

ITAM + HIGH = 25/9/1970

Dispute over red evelopment site

Housing Minister accused

HOUSING MINISTER Mr. Peter Walker was accused of paying "lip service" to the Ministry's own policy of increasing residential accommodation in central London when members of Camden Council discussed the Tolmers Square redevelopment scheme last Thursday.

Mr. Walker has refused to confirm compulsory purchase orders issued by Camden for the site, in St. Pancras. And he has done this without holding a public inquiry to hear objectors to the scheme.

He has told the council that their efforts "could be more usefully concentrated on the other sites under consideration where major gains would result." And the Ministry of Housing now wants to know if Camden still seeks to re-zone the site for residential use.

This attitude was criticised when members of the Planning and Communications Committee discussed the scheme at its first meeting open to the public and Press.

The chairman, Alderman Alan Greengross, said: "We have been in effect told by the Minister that from a cost point of view this is not suitable land for housing—the

implication being there is cheaper land elsewhere. This land is as cheap as we are going to get in Central London. It seems the Minister—while accepting the policy—is not going to do anything about it. I am quite sure the previous Minister as well as the new one would have given the same answer."

Mr. Greengross said the problem was one of "considerable urgency" and argued that if the council kept on submitting individual schemes for residential accommodation in central London, there would be the same reply.

He said the answer was for Camden to examine all the sites where it could re-develop housing in Central London, and the committee decided that this should be done by the planning department.

"I would like to put to the Minister quite simply that these are the only possible schemes," Mr. Greengross added. "You are paying lip service to re-housing in Central London. Which of these are you going to sanction?"

There was also some heavy criticism of the Ministry from Labour Councillor Roy Shaw. "It's more than a refusal to understand our problems—it's an inability. I find it incredible that Ministry officials can write bloody stupid letters like this."

No purchase order on Tolmers Square?

CAMDEN Council may not be able to compulsorily purchase Tolmers Square, Euston, for redevelopment. The council has had a Compulsory Purchase Order served on property in the square refused by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

But the council is to appeal against the decision and ask the Ministry to have another look at their application.

The Ministry feels other areas of Camden, such as Kentish Town, are in more urgent need of redevelopment. N.L. News 25/9/70