

Tolmers Square: We're confident

Ham & High
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WE WERE delighted at the extensive coverage given last week by the Hampstead and Highgate Express to our proposals for the Tolmers Square development, and are grateful for this opportunity to comment briefly on one or two of the points which have been made.

It seemed last week that various of the councillors you quoted had still not had time to examine our offer in detail. We trust they will by now recognise that our proposal is serious, soundly financed, and based upon an expert appraisal of the many complex factors involved.

1. Council leader Frank Dobson says of our offer that "he was not brought up to believe in Father Christmas." It was precisely because we believe that Camden has been acting like "Father Christmas" in making possible a profit approaching £20 million for Mr Levy's company Stock Conversion, that we made our alternative offer.

2. You say that "Stock Conversion is already heavily committed to the success of the scheme," with the implication that Stock Conversion stand to lose heavily on their investment if our offer is accepted. In fact, when in order to proceed with our offer, Stock Conversion are bought out at a present market valuation, they will in any event have made an enormous profit on their landholdings. Camden need feel no guilt at limiting Mr Levy's profit to a few million pounds.

3. The Town Clerk, Mr Wilson, has been reported as saying that "it is doubtful" whether Mr Levy could be bought out by compulsory purchase. Firstly Mr Levy is only one of the many landowners on the site. Any scheme is doubtless going to involve the buying out of owners by compulsory purchase and we are simply proposing that the same treatment be applied to Stock Conversion as that company was proposing for others.

Secondly, and more important, as you quote a Department of the Environment spokesman concerning the likely success of a compulsory purchase application, "the relative benefits of the two schemes to the

the support of compulsory purchase powers.

4. It has been suggested that our scheme would involve considerable delays through "legal battles." In fact there is no reason to assume that the legal process of buying out all the landowners, including Stock Conversion, would take any longer than it would have done under Mr Levy's proposal. To assume otherwise is to accept that Mr Levy's legal rights are more important than those of his fellow property owners in the area.

It is understandable that many people have initially been somewhat surprised by what you describe as the "unorthodox" nature of our offer, and in some cases have been perhaps overhasty to comment before examining the details.

However, we are pleased that the reaction of most councillors and officers has been more considered. We have now embarked on discussions with the council and we are confident that when they are complete, the council will take a decision which we believe to be in the best interests of all who live in Camden.

—CHRISTOPHER
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