

## Funeral of Mrs Gavin

Hundreds of residents on the Regents Park estate are expected to join St Pancras North MP Mr Jock Stallard and representatives from Trade Union, Co-operative and Old Age Pensioners' organisations this afternoon for the funeral of murder victim Mrs Rosina Gavin.

The 62-year-old mother of seven, known throughout Camden for her efforts to improve social conditions, was discovered dead at her flat in Cumberland Market just before Easter. Police are still hunting her killer.

HAM & HIGH 8.6.73

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# Council cautious over Tolmers Square offer

AN URGENT meeting will take place on Monday afternoon between Camden Council and two journalists whose "profits to the people" offer to redevelop Tolmers Square, Euston, has disrupted the closing stages of negotiations with a major property company.

The journalists, Christopher Booker and Bennie Gray, have claimed that the £20 million profit which Mr Joe Levy's Stock Conversion and Investment Trust stand to make on the deal, is excessive. On Friday they told Camden they had raised more than £20 million to do the development themselves, and they would hand over all profits to the local community.

Unaccustomed to such generosity on the part of would-be developers, council leaders have reacted with extreme caution.

The Town Clerk, Mr Brian Wilson, has written to Stock Conversion, with whom preliminary agreements were due to be signed in a few

weeks, to tell them that an alternative proposal has been received, but official comment is not going much further at present.

"We are seriously considering the new offer but it is going to take a lot of investigation before we can make a judgment," said Councillor Frank Dobson, the new leader of the council.

"We must verify the commitment of their various backers and we must look further into their calculations of the potential profits on the scheme.

"From the viewpoint of the people who need the houses we are going to build here, this is a very important matter. It is not a casual thing to be despatched in a couple of days.

"At this stage I have to look at it with a jaundiced eye if only because I was not brought up to believe in Father Christmas."

Alderman Alan Greengross, deputy leader of the minority Tory group, who himself spent many months in negotiations with Stock Conversion when Tolmers Square was first discussed in

1965, said the new scheme was "straight municipalisation which ignores the serious problems of urban development that have to be tackled.

"I don't believe we would get compulsory purchase powers to do this, but anyway it is a half-baked idea which just puts off the evil day when we come to grips with the private sector and decide how much we give back to the community from developments like this.

"Instead of taking a punitive attitude to a developer who makes a large profit we should make good and sure we get a fair share of that profit for the community.

"I believe we can still sew up the agreement with Stock Conversion in such a way that Camden takes a real share in the profitability of the commercial development.

Mr Gray told the Ham and High on Monday: "We are absolutely serious in this. It may be unconventional but it is certainly no wheeze. Our financial backing is entirely solid, entirely serious.

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## Tolmers Square deal

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"The profit from a commercial development of this size is so large that it provides cast-iron security."

The notion that their scheme constituted a form of municipalisation was absurd, he said.

"We are acting in the purest entrepreneurial tradition, basing all our proposals on the profitability of the scheme but also saying that the profits will go to Camden.

"If Mr Greengross regards this as municipalisation he would presumably criticise Mr Levy in the same way for the charitable contributions he makes from his profits."

Mr Booker, who like Mr Gray lives in Camden, said they had decided to act in this particular case because the profit margins involved were so spectacular.

"What we are doing is symptomatic of a much wider process all over the country where it is being realised that for the past 15 years developers have been getting away with amazing profits in schemes only made possible because local councils have bent over backwards to be helpful.

"We are simply demonstrating that in deals of this kind, where the value of a developer's holdings is directly related to the planning permissions and zoning ar-

rangements which only the local authority can give, the profits can be channelled back to the community."

On Wednesday Mr Levy told the Ham and High "I have no statement to make on Tolmers Square, nor shall I have one at a later time."

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