

25 Gresse Street Tenants' & Residents' Association

Chair: Gary Comenas Secretary: Eddie Bloch Treasurer/DMC: Ezra Benson DMC: Paul Strölb

Q&A Residents' CCTV – 25 Gresse Street

Q: If the equipment was removed because the switchover would make it obsolete, why was it removed over a year before the switchover was due to begin? The switchover to digital is not due to take place in London until April 2012.

A: The analogue to digital switchover or conversion relates to Television broadcasting not CCTV. It involves TV stations, over-the-air or terrestrial broadcasting, TV networks (like BBC), and the conversion of cable television to digital cable.

This project is an ongoing CCTV systems upgrade and our programme of work across Camden relates to:

- Enhanced image quality enabling CCTV data of evidential quality to be used in criminal proceedings
- Central monitoring management and recording of the cameras from the housing CCTV control room, staffed 24/7 by trained operators.
- Improved coordination of the LBC community patrols (Community Wardens and Housing Patrol) which can be alerted to incidents detected by CCTV operators

Q: Why wasn't a converter used, instead of removing the system entirely?

A: The system has been replaced not removed

Q: Was the actual hardware removed or was it just disabled?

A: Disabled

Q: Which specific item of the Data Protection Act did our camera contravene? (I need a number.)

A: The letter to residents from Guy Arnold did not say your previous system contravened any item. That letter was the official communication from Camden Council.

Q: Camden now claims that the residents' CCTV system violated the Data Protection Act. The Data Protection Act consists of 75 items. A copy of the act can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>. Which item does it contravene? (If it was true that residential CCTV systems were illegal, the large amount of companies who provide residential CCTV systems would go out of business – as would shops such as Maplin who sell a considerable amount of such equipment. Are you saying that all that equipment is illegal as well?)

A: I am not aware of this claim. Please confirm where you got that information from?

Q: If the Information Commissioners' Office does not think our system contravened the Data Protection Act, on what basis can Camden claim that it did?

A: This is a Council/Organization CCTV system not an individual household system, so the ICO code does apply, but the residents are not overlooking anything other than the entrance to their own block, so this does not contravene the Data Protection Act?

Q: Why did Camden Council remove the system without sending out a warning letter or going through a consultation process with the residents?

A: The communication was sent late for which Guy Arnold apologized in his letter. I do not know why there was no consultation.

Q: A recent article in *The Sunday Times* (26 June 2011) titled "The net is closing on burglars" detailed a residential CCTV system named Jabbakam which monitors residential property via personal computers. How can that system be legal and our residents' system illegal?

A: N/A (as answered above)

Q: Given that Camden claims that they operated an illegal residents' CCTV system for over twelve years, what compensation do they plan to offer residents for the years they were subjects of the illegal system?

A: N/A (as answered above)

Q: Camden continues to operate a CCTV system which they have access to but which the actual residents do not. They argue that this is a substitute system that provides security. That system does not provide us with the level of security that our old system did. An off-site CCTV system that is (supposedly) monitored off-site is not as effective as an on-site system. When anti-social behaviour occurs our ability to get information is limited to the wardens at Kings Cross who monitor our system (along with numerous other systems) meaning a formal request has to first pass through the bureaucracy and CCTV monitors then have to go through thousands of images to find the information we need. The residents' system was much more direct and allowed us to deal with any anti-social behaviour while it was happening (i.e. call the police or the mobile housing patrol) rather than waiting until someone in King's Cross had the time to go through thousands of images.

A: The police have access to images for their investigation when there is an incident and regularly attend the control room to view footage which contributes to their investigations.

This is the crime data on burglary for 25 Gresse Street:

Year from 1st June 2008 - 31st May 2009 - 5 offences

Year from 1st June 2009 - 31st May 2010 - 4 offences

Year from 1st June 2010 - 31st May 2011 - 5 offences

There have been no recorded burglary offences in this location after 18/01/2011. If anything the use of external cameras increases the perception that security measures are in place and this deters crime. Criminals will generally target addresses with no external CCTV.

If residents are experiencing other types of ASB or crime please report it to Housing Patrol or to the Police.

Q: When is our residents' CCTV going to be re-installed or replaced?

A: This is a local decision about a localised asset. If the residents want to pursue this internal system they should speak with Lionel Meade, Ward Housing Manager for Bloomsbury. At Bramber Court (Holborn & Covent Garden), a company called SCC Intl Ltd maintain an internal CCTV service at Bramber Court. This is in addition to the CCTV Service we provide.

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