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Camden rebuffs builders

By our own Reporter

Camden Council last night withdrew support for two property development schemes which had been recommended for support by council committees.

The council voted not to adopt Mr Joe Levy's Stock Conversion scheme for Tolmers Square, and also withdrew the report on Pamlion Properties' plan to build 60 houses in the grounds of Witanhurst, the mansion which overlooks Hampstead Heath.

Mr Frank Dobson, leader of the council, recommending that the council would not support the Stock Conversion plan, said that he hoped that some way could be found of redressing the balance between local authorities and developers. A deputation from Camden, led by two local MPs, Mrs Lena Jeger and Mr Jock Stallard, are proposing to press the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Geoffrey Rippon, for a compulsory purchase order on property owned by Mr Joe Levy in the Tolmers Square area.

Mr Bennie Gray, who with Mr Christopher Booker offered through their Claudius Properties company to redevelop the Tolmers Square site but hand back the capital gains to Camden, said that he was delighted by the council decision.

The council also decided not to agree to the planning committee's decision to support the Pamlion plan to build houses in the grounds of Witanhurst. It was felt that the plan was not in keeping with the aim of retaining the Heath as open space.

The Pamlion scheme involved building 60 houses, of which 20 would have been visible from Hampstead Heath. The company can now lodge an appeal to the Secretary of the Environment against the council decision, or submit a new plan which would not involve where this could be seen from the Heath.