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# Tolmers loses appeal

THE pioneering profits-for-the-people scheme to redevelop the Tolmers Square area, Euston, is beginning to lose some of the political attraction it had for Camden Council's ruling Labour group.

The news that the Department of the Environment had granted Camden an office development permit for 300,000 square feet of offices on the site brought not acclaim but bitter criticism at the Community Planning and Resources Committee's meeting last Thursday.

When the council decided to wrest control of the area from Mr Joe Levy's Stock Conversion and Investment Trust, one of its boasts was that it would not have to embark on any massive office building.

With the removal of capitalism's profit motive, only sufficient offices would have to be built to subsidise the rehabilitation and redevelopment of housing on the rest of the site, Camden claimed.

But the 300,000 square feet represents far more offices than the much-maligned Mr Levy ever sought to put on the land, although it is the amount Camden says is necessary to subsidise the £4,000,000 the council paid for Stock Conversion's interest in the site.

Councillor Ivor Walker, who has strongly defended Camden's original plan to develop the area in partnership with Stock Conversion, bitterly criticised this latest turn.

"Those people who voted against the original proposals should stand up and take

the blame for their actions," he said. "A lot of people have an awful lot to answer for."

He added acidly of the two journalists who spear-headed the campaign against the Levy deal: "Perhaps we should ask Booker and Gray to come back and ask their merchant bank, which is now in liquidation, to come in."

He pointed out that the housing, now in its final planning stages, would have been built under the original deal.

Cllr John Mills, the committee chairman and council deputy leader, said he had some sympathy for Mr Walker's comments. "I hope we won't have to put up 300,000 square feet of offices," he added. "We have got ourselves into a bit of a mess."

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