

TOLMERS NEWS Oct 77

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Council postpone decision

The campaign to save Tolmers Square has made a significant success in persuading the Council to think again about its application for outline planning permission for 300,000 square feet of offices.

The application was to have been discussed at last weeks Development Control sub committee. However copies of our objections to the scheme were circulated to all councillors a few days before the committee was to meet. The objections appear to have had some impact on several Labour councillors who are increasingly uneasy about the council's scheme. Councillor John Lipetz, chairman of the committee told us that he found the objections an

'interesting read' and promised to keep us in touch with future developments. He has now asked the Council's officers to produce more information about the scheme to see if it would be financially possible to do it with less offices.

He was quoted in the Camden Journal as saying "So far we have looked at the scheme in purely financial terms. I feel the Council should now look at it in planning and political terms."

This is encouraging news and makes it plain that this is the time to press our views as strongly as possible throughout the Camden community.

We are also particularly pleased at the support given to us by the Camden Trades Council, who wrote to the Council objecting to the scheme. In addition Kings Cross Community Association, Ridgemount Gardens Residents Association and the St Pancras Labour Party have all shown interest in our campaign. We intend to build upon these contacts and would welcome anyone wishing to help.

We will obviously be living here for a while yet (two years at least) and the more people become involved in the area (in the campaigns or just in making it a nicer place to live) the greater will be our chances of success.

NO TO OFFICES

As everyone probably knows by now Camden Council applied for planning permission last month to build 300,000 square feet of offices on the Tolmers site (bounded by Euston Road, Hampstead Road, Drummond Street and North Gower Street). Here we print a summary of the objections to the proposals which the Tolmers Village Action Group sent to the Council (signed by 72 residents of the area.)

When buying out the developers (Stock Conversion) in 1975 the leader of the Council Frank Dobson declared 'We believe we can do the scheme with fewer offices and more housing than proposed by the developers, and gain the advantage of owning the property'. Yet now the Council proposes to build 50,000 square feet more offices than Stock Conversion. The change in attitude is clear from a quote from the Council Minutes of 20 July 77: 'We consider that, in the present market conditions, it will be necessary to grant a planning consent for the full 300,000 square feet gross of offices accommodation to afford the Council the opportunity of

recouping the major part of the land and interest charges applicable to the commercial development and adjacent sites. The recouping of its money is seen to be its primary objective and other social and environmental considerations are to take second place. In the same way as a speculative developer the Council is intent on building as much as it can of the most profitable form of development regardless of social need.

It is precisely this narrow minded attitude towards development in the past which has led to the social and environmental problems of our cities today.

We believe the Council's development should be based on a different set of criteria founded on social need, thus serving the purpose of bringing land into public ownership. We would like to see the present housing in Tolmers Square and Drummond Street rehabilitated, new housing built in North Gower Street where Avis now is, and a diverse mix of new facilities such as workshops, studios, light industry, small offices,

a cinema, laundrette, surgery and open space on the remainder of the site.

We object to Camden's current application because:

- 1) 300,000 square feet of offices will dominate the site to the exclusion of other uses;
- 2) Offices do not provide the kind of jobs for those people in Camden who need them most;
- 3) There is already at least 500,000 square feet of empty office space along the Euston Road.
- 4) The rehabilitation of Tolmers Square would house more people with higher space standards for comparable if not less cost than a new development;
- 5) The building of offices on this site is contrary to the Borough plan and represents a breach of faith with the people of Camden who have for many years indicated their opposition to this kind of development.

Anyone who would like to see the objections in detail should ask at 12 Tolmers Square or come to a TVAG meeting (mondays at 8.30)

GOWER HOUSE ?

Gower House is now due to be evicted any day and just to remind people how grossly inept the council are at handling rehabilitation a little history should be told.

This time last year tenants were being moved out and the council said they would be starting rehabilitation work by christmas. To make their point they smashed up toilets and pipework in the flats to deter squatters. (fortunately this is not enough to deter squatters). Ever since then they have always claimed they would be starting work in two months time. In July they obtained possession orders against the squatters but said the squatters could stay until mid september. It is now the beginning of October and there is no indication that the council will be starting work before this christmas, if then.

If this record is anything to go by we could still be living in the Square in the year 2,000

PS Squatters were told they had to leave 221 to 229 North Gower Street last christmas and they did so believing the builders were ready to start rehabilitation. The houses were left empty and rotting until August when work finally started.

The motto

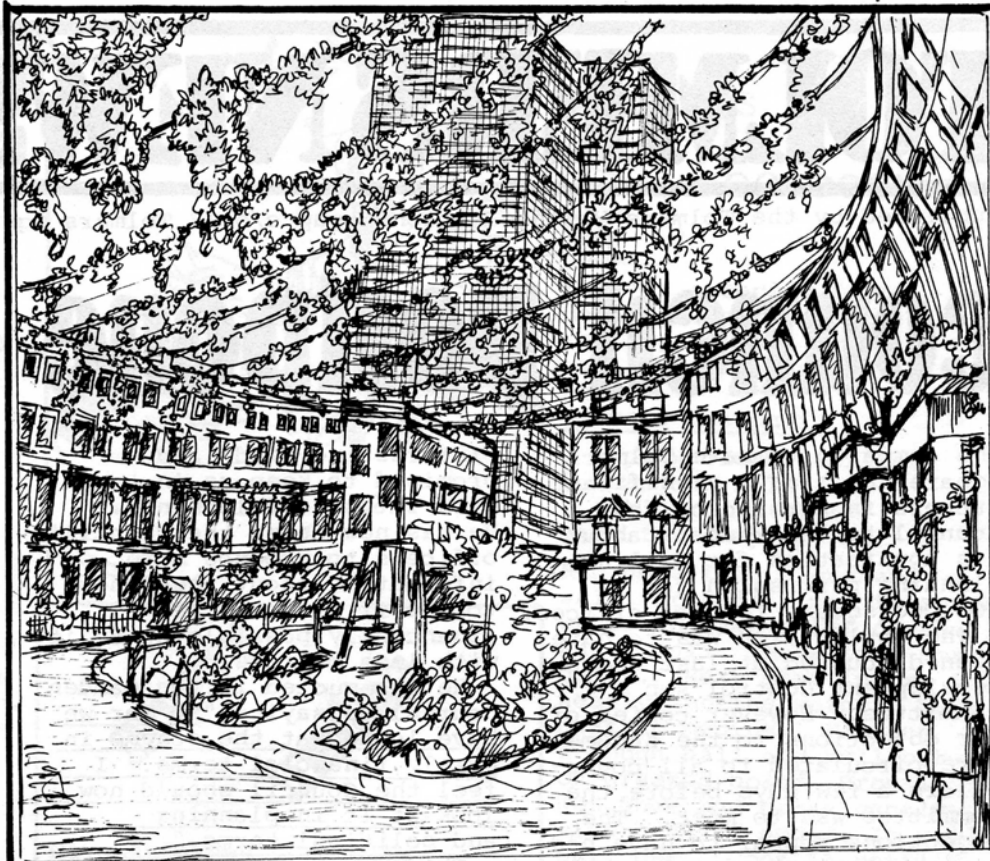
The lesson is: Don't move u until the builder himself tells you that he is ready to start.

moving

Dennys, the butcher and grocer in Hampstead Road, is to move in a month or two. But do not despair because they are moving into Drummond Street, next to Diwana where Vines used to be.

We are having a celebration on November 5th for everyone in the Tolmers area. There will be a bonfire in the Square so if you're having a clear out, keep any wood for the fire. (think how long you've been longing to clear all the junk out of the back yard.) Anyone who would like to help preparing refreshments, music or in any other way get in touch with the gorgeous Corinne at 12 Tolmers Square. Bring fireworks on the night.

bonfire night



the greening of tolmers

Every year when summer comes around again how many of us look at the flourishing gardens and window boxes scattered throughout the inner city and feel some regret at not having put more effort into 'the greening of Tomers Square'.

Without too much effort, bomb sites and wasteland have been turned into gardens from which the community at large can benefit.

The garden in Tomers Square has been a great asset to us all and has helped improve the image of the area in everyone's eyes.

How much better it would be if next year the square could be a riot of colour - flower boxes in every window, russian vine creeping over all the balconies and up the porch columns, and flowering shrubs in place of odd paving slabs to give the pavement a new dimension.

We should increase the planting in the garden and replace the dead trees preferably with flowering fruit trees

Winter is coming on now and the months ahead are the time to begin this great project.

Russian vine, daffodil bulbs, geraniums, hyacinths and many other suitable plants and cuttings can be obtained from local garden stores - there is one in Goodge Sf. called W. Sugar, opposite Tesco's and there is a branch of Chivers by Warren St. station.

A trip to the new Covent Garden market could be organised, also friends and relatives can be a good source of plant cuttings.

For any gardening advice please come to the Tolmers Village Action Group meetings on Mondays at 8.30 pm.

Public Inquiry into the Borough Plan

Camdens Borough Plan will be subject to the statutory Public Inquiry beginning November 15. The TVAG has lodged its objections and will supplement these with a short written statement. If you're interest, it will be held at 10.30 in the Council Chamber Town Hall, Euston Road.



Basements

After our great efforts in the spring to clear and paint the basements for use as a Tolmers events place, we somehow let it fall apart over the summer; rubbish piled up and rooms were used (squatted?) as a doss house. So we moaned and groaned and duly exhorted the community to gather again for the muck raking. Well, a few folk did turn up, gas masks a and all, and there is some progress. The area is pretty clean and its much harder to break in. The carpenters have agreed to let us have access through their workshop tho' we still need to build a corridor. We also need to get the water supply and toilet fixed up.

Now for how its going to work. At a Tolmers meeting it was agreed to set up a management group of people who had worked on the place and had definite ideas of using, grooving, and warming it. The group would then have a large measure of independence in sorting out what was to be done, how to keep it clean, what events, shows, parties, games etc could be held. 50 per cent of all monies taken will go to the Tolmers Village Action Group and the other half to improvements and expenses in the basements.

The basement group at the moment includes Barbara, Nick, Phil (all at no.4), Alex and Chiara (no.20), and others who are interested may be co opted

We hope to have a GRAND OPENING (again) in early November. Anyone who wants to put on anything or has any ideas get hold of one of the above people.

DAVE'S POEM

After eating perfectly balanced
food for a few days,
my body parted company with one
so perfect round and strong
and in one piece,
which, in ejection,
travelled so swiftly
(as if on lightly oiled rollers,)
it shot round the bend
quite out of sight
And I could only know 'twas fine
through feeling its ecstatic
exit
and its good earth smell.
Well well

Dave Downstairs

The TVAG also held a press conference in September in an effort to bring the Councils intentions to the public's notice. This was attended by both the local and national press and so far has resulted in articles in the Municipal and Public Services Journal, the Chronicle, Building Design, Architects Journal and the Hampstead and Highgate Express as well as an interview on LBC.

A petition has also been drafted objecting to the office development and this can be signed in Tolmers Shop.



At the press conference recently held by the TVAG it was evident that we did not have enough basic information on the Tolmers Area - such as how many people were still living in the area, hoped to stay, the condition and facilities of the houses etc.

A questionnaire has been prepared which we hope each house will complete. This information will be useful in our campaign to get the square rehabilitated and everyone rehoused, so we will be grateful for your co-operation.

The Council last month received listed building consent to demolish two of the best georgian houses in the area; 239 and 241 North Gower Street. An architect from Renton Howard Wood Levin said they were 'irelevant'

CRASH

HOUNSLOW

On Thursday night, October 6th, private ambulance men hired by Hammer-smith, Hounslow and Ealing Area Health Authority under a police guard, evicted 21 elderly patients from Hounslow hospital, leaving behind them a scene of total wreckage.

The patients, some in their 90's, were confused and had to leave their possessions behind as they were moved to the West Middlesex hospital. Beds were dismantled; bed linen, half eaten food and used urine bottles were strewn across the floor; and some patients' case records had been idly left around.

The eviction took place despite the fact that the hospital had been assured that no immediate action would be taken to close it down.

These hospitals will press their Unions for a National Strike whilst the staff at the Hounslow will continue their occupation in an attempt to reverse the Area Health Authority's decision. Other hospitals in the area are demanding strike action on October 12th until ALL hospital closures are halted.

The eviction of Hounslow hospital, unprecedented in NHS history, indicates the likely future pattern if the Criminal Trespass Law is allowed to be implemented.

Under the Law, occupations of workplaces, institutions and houses will be made a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment.

Even in our own area there is the EGA hospital, potentially the National Temperance hospital as well as many squatters who are threatened by this Law. We must not allow the unique facilities or any of the jobs provided by the EGA hospital to be lost. Such support must be strengthened and consolidated, and we must continue to fight together. Resistance and unity are the weapons with which to prevent such evictions as Hounslow.

shops to go?

Over the last decade we have seen the continuous destruction of the inner London communities. Small businesses, housing, open space, our 'locals' have all been destroyed. In their place have been built high rise office blocks. While we have heard lots of good speeches from Camden's supposedly 'labour' Council, they too are using Tolmers in the speculators monopoly game. Tolmers is a resource that belongs to the people of Camden - we will not let it become profit for financiers.

The Council has 'talked' about keeping the 'character' of the area. Councillors and officials have, on many occasions, stated that they will keep all the shops and other businesses in the area. Now the Council's sincerity looks like being trashed, yet again, with some of the shops.

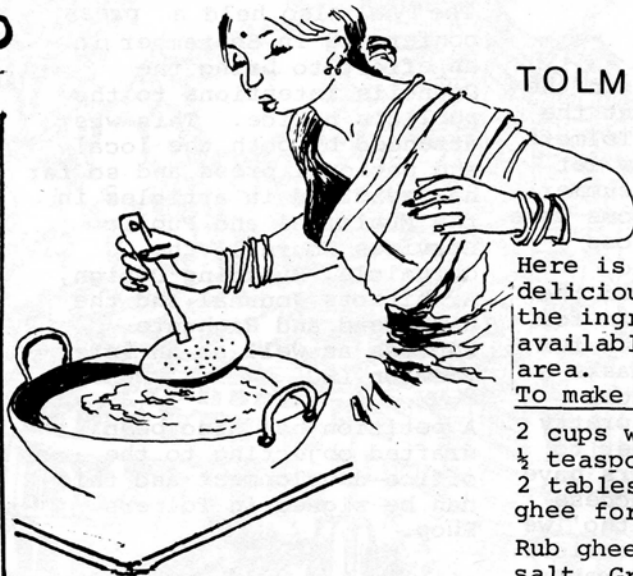
The number of shops in the area is being reduced. While most of them have been offered alternative premises, the new shops and those that are being re-habbed are smaller than many of those that are being demolished and the Council is charging more rent for them. Several of the shops in the area are family businesses and live above the shop. This means that they can run the shop, keep an eye on the kids and the house at the same time. The Council doesn't see this as important and are not guaranteeing that the families can live above the new shops. This will make it impossible for some of them to continue.

Its not on! All the shops must stay where they are or be given suitable alternatives. This means the same amount of space, housing above the shop and the same rents and rates - otherwise they'll go out of business.

The Shah Restaurant, Lawrence Corner, the 'Him & Her' and the CHA Club are all remaining untouched - there is no reason why the Palmeston, Shanes, Shah, the Rendevous, Nelam and 155 shouldn't be kept either. They say that the row has to come down for road widening. The other side of Hampstead Rd has extra wide pavements - why not use that.

ITS ABOUT TIME THAT THE PLANNING COMMITTEE STOPPED TO THINK AGAIN. THIS TIME THEY SHOULD COME TO TALK TO THE PEOPLE IN THE AREA TO FIND OUT WHAT WE WANT.

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TOLMERS

COOKBOOK

Here is a recipe for delicious potato puri; the ingredients are all available from shops in the area.

To make the puris

2 cups wholewheat flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons ghee
 ghee for deep frying

Rub ghee into flour add salt. Gradually mix in enough water to make stiff dough. Knead well. Make into small balls. Heat ghee in pan to nearly smoking point. Turn heat to medium. Flatten a dough ball and roll out on greased board. Drop it in hot ghee and press gently with back of spoon. It will puff out. Cook it until golden then turn and fry the other side.

1 cup yoghurt, 24 puris, 6 boiled potatoes (chopped), salt, paprika of chilli powder, hot chutney (see below), cumin powder, chopped coriander leaves.

Beat yoghurt. Make hole in puris and stuff with potatoes sprinkle with salt and paprika and hot chutney. Pour yoghurt on top and some sweet chutney. Sprinkle with cumin powder and coriander leaves. Serve while puris are still crisp.

Hot chutney: grind together ½ cup fresh conander leaves, 2 green chillies, 1 teaspoon chopped ginger, 1 clove garlic salt. To make past, add water if necessary.

Sweet chutney: grind together to form a paste: 1 cup stoned dates, juice and pulp of lemon, salt.

News Notes

Covent Garden Community

Theatre, who had such a good reception at this year's Tolmers Carnical, have just brought out a new play called "up for grabs".

It will be shown at many local venues over the next month some of which are listed below and is well worth a visit

Wed 12 Oct 1pm Shaw Theatre Foyer, Euston Road.

Wed 12 Oct 8.30pm, Two Brewers 40 Monmouth St WC2

Sat 15 Oct 9pm, Princess Louise 208 High Holborn

Sat 22 Oct 7.30pm Fitsrovia Neighbourhood Centre, 39 Tottenham St W1

Sun 30 Oct 5pm Drill Hall Chenies Street, WC1

TVAG meetings

Tolmers Village Action Group meetings are held every Monday at 8.30 pm. The local location varies but notices are normally posted on doors in the area. If you have an issue to raise or are just interested then come along.

ALL WELCOME
 contact address: 12 Tolmers Sq
 TOLMERS NEWS

WANTED: Your letters, articles, cartoons, graphics, poems, advertisments, editorial a graphic skills etc etc. The Tolmers News is edited typed and laid out by different people each issue. If you would like to have a go at it drop a note in to no 12 Tolmers Square or come to a meeting (mondays 8.30)

CACTL

The Campaign Against the Criminal Trespass Law (CACTL) is holding National Conference at Digbeth Ci Hall, Birmingham, on Nov 26th and 27th. For further information please contact:

CACTL, o/o 35 Wellington St., W6

contributions to this Tolmers News from Nick, Phil, Lynne (4.T.S) Dave (18 T.S) Corunne (12 T.S) Caroline & Mick (10 T.S) Moni (17 T.S) and Allan (155 Drummond St)