

HOUSE COLLAPSE

Families living in limbo

Reports by Rudolf Richter
and Vicki Kellaway

DOZENS of people were left living in limbo over the Easter weekend after their homes in Ridley Road, Bromley, were evacuated following last week's dramatic events.

The house that collapsed into the hole, number 122, belonged to Terence and Yvonne Shepherd.

They alerted neighbours and the fire brigade after noticing alarming cracks start to form in their walls, at about 4am, last Tuesday.

They were trapped inside their home until fire fighters arrived. Four hours later their home of almost six years caved into a 20ft hole that appeared in their front garden.

The Shepherd family are now living in a hotel paid for by their insurance company.

They have had to pay £500 to put the personal belongings they have been able to save into storage, in Elmers End.

The other three families hardest hit have also emptied out their homes, ahead of demolition teams moving in.

Mrs Shepherd said: "We've been married 35 years. There are a lot of memories in that house.

"We want them to knock it down with respect."

She said: "You hope that it can be rescued but next thing you know, we found out on Friday that it and the three others had been condemned."

Mrs Shepherd added: "We just want to know why this has happened."

The couple were treated for shock after the collapse, which happened at about 9am, last Tuesday.

Mrs Shepherd, speaking to Bromley Extra hours after the incident, said: "I'm devastated, but no one was hurt. I guess that's the main thing."



■ A property in Ridley Road, subsided and left condemned

pictures: Kathryn Boudet pd995415

'No this

SOME residents with the information to them, once told they could return to their homes.

Many evacuees returned to the area for updates or discussions.

Louise Shepherd one can tell what happened. The people here but to one another want to know why.

Gas supplies were cut and systems were disrupted. Families in Bromley Council ordered 80 leaflets containing information on electricity, water supply, mobile phones and a 9am to 5pm to A spokesman said most residents to return to take possession and security - they will move back unless services, including are restored, in establish the likelihood of being completed. The affected area is occupation again.

Gordon Hayward of Environment Bromley Council overriding concerns for the safety of the residents who need to work determine the cause of the problem.

Nowhere to go for twins' first birthday

A MOTHER whose twin boys celebrate their first birthday on Sunday, said her family is struggling to cope after being evacuated to a hotel outside the borough.



Eurostar disrupted by broken main

THE collapse of 122 Ridley Road caused huge disruption for train passengers, particularly for those travelling by Eurostar.

A gas main was fractured dur-

Uninsured and unsure of the future

A COUPLE who were trapped after the collapse, and rescued by their neighbours fear for their future because their condemned home was uninsured.





■ Leanne Parker looks on as she awaits the demolition of her home

picture: Kathryn Boudet p1995

Will we ever be able to return?

■ Families still waiting to hear if they can go home as bulldozers move in

by Rudolf Richter and
Vicki Kellaway
bromleyextra@thekmgroupp.co.uk

FOUR families were faced with watching their homes be demolished on Tuesday.

A week after a house in Ridley Road collapsed, and as *Bromley Extra* went to press, a decision was being made as to which homes in the Bromley street had to be taken down.

Around 20 families have spent a week living in limbo since the front of number 122 fell into a 20ft hole.

Evacuated from their homes, they have been staying with friends and relatives or in local hotels, waiting to find out if they will ever live in their houses again.

Bulldozers were expected to knock down numbers 120, 122, 124 and 126 on Tuesday, if insurers gave the go-ahead.

Many other residents are anx-

ious about returning until it can be established what caused the sudden collapse in the road.

Ridley Road is understood to have been built on a flood plain but experts won't be able to examine the site closely until any dangerous buildings have been demolished.

■ **Special report on the families from Ridley Road - page 2 & 3.**