



21st November 2016

STATEMENT

Ref: St Michaels Gate, Parnwell, Peterborough, PE1 5YT

In response to the recent media inquiries and interest in the above development we feel the concerns of all parties are best served by Stef & Philips Limited providing a statement.

Firstly, we regret any distress experienced by the current tenants at St Michaels Gate.

Stef & Philips specializes in providing accommodation for Social Housing to local authorities – that is all we do. We do not enter into private lettings or management contracts. We have developed properties, detailed systems and extensive package of services which are all suited to serving the needs of service users and local authorities we work with.

Organizational Ethos;

1. We are offered developments on a weekly basis throughout the country
2. Our decision regarding the lease or purchase of a property or a development is primarily based on the price and Local Housing Allowance for that specific postcode
3. We do not acquire a property based on research or knowledge of any local authority's housing needs
4. Hence, the notion that 'knowing the housing needs of Peterborough City Council S&P spotted an opportunity' has no substance at all
5. Our basic tenet is a detailed 'service model' and constant improvements to the same
6. This includes numerous services which we are contractually not required to provide

Operations and Ethics;

1. We work with local authority services to provide practical solutions which represent both value for money to the council and an acceptable living experience for families and individuals in housing need
2. We work within the constraints imposed by the workings of the housing market on the one hand and central government's subsidy regime for temporary accommodation on the other
3. We will work with local authorities anywhere in the country to address their specific housing needs, adjusting and readjusting the model to suit their needs
4. We endeavor to ensure a number of things;
 - a. Accommodation we provide is of a good standard
 - b. It is suitable for families and individuals to live in
 - c. Accurately addresses the needs of the local authority
 - d. Enables our partner councils to meet their financial obligations



5. We are recognized for the fact that our supply of accommodation also includes the provision of support for vulnerable households
6. Our properties offer;
 - a. Suitability of properties considered and/or designed by in house architects
 - b. Construction/Refurbishment to a good specification
 - c. En-suite facilities
 - d. New fixtures and fittings
 - e. New furniture
 - f. New wiring
 - g. New plumbing
 - h. Due regard to energy efficient installations
 - i. New appliances
 - j. Fully compliant with all Building Regulations
 - k. Fire Brigade consultation and approval for every property
 - l. Health & Safety compliant
 - m. Adaptations for special needs
 - n. Interlinked smoke/heat alarm system (Grade-A where required)
 - o. Electrical, Gas safety, Emergency Lighting, Fire Detection certificates and EPC
 - p. Completion Certificate
 - q. Construction/Refurbishment carried out by S&P's own construction team
7. Our services include;
 - a. Detailed check-in procedure for service users
 - b. Detailed 'Welcome Pack' for service users
 - c. A clear/concise list of Do's and Don'ts for service users
 - d. Weekly visit by our Maintenance team for cleaning of all communal areas
 - e. Weekly visit by a member of our Housing team which includes;
 - Inspection of the internal and external communal areas
 - Inspection of accommodation units
 - Welfare checks
 - Support where required
 - f. Gardens maintenance
 - g. Service users are encouraged to call the office number during working hours for any issues
 - h. We also provide a 24hr x 365days telephone number for out of hours emergencies
 - i. A 'Mother & Baby Welcome Pack' for mums with cot age babies or expecting mums
 - j. Notice board or information pack providing details of local services
 - k. Clear advice on responsible waste disposal
 - l. Information about waste collection
 - m. Information about location of utilities
 - n. In addition to the council's bin collection, where required, we also establish a private contract for collection and recycling of waste
 - o. Regular communications with council officers to minimize void rates and ensure the best use of accommodation
 - p. None of our work is subcontracted



- q. All work is carried out by S&P's staff
- r. All our staff are subject to an enhanced CRB/DBS check
- 8. The suggestion that 'this is all about money' could not be further from the truth, proved by a number of facts;
 - a. Every local authority has its own particular needs
 - b. They address these needs by initiating different types of housing schemes
 - c. Each scheme is different in terms of property type, service needs, support needs and a rate the local authority would pay
 - d. Fact; London accounts for around 25% of all homeless households in the country and 75% of those who have to be accommodated in temporary accommodation, including more than 55,000 children
 - e. If our business was simply 'all about money', we would merely pick the most lucrative contracts
 - f. Instead, we also work with local authorities away from London in wide spread geographic locations
 - g. Although, local authorities have very pressing needs, S&P's established ethos is to never work in an opportunistic manner
 - h. With each and every local authority we see this as a close working partnership

Specifically about St Michael's Gate;

1. We can confirm that long before our first contact with Peterborough City Council, we had already committed to the acquisition of St Michael's Gate. Hence, the opinion of a 'pre-purchase relationship with Peterborough City Council' has no basis.
2. St Michael's Gate was purchased by Paul Simon Magic Homes Investments Limited (PSMHIL). A Director of Stef & Philips Limited has a minority interest in PSMHIL.
3. It was purchased at a time when the existing tenancy agreements were either drawing to a close or had already expired
4. It was purchased with the knowledge that majority of these properties will require extensive refurbishments
5. Because of Health & Safety stipulations the properties cannot be occupied whilst the refurbishments are carried out
6. Almost all of the tenants currently on site occupy their respective premises under a 6-month or 12-month Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) agreement
7. Each tenant is fully aware of their rights and obligations under the agreement and in particular their obligation to give up possession of the property on the correct amount of notice
8. Key facts about this development;
 - a. A total of 74 properties with;
 - 68 AST agreements
 - 2 Assured tenancies
 - 4 vacant properties
 - b. 50+ properties need complete refurbishment and upgrade to make them fully compliant
 - c. We see no evidence of significant repair and maintenance in the past
 - d. Deposits paid by the tenants to the previous managing agents were placed in a Deposit Protection Scheme, and will be refunded



Assurance;

1. No deductions will be made from the deposits unless we have evidence of malicious and wilful damage
2. We are lawfully seeking possession, strictly in accordance with the terms of each agreement
3. Each case is considered personally by a Company Director on its own merits
4. 10+ tenants have already been allowed time beyond the end of their notice period
5. S&P is funding all the refurbishment, repair and compliance related work
6. All work will be completed at no additional expense to Peterborough City Council or the public purse

We are working closely with Peterborough City Council to ensure the properties become a valued part of the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio, providing an excellent opportunity for them to reduce the use of unsuitable accommodation elsewhere and to provide cost-effective temporary accommodation of a good standard from a specialist provider.

For & on behalf of
Management
Stef & Philips Limited