

Square Decision



Tolmer Cinema under the axe.

As predicted in last week's 'Time Out', Camden Council has voted to go ahead with the Stock Conversion plan for the Tolmers Square site. The main reason given was 'the Council's desperate need for housing, which counter-balanced the possible financial advantages of the Claudius proposals'.

The Council also argued it was 'unlikely that the Secretary of State would confirm the CPO on the Stock Conversion property, in which case the Claudius proposal would fall through leaving the Council with no housing land and in no position to bargain again with Stock Conversion. The Stock Conversion deal, on the other hand, seemed likely (but not certain) to secure the approval of the Secretary of State. With 11,000 people on the Council's housing list, with homelessness increasing and with a desperate shortage of housing land, it was decided to go for the alternative which seemed most likely to provide homes for about 1,500 people.'

The argument over the housing land is clearly guaranteed to obtain maximum sympathy from people in the borough. Council leader Frank Dobson, commenting

on the subsequent writ served by a local ratepayer to stop the deal going ahead, said: 'I think we have done our duty to help house the worst off members of the community. Nobody else even tries'.

What his statement ignores, however, is the fact that Stock Conversion will still emerge from the episode with an enormous profit. The Council, meanwhile, is proposing 'to investigate the possibility of applying the Claudius scheme to other sites where the chances of success are greater'.

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