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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

So Camden Council's "new style land deal" depends upon a private property developer buying land at £300,000 an acre only to sell it to Camden Council for £200,000 an acre.

Property developers are not normally noted for such altruism and public spirit. So if Alderman Greengross had completely described the deal, it would indeed be a "new departure in central urban planning" and his warm welcome would be appropriate.

However, when the property developer's "gift" of £1.200,000 depends upon Camden Council permitting commercial development on land which should be used for housing, then the deal is simply another manifestation of the fairly old-fashioned practice of making private profits at public expense.

The Tolmers Square site contains some dreadful houses. The people living there, and others in similar conditions, urgently need decent homes.

They must find it thoroughly unwelcome that the council encourage more office blocks to be built to lie empty while families have no home - particularly when the council propose to co-operate with the very property developer who already has empty offices to let in the Tolmers Square site.

If commercial development is permitted on housing land in Tolmers Square, then the property speculators will have the green light to buy into any housing development area, force the land price up, and then "benevolently" offer a "new style land deal" in return for planning permission for commercial development. The land available for housing will be continuously eroded.

As long as national government permits the property speculators to thrive, it will unfortunately be necessary for Camden Council to do business with them.

But I would hope that the next Labour council in Camden will not welcome them, but will control them carefully to ensure the minimum exploitation of the public.

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