

Would-be developers of square claim conscience

By HOWARD HANNAH

COFFEE and question time at Joe Levy's Stock Conversion headquarters in Jermyn Street seemed to be a landmark for Tolmers Village Residents' Association on Friday — but by this week it had all turned sour.

The meeting between Mr Levy, Stock Conversion

'I build boys' clubs' Joe Levy tells residents

chairman Mr Robert Clark and the TVA's chairman John Stansfield and Rachel Syers was amicable enough, with hard questions getting answers at least.

Key questions from the TVA included two about the possibilities of a community centre in the disused bank at the corner of

the square and an open space in the centre.

Yes of course it was possible, said Mr Clark, subject to certain conditions to prevent their scheme for the square being prejudiced.

Camden Council, who Stock Conversion still regard as being their ultimate partners, albeit reluctant

partners, would have to agree with them to a licence for the bank to be used as a community centre.

Would the TVA be consulted if Stock Conversion were allowed to go ahead with their scheme? Of course, came the answer, but there were no undertakings beyond the normal consultation required for any scheme under the planning laws.

Would Stock Conversion take steps to conserve the socio economic structure of the area — in other words would the same sort of people and businesses be able to stay on there after their scheme? The socio economic structure would be preserved, came the assurance.

Why had the homes in the

area been allowed to fall into ruin and left empty

To this one, Mr Clark replied that Camden Council prior to their final disenchantment with Stock Conversion, had asked them not to repair or let out the homes. He stressed that his company had never authorised the smashing up of property owned by them.

Meanwhile, in a bid to redress the balance in the light of adverse publicity they have received and, they claim, "misrepresentation" of their plans, Mr Clark and Mr Levy made a number of remarks.

"At the end of the day," said Mr Clark, according to the TVA, "you'll find Stock Conversion has a social conscience."

"I am socially committed,"

Mr Levy is reported as having said. "I'm building boys' clubs up and down London."

And Mr Clark added that Camden's delay on Tolmers Square had cost the ratepayer some £6 million to date.

Camden Council leader Frank Dobson's attitude to Stock Conversion's reassurances, answers, and claims was that they were largely "irrelevant".

"We intend to carry out our own scheme now, and all we have to be sure about is that we do nothing to prejudice our position for acquiring the property."

Councillor Dobson added that with Labour's Land proposals made law, Stock Conversion's plans were largely academic.

Tolmers hopes dashed — 'no' to community centre

HOPES FOR a community centre and open space for Tolmers Square were dashed this week — only days after an "amicable" agreement between the local tenants association and Joe Levy's Stock Conversion.

On Friday, at a meeting

of Mr Levy and Stock Conversion chairman, Mr Robert Clark with Tolmers Village Association chairman John Stansfield and co-ordinator, Rachel Syers, Stock Conversion agreed that the disused bank at the corner of the Square could be used as a

community centre, and the cleared site of the old cinema as an open space.

But on Tuesday came a letter from Mr Clark — with a sting in its tail. As a P.S. Mr Clark said his board had decided to reject the recommendations because the TVA had squatted a house in Drummond Street in breach of an agreement.

Rachel Syers said: "It is nonsense to suggest that the TVA squatted the house."

"In any case there was no such agreement about squatting. I can only conclude they had no intention of co-operating at all. And that is a tragedy — because we need a community centre."

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