

3 OCT 73  
EV. STAN

# Camden replies

CAMDEN COUNCIL earns its progressive reputation because its first priority is to provide the best possible service to local people. It provides homes directly for more than 21,000 people and seeks to protect other residents by bringing as much as possible of the rented housing in the borough into public ownership.

It were recently described by the Investors' Review as probably the toughest Central London borough. If we are to provide homes in the central area for people in housing need, deals with the present owners of the land are inevitable.

We have recently obtained an almost tenfold increase in housing on the Gamages site and another favourable deal in Gray's Inn Road.

Having already had one compulsory purchase order in Tolmers Square turned down by the Minister, we were forced into a deal with Stock Conversion if we wished to get council-owned housing in the area.

## Unhappy

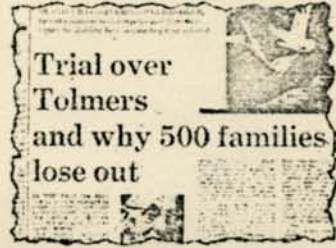
The choice was crude and cruel: do a deal or do nothing. The deal would give Camden the housing land at a price subsidised by Stock Conversion and they would be permitted to build an office block on Euston Road. No one has ever been happy about the terms but they were the best obtainable after years' negotiations.

The alternative Claudius Properties proposals depend for their success on the compulsory purchase of Stock Conversion's holdings in the area—compulsory purchase orders are unpopular with Tory Ministers and are frequently turned down.

Almost a year ago Camden put a CPO on the 36 empty flats at Centre Point. The Department of the Environment have just announced a public inquiry.

Recently, another Camden CPO on Lissenden Mansions was turned down without even a public inquiry. We are now challenging that decision in the High Court.

When we consulted the department about Tolmers Square their response was unhelpful and the Secretary of State refused to meet a delegation. From



From last night's Standard

by Frank Dobson  
Leader of Camden Council

bitter experience the chances of him confirming this CPO seem very poor and I have yet to meet any informed person—including supporters of Claudius—who disagree.

If the CPO were turned down, Stock Conversion would still be there and our negotiating position would be totally undermined. We could easily lose the whole of the housing.

The deal with Stock Conversion, objectionable as it is, seems likely to put the housing within our grasp within the foreseeable future.

Camden have never claimed that the housing site would be all housing gain. Anyone familiar with redevelopment or rehabilitation in Central London knows that they usually result in housing loss. In Tolmers Square there would certainly be a gain although the size of the gain is doubted by the Claudius campaigners.

I do not know how Booker and Gray arrived at their figures but the census figure for 1971 showed 463 people living in private households in the area covered by the deal.

Whatever the figure, the present residents would become the responsibility of the council and be rid of their private landlords. The remainder of the housing would be for people in housing need. To do anything other than go with Stock Conversion would seriously risk the housing prospects of several hundred people. Some of my colleagues think the risk worth while, others do not.

It is not a matter of principle. The principle for which we all fight is public ownership of such land. Until that comes, deals with developers will be inevitable if we are to house people in the central area.

Handwritten scribbles and a large 'M' on the right margin.