

Tolmers site: new plans

WE'LL BUILD the Tolmers Offices ourselves, say Camden Council in plans for the controversial development site published today.

"But we'll need a Labour Government to stand a good chance of doing it," council leader Frank Dobson warned this week.

The plans which come only weeks after Joe Levy's Stock Conversion property company announced that THEY would go it alone in developing the site, include homes for 1,700 sports facilities, a cinema — and much reduced office development.

The council's plan will be possible if the Labour Government's proposals on land development, which will drastically cut the cost of buying the land, give Camden extra powers to buy it off Stock Conversion.

For council's plan in full see next week's JOURNAL.

NEW PLAN

THE saga of Tolmers Square took another new turn this week when Camden unveiled its latest development plans for the controversial site.

The new plan, by far the most radical yet, proposes that the council should buy up the whole 11.2 acre site, including the commercial Euston Road frontage and large sections owned by Mr Joe Levy's Stock Conversion and Investment Trust.

The council's Community Planning and Resources Committee in secret session on Monday, approved Compulsory Purchase Orders for the land, including a triangle site bounded by Hampstead Road, Euston Road, and North Gower Street previously excluded from consideration.

But Councillor Frank Dobson, leader of the council, said this new radicalism rested heavily on the White Paper on nationalisation of development land becoming law.

The new scheme envisages more rehabilitation of housing to provide 130 units, an overall increase in the housing to accommodate more than 2,200 people and office content cut drastically to 85,000 square feet.

The council will justify its bid for the Euston Road frontage by providing housing within the office content there and buildings on the northern and eastern side of Tolmers Square itself and in Gower and Drummond Streets will be retained to meet criticisms that the character of the area would be destroyed by massive re-development.

"Last year we decided not to go through with the re-development of Tolmers Square with Stock Conversion because we believed the time was at last turning against the developers and in favour of councils as representatives of local communities," Mr Dobson said in a press statement.

"The council's main objective for the area has always been to provide a massive amount of decent housing for people who really need a home in the area. The main obstacle was the immense cost of the land.

"Now things have changed. The Government has moved to redress the balance of advantage towards the council both in recent planning decisions and in the White Paper on land.

"The chances of going through with this scheme will be poor unless the present Government is returned at the general election."

The proposals would reduce the price dramatically by allowing Camden to buy at existing use values (some of the most expensive sites on current market values would be classed as derelict) thwarting any chance the Stock Conversion would make a huge profit out of the council take-over.

The council development would include a hostel for 85 people and an old people's home for 40. Landscaping includes extensive open spaces, restoration of the small street in the area as lightly trafficked lanes and encouragement of a street market in Drummond Street, with nearby supermarket and community and sports centre.

But Stock Conversion revealed at its annual meeting last month that it, too, has a plan for its Tolmers Square properties, involving extensive rehabilitation. It may be for the next Government to decide which plan becomes