

Devon's derelict Crossways shopping centre set to be demolished

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Demolition work will begin soon on Paignton's derelict Crossways shopping centre, it can be revealed.

Torbay Council has finally [completed its compulsory purchase](#) of the run-down 1960s concrete shops complex off Torquay Road from its long-time owners Gaelic Investments.




The purchase – for a so-far undisclosed amount – was rubber-stamped before [a scheduled court hearing over the ownership of the centre](#) could go ahead. Gaelic Investments has now agreed in principle to the council's terms. Now just the Royal Mail, which owns the Post Office building next door, remains to be persuaded.

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The purchase announcement brings to an end decades of decline for the centre – which was once a bustling state-of-the-art shopping experience.

In recent years, its 30 small shop units and large supermarket have closed one by one, leaving just one charity shop, a cafe and a small gym. The centre's dingy stairwells have been taken over by drug users and street drinkers.

Now the success of the [compulsory purchase](#) gives the council the green light to move towards knocking the centre down to replace it with a modern development of flats with shops and restaurants beneath.

Council leader Steve Darling said: "There are still a few more hurdles to clear, so you won't see the building work starting just yet, but it means we can work at pace on the next steps of the scheme."

Gaelic Investments, which bought Crossways in 2009, had been reluctant to relinquish its ownership of Crossways, and was believed to be still receiving rent from at least one of the former tenants long after the business closed down.

A compulsory purchase order was first made in September 2020 after no development proposals had been put forward since its purchase.

The current tenants of Crossways have been contacted and are being kept informed of progress. The council has offered to undertake site searches and provide additional support for relocation. Anyone with a legal interest in the property will be compensated as part of the CPO process.

Council deputy leader Darren Cowell said: “For many years the Crossways site has been an eyesore and had a negative impact on Paignton and specifically the town centre. While it’s not all systems go just yet, successfully reaching this milestone does move this scheme forward and demonstrates our commitment to investing in Paignton.”

Cabinet member Swithin Long added: “This is great news for Paignton as it means we’re one step closer to being able to move forward with our regeneration plans for the town centre. It also comes at a time when we need to deliver more high-quality suitable homes that meet specific care and support needs.”

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It is proposed the redevelopment of the site will be carried out by TorVista Homes, a company wholly owned by the council. Later this month, a public inquiry will be held online to address the remaining objections to the purchase, understood to be from Royal Mail, which is concerned about access to its site. The council says it is working with Royal Mail to address its concerns.

Once the outcome of the inquiry has been published, the

council will move forward with the regeneration. On Boxing Day 2020, it was announced that £13.36m of Future High Streets funding had been secured by the council from the Government for the transformation of Paignton town centre. Projects set to benefit include the redevelopment of Station Square, Crossways and the Victoria Centre.

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