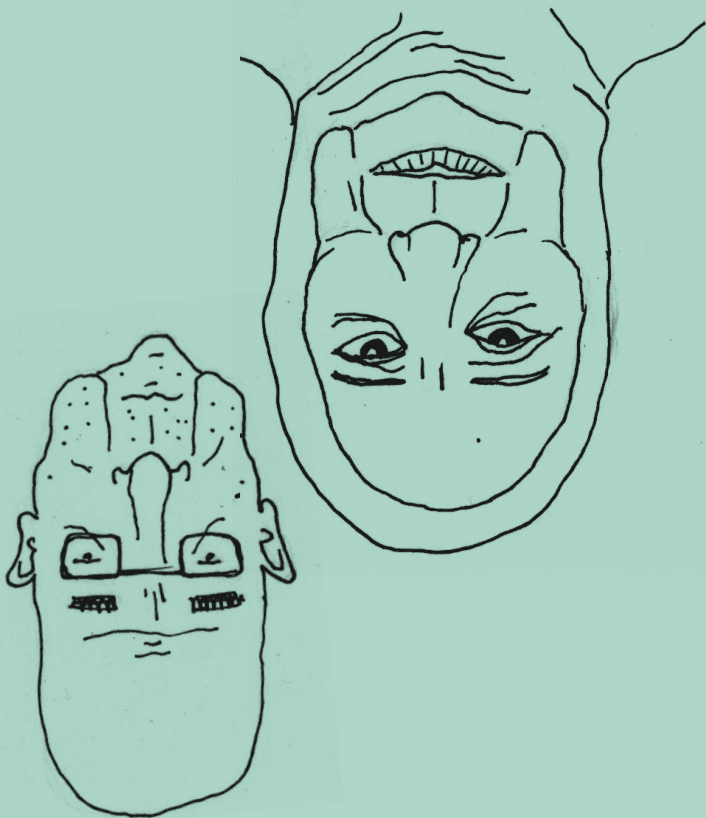


I live in a two-hundred year-old house in the Hay Al Arab area: The house of my forebears from the Al Arab family, I constructed a water cistern here and we still use it. This attic was used as a hideaway during the civil war. Now they want to demolish the house and move me to an apartment, and however big it's going to be, as far as I'm concerned, it'll be like a little prison. I'm used to drinking my coffee out in the garden and tending the plants that first sprouted beneath my mother's hands.



Historically, Tariq El Jdideh has been defined as the neighbourhood running from the Makassed Street to the south. Prior to the wave of construction which swept through the neighbourhood around fifty years ago, this area was known as Tellat Zurayk—or Zurayk Hill—after the Zurayk family, which owned land there. The extent of this dune-like rise and the fact it was undeveloped and unpopulated saw city-dwellers adopt it as a getaway: somewhere they brought their families to spend the weekends. It was also referred to as Al Ramei, or The Sands.

In the early twentieth century—specifically, at the start of the French Mandate—development began in the area as families moved in from the Old City. At the time, the area was primarily used for agriculture, livestock rearing, and pasturage, but at the outset of the 1920s the mandate authorities granted plots of land in Tariq El Jdideh to Roman Catholic families living in the Mazraa district to the north. In the space of a few years, these new owners had divided large plots of up to 10,000 square metres into properties of 1,000, 700, and 500 square metres fit for building on. These divided plots were purchased by families from the Old City and Basta, who moved here in pursuit of improved housing.

In 1935, the mandate authorities built Al Ramei Prison, which they connected to the city with a single highway, which became known as Tariq El Jdideh, or the New Road. At the time the area was relatively distant from the city boundaries, and was home to various cemeteries, among them those for French soldiers, Polish immigrants, and the Daouk family. It was only when Beirut expanded in the 1930s and the area became more densely inhabited that it took the name Tariq El Jdideh. It was during this period that Lebanese families from the Kilim El Kharroub region began to settle here in search of better opportunities for employment and education in the capital.

My family moved to Mazraa in the 1940s and in 1955 they rented a place in Tariq El Jdideh. I lived there for 57 years until I was evicted in 2012, aged eighty. I love this neighbourhood, and I looked for alternative accommodation so that I could remain here. Friends and family helped me, until I found an apartment in the same street in 2015. I pay the \$500 rent out of the compensation I was given for the eviction. The money should last a few years, but without any security for my old age I worry about what will happen if I fall ill.

We're children of these walls, of this neighbourhood. Despite our poverty, despite the circumstances we live in today, you know, if you offered me an apartment overlooking the neighbourhood since I was a little girl, to visit my sea, I'd turn you down. I've been coming to this neighbourhood since I lived here with my husband for 35 years. All our relatives live around us here.

In 1948, working and middle-class Palestinian families emigrated to Tariq El Jdideh from the coastal cities of Haifa, Akka, and Jaffa. As a relatively new neighbourhood, better-off families had little difficulty finding unoccupied accommodation, while the very poorest settled around the Daouk family cemetery to form what would later be known as the Sabra Camp. The influx of new families prompted the construction of the Municipal Stadium, the Bir Hassan Airport, and a number of public utilities and services.

My grandfather came to Mazraa in 1960 and rented a house in the Al Dana quarter. A little later he purchased a property whose owner had forfeited it through gambling. The family still live there to this day. My grandfather didn't stay in the single-storey building: he divided it into four rooms and rented it out, then he built a three-storey house nearby, renting out the first floor and living on the third with his wife and children.

With the opening of the Beirut Arab University in 1960 the character of the neighbourhood changed again, with an influx of Lebanese and Arab students contributing to the movements. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation had a strong influence in Tariq El Jdideh, particularly in light of widespread local support for Nasserist movements. The state was almost absent, leaving it to civil society associations, particularly those with Islamic charters, to provide services and aid to families in need. In 1968 we moved in, for free.

When I got married in 1960, I lived with my wife in her family home in Upper Basta. My father-in-law built a place in Tariq El Jdideh and offered us an apartment in the building.

## Joumana returns to Tariq El Jdideh...

“Since leaving the house in Abou Shaker Square where they were born and raised and moving to the town of Barja outside Beirut, Joumana and her seven-strong family have suffered. The family was forced to leave their “historical” home and relocate to “an area where we have no connections other than our new home”. The property firm which bought the old house decided to demolish it and put up a new building in its place. The compensation the company paid to Joumana's family was extremely modest and did not permit them to rent or buy a house inside Beirut.

Ten years ago, the family had purchased a house in Barja, but unable to commit to living there had put it up for sale on several occasions. When they had to leave Beirut, the family obtained a bank loan to renovate the house in Barja and make it fit for habitation.

However, being so far away from the environment they grew up in, the customs they were raised with, and their neighbours and friends, left Joumana and her family “feeling like they were in exile... an estrangement we couldn't come to terms with,” not to mention the distance they had to travel every day to reach their workplaces in Beirut, enduring the traffic and the cost of transport.

After a year in Barja, Joumana decided to leave the family home in Barja and return to Beirut.

She rented out a room in an apartment that she shared with several other young women. The decision to live in a shared flat was not an easy one for her to take, but given the high rents and the impossibility of buying a house for herself, it was the simplest and most practical solution.

Joumana's family continued to feel unsettled and out of place, especially her mother, whose health has declined and has had to be admitted to hospital on several occasions. “Sadly, all our neighbours have been subjected to the same pressures and problems,” says Joumana: “They have been forced to move to places like Jiyeh, Jadra, and Sibline.”

## Housing Monitor

beirutevictions.org / housingmonitor.org

The Housing Monitor seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of housing in the country, recognising that housing is more than just shelter, and encompasses social networks and access to other resources available in the local environment. In response to studies of residential patterns and changes in land ownership, in particular the alarming number of evictions and vacant units and buildings in Beirut's residential neighbourhoods, not to mention the difficulty residents have in getting access to affordable and appropriate accommodation, the Housing Monitor was launched with the purpose of advancing a reading of these phenomena as symptoms of wider systemic processes at work in the city, and to transform individual initiatives to fight for housing rights into an issue of public interest.

This series of pamphlets is associated with the **Housing Monitor**, an online platform which collates research, lays the groundwork for advocacy, and proposes alternative strategies with the objective of promoting the right to housing in Lebanon.



As we get to know the streets and alleys whose residents have witnessed significant changes in the architectural and social environment, we pose questions about heritage and the housing policies which have led to the displacement of communities.

The Another City Series sees local history through the lens of its community's stories, an approach which gives us space to reconsider both dominant models of urban development and the policies which shape the housing market.

The current population of Tariq El Jdideh is around four million. The area is famous for its cultural heritage and is home to Beirut's largest social and educational institutions and a range of cultural landmarks from historic cafés and buildings to the Beirut Municipal Stadium. It is also famous for its souks, such as the Textile Souk, the Afif El Tibeh Souk, and the Sabra Souk, which is the largest popular market in Beirut.

A large number of schools are located in Tariq El Jdideh, some of them demolished over the years. In 2000 the Mama Najah and Al Anwar schools were replaced with luxury tower blocks. In the case of the Mama Najah School, an investor purchased houses that surrounded the school and pooled them into a single property. In August 2015, a survey listed a total of 381 buildings standing in Tariq El Jdideh, and recorded that 62 families had been evicted, with 98 more threatened with eviction. There were 27 buildings either demolished or scheduled for demolition,

while 88 buildings in the area had been built on the rubble of demolished properties over the course of the previous twenty years. Having to move from the home or neighbourhood where one has lived all one's life, particularly in old age, constitutes a form of emotional and psychological violence, in addition to the financial and social problems which result from relocating someone away from their place of work and the social networks that sustain them.

Joumana, El Hajja Wafiq, and El Hajj Abdel Qader have lived in Tariq El Jdideh their entire lives. Each was left to deal with the process of forcible displacement in their own way, drawing on the strong ties of friendship and community that characterise this neighbourhood.



# TARIQ EL JDIDE

## طريق الجديد

# Major landmarks with evictions and buildings scheduled for demolition

### Sabra Street

Sabra Street runs from the Sabil intersection down to the Akka Hospital and Kuwaiti Embassy in the south. The Sabra Souk makes it one of the busiest streets in Tariq El Jdideh, and the most vibrant and visited by the city's inhabitants.

### The Beirut Arab University

The university was founded on the site of the old Al Ramleh Prison by the Bir wa Ihsan Society in 1960. Prior to the civil war, it attracted large numbers of students from across the Arab world to the neighbourhood, where they stayed, contributing to the diversity of the local community.

### Hamad Street

Up until 1935, Hamad Street was little more than a narrow alley, before developing into what is regarded as the oldest residential neighbourhood in Tariq El Jdideh. Historically a high-income neighbourhood, in the aftermath of the civil war it came to house a preponderance of middle-income families. Architecturally, it is considered one of the neighbourhoods which has managed to preserve the greatest number of old buildings in good condition.

### Watah Al Msaytbeh

Prior to 1950, when Watah Al Msaytbeh was established as an informal residential settlement, residents of Tariq El Jdide used this area as an essential site for walks, as it lay among : a pine forest with lakes. Residents of Tariq El Jdideh developed close links with the inhabitants of the facing Hayy Al Sukkar quarter.

### Abou Shaker Square

The neighbourhoods of Abou Shaker and Tamlees are among the poorest in Tariq El Jdideh and are mostly comprised of low-rise buildings. However, over the course of the years, many of the older structures have been replaced by new buildings. Historically, the square and surrounding streets were a hub of political activism and Palestinian guerrilla movements.

### Al Sabil

The area got its name from the sabil, or public water fountain, constructed by Abdel Rahman Jalloul in the 1940s. The quarter remains a landmark in the area of Tariq El Jdideh to this day.

### Haret El Yehoudi

An old quarter of, Tariq El Jdide, known as Haret El Yehoudi, or the Jewish Quarter. Sources suggest that

the original landowner was a Jewish man, who asked an accountant to show him land where he might build a house. The accountant directed him to a plot of land owned by the Yamout family in Tariq El Jdideh. In 1910 the new landowner brought Jewish workmen from Turkey and constructed the building adjoining the Aisha Umm Al Mumineen School. The building was destroyed by Israeli air raids during the invasion of Beirut in 1982.

### Horsh Beirut

A historical woodland area with which residents of Tariq El Jdide enjoyed a long and close association,, its pine trees merging with the lanes and alleys of the neighbourhood. At Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha, the Al Arab family played a central role in arranging entertainments in the Horsh, setting up swings and seesaws and selling food. In 1955, during the presidency of Camille Chamoun, the construction of a new arterial road divided the forest from the neighbourhood. "Chamoun's stolen the Horsh from us!" was a common lament at the time. The Horsh was closed to the public at the end of the civil war and remains so to this day.

### The Municipal Stadium

The stadium was built by the French army in 1936 to host celebrations and sports matches. It is currently owned by the municipality of Beirut. It suffered extensive damage by Israeli forces in 1982, and was then renovated and expanded to host the Arab Club Championship in 1997. Today the stadium is closed to the public and remains under the control of the Lebanese Army.

### Hay Al Arab

According to local stories, the Al Arab family were first to settle the Al Horge district, and Mazra'a was formerly known as Mazra'at Al Arab. The family were descendants of Arab tribes who had travelled from Iraq and the wider Arabian Peninsula to Beirut via Akkar. Al Horge is one of

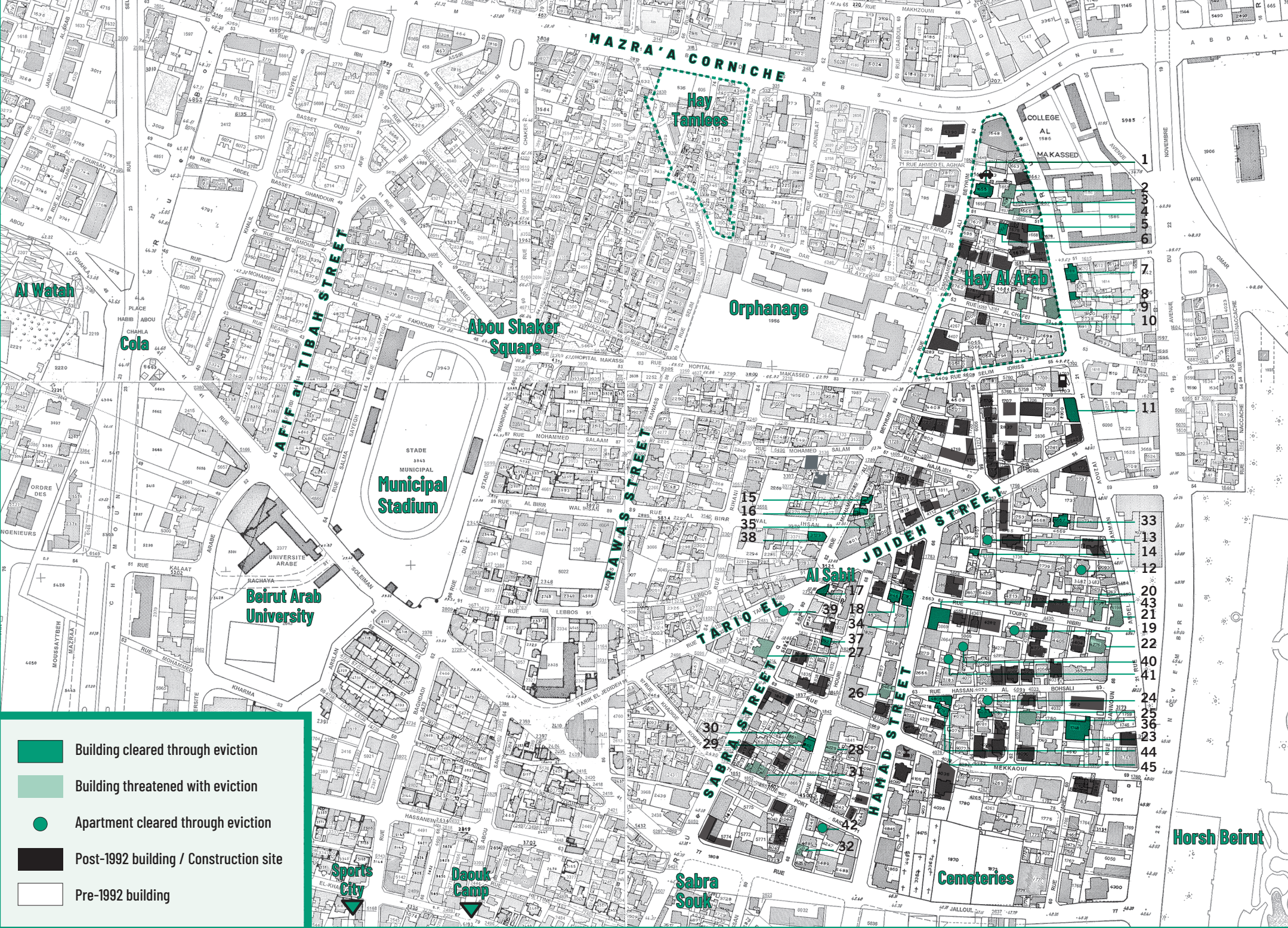
the older quarters in the neighbourhood, with a number of its traditional buildings still intact. It was once more like a village, with houses no higher than two storeys and surrounded by greenery on all sides. Before the state built the arterial road that cut the neighbourhood off from the pine forest, the residents of Hay Al Arab had close ties with the Horsh. There was a café set up facing the trees, called Qasqas Café after its owner, who was from the Qasqas family. The café became famous after it was shelled during the war and the area around it became known as Qasqas. Hay Al Arab is currently undergoing radical changes as a result of contracts between property developers and landowners, brokered by local property dealers, some of them engineers from the Al Arab family.

### Afif El Tibeh Street

A street comprised of residential blocks with shops on the ground floor. Residents are a mixture of tenants paying old rent and apartment owners.

### Rawas Street and its environs

The majority of residents here were once tenants paying old rent, but in the last decade the area has undergone radical changes. Only a few of the old buildings remain: most were demolished as a result of partnerships between landlords and investors, and replaced with new tower blocks, some of whose apartments were occupied by the old owners.



- 1

**Five storeys, nine apartments.** Tenants of all apartments evicted. Threatened with demolition. Property no. 1655
- 2

**Three storeys.** Old rent tenants evicted. Four apartments occupied by workmen from neighbouring construction sites. Threatened with demolition. Property no. 1658
- 3

**Three storeys.** All residents own their apartments, but most apartments are currently vacant. Property no. 1659
- 4

**Two storeys.** One apartment is occupied by its long-time owner, the second is rented. Owners are negotiating a sale with an investor in exchange for apartments in the new building. Property no. 1666
- 5

**Three storeys.** Ground floor housed a shop. The top two storeys contained a total of four apartments. The building was demolished in 2016, and construction work has begun. Property no. 1668
- 6

**Two storeys.** Scheduled for demolition. Property no. 1669
- 7

**Four storeys.** Residents evicted, sold, and demolished in late 2016. Construction work has begun at the site. Property no. 1688
- 8

**Two storeys, built in 1925.** Bought by the current owner in 1972 and rented out. Residents and shops recently evicted in exchange for compensation of \$50,000, to be demolished and replaced with an eight-storey building. Property no. 1616
- 9

**Three storeys, six apartments.** Five apartments are occupied by

- 10

**Three storeys.** Two apartments are vacant, and one is occupied by a tenant paying old rent. The tenant and landlord are currently involved in a court case. Scheduled for demolition. Property no. 1688
- 11

**Five storeys.** Sold and scheduled for demolition. Currently occupied by workmen. Property no. 2800
- 12

**Four storeys.** Three apartments paying old rent, three owned. The first storey has been evicted. Property no. 1741
- 13

**Five storeys, ten apartments.** Five apartments paying new rent, five owned, and one evicted. Property no. 4956
- 14

**Two storeys.** Property no. 4210
- 15

**Four storeys.** Property no. 1897
- 16

**Two storeys.** Property no. 1797
- 17

**Two storeys.** Vacant. Property no. 1396
- 18

**Two storeys.** Property no. 3146
- 19

**Five storeys, five apartments.** Ground floor tenant paying old rent has been evicted. Remaining storeys owned by siblings. Property number 4278
- 20

**Three storeys, three apartments.** All apartments paying new rent. Demolition planned. Property no. 4197
- 21

**Five storeys.** Apartments rented out without contracts. Ongoing court cases. The top two floors previously evicted ahead of demolition. Property no. 4198
- 22

**Four storeys, four apartments.** First storey is vacant. Tenants on the remaining storeys have received compensation to vacate the property ahead of demolition. Property no. 4276
- 23

**Five storeys, five apartments.** Tenants evicted four months ago and all window and door frames removed. Property no. 1748
- 24

**Five storeys, seven apartments.** Two apartments paying old rent, five paying new rent. Tenants evicted and apartments subdivided into rooms and rented out pending permission to demolish. Evictions expected to begin at the end of the summer season.

- 25

**Four storeys.** Tenants evicted months ago and the building currently under renovation. Property no. 4082
- 26

**Two storeys.** Vacant. Property no. 5464
- 27

**Three storeys.** Inherited by siblings who reached an agreement to demolish the building. Property no. 2482
- 28

**Three storeys, six apartments.** Three apartments owned and three paying old rent. Purchased from owners by Contractor A who took out cases against the tenants. Property no. 4229
- 29

**Two storeys.** Building purchased two years ago by M.B. who is currently attempting to buy the neighbouring property with a view to demolishing both and replacing with a single new building.
- 30

**Three storeys, nine apartments.** Attempts to purchase the building and threaten current tenants by M.B. Property no. 1861
- 31

**Eight storeys, 28 apartments.** Twenty-six apartments paying old rent and two paying new rent. Majority of the residents are elderly, among them a wheelchair-bound woman who lives with her children. All are threatened with eviction by investor Y.H. Property no. 1853
- 32

**Seven storeys, 18 apartments.** Fifteen apartments paying old rent, three owned. The landlord is refusing to accept rent payments. Property no. 4250
- 33

**Four storeys, seven apartments.** Three apartments paying old rent, four paying new rent. The building has recently been sold with a view to demolition. Property no. 4687
- 34

**Three storeys.** All tenants evicted with the exception of a tenant paying old rent on the ground floor. Property no. 1787
- 35

**Two storeys.** Ground floor occupied by tenant paying old rent. The storey above occupied by the landlord who wants to sell the property and pool it with the next-door property which is currently undergoing construction work. Property no. 3394
- 36

**Six storeys, 12 apartments.** The owners are all from the same family and are in the process of evicting the old-rent paying tenants with a view to demolishing the property. Property no. 4092
- 37

**Two storeys.** Vacant. Property no. 292
- 38

**Four storeys.** Vacant building for sale and at risk of demolition. Property no. 3123
- 39

**Five storeys, six apartments.** The two owners occupy the fifth and sixth storeys and have evicted tenants paying the old rent from the first and third storeys. Property no. 3491
- 40

**Eight storeys, 26 apartments.** The majority of the apartments are the property of long-time owners. The first storey is

- 41

**Six storeys, 18 apartments.** All tenants pay the old rent. The ground floor has been cleared by eviction. Property no. 5966
- 42

**Eight storeys, 14 apartments.** The owner is seeking a court order requiring the tenants on the first floor to either buy their apartments or face eviction. The tenants in question are a brother and sister in their sixties, and they are awaiting the outcome of the case. Property 4248
- 43

**Eight storeys, 21 apartments.** Fifteen apartments paying old rent have ongoing court cases with the owners, and are threatened with eviction. To date, four apartments have been evicted. Property no. 3869
- 44

**Three storeys, three apartments.** The previous owners sold the building because they were unable to afford the cost of renovation. Tenants are now threatened with eviction. Property no. 4219