



14 January 2009

**Dear Rt Hon Mr Johnson,**

We are petitioning you to guarantee that Lubetkin's iconic Finsbury Health Centre on Pine St EC1 will be refurbished and its NHS services remain there. Over 1800 people have signed this petition, but we have learned a lot since we wrote it. The major revelation was that LIFT monies meant for refurbishment involve sale of the building and an expensive leaseback arrangement with Islington PCT (recently rebranded NHS Islington). After two Freedom of Information requests and a well-attended public meeting with the PCT here are still many unanswered questions :

- 1. Why after six years of negotiation which was on the point of agreement with English Heritage and The 20th Century Society did the PCT suddenly decide to sell the building instead of refurbishing it? Why sell it if the district valuer only thinks it worth only one pound to a private buyer?**
- 2. What was done with the claimed £1.5 million a year maintenance budget for the Finsbury Health Centre? How has the originally estimated cost of £4-5 million to refurbish recently doubled to £9.8 million (£5974 sq/m)? Finsbury Health Centre was designed for flexibility, and English Heritage is not asking for original materials to be used.**
- 3. Why are they proposing to close the only health centre in the south of Islington and serving the City and Holborn when the population is expected to rise by between 25-30,000 in the next 10-15 years - especially when the government have said they want more health services 'closer to where people live?'**
- 4. Why in their public consultation was there no option offered to keep FHC open?**
- 5. Considering the reputation of the building - as many architects have said, if Finsbury Health Centre can't get conservation grants they don't know what could - why was no other finance option besides PFI considered for refurbishment?**

A decision will be taken by the board of Islington PCT at a public meeting on **Thursday 29 January**. We hope you or your ministers will be able to intervene with Rachel Tyndall, Paula Kahn and the board of Islington PCT to get proper answers to our questions and save this living, vibrant local health centre. If they decide to sell we have been advised that there are solid grounds for a judicial review.

Underlying all these questions is larger question of who will benefit from the proposed sale of Finsbury Health Centre? It will not be residents in South Islington, Clerkenwell, Bunhill, Holborn, or the City. They will lose important local health services like physiotherapy, and a huge source of local pride in a building which was an inspiration for the NHS. Any government - Labour or Conservative - should be proud to look after it.

Further information: Campaign to Save Finsbury Health Centre, 18 Wilmington Square, London WC1X 0ER  
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Sincerely,

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