



230 FIGHTBACK

An empty property 'protected' from those in need of housing by barbed wire

214-230 Sherbourne is an empty property in the heart of a community that is desperately in need of housing. Shamefully, it has been vacant for almost two decades. The owner of the property, the developer KingSett Capital, bought the site with the disgraceful intention of building a luxury condo tower in this poor neighbourhood but, with the condo market slumping, they are simply sitting on the property and waiting for a more favourable time to make a profit.

230 Fightback has been demanding that social housing be built at this location and we have occupied the site to press that demand on more than one occasion. Just recently, desperate people denied the basic right to housing attempted to set up an encampment there in an effort to survive.

KingSett's response has been to put up a second fence complete with barbed wire in order to guard their disgusting monument to greed and selfishness. As this vital site is fenced off in this way, the surrounding community is experiencing unheard of levels of desperation and hardship. Low-income tenants in the area struggle to keep a roof over their heads, paying impossible rents for substandard housing. Public housing has been run down to the point where a portion of it is now uninhabitable. Food banks line ups are longer than ever. Every night homeless people struggle to find shelter space or sleep on the streets. Drop-in facilities and other vital services are overstretched and overwhelmed. As the crisis worsens, the capacity to meet peoples most basic needs is being destroyed.

Developers like KingSett are a blight on our communities, they ensure that resources are diverted away from building the housing that would meet the needs of hard-pressed people. The gentrification they bring in the wake means that rents are forced up and services driven out. The only 'service' that is prioritized as poverty explodes is heavy-handed racist policing that targets communities that are already under attack.

In this dire situation, the politicians at City Hall and Queen's Park do all they can to assist the developers. They rubber stamp their applications for luxury developments and they throw public money at them to grease the wheels of their profit-making. The new fortifications at 214-230 Sherbourne are a sickening case of adding insult to injury and they can't be tolerated. 230 Fightback will be announcing plans to challenge this outrage. We will be appealing for support and solidarity from all who think that housing should be a human right.

As far as we are concerned KingSett's fence must fall and social housing must be built on this site. Please support the struggle to make this so.

