

## Tolmers Square about turn

A new controversy seems inevitable over the notorious Tolmers Square development in Camden following the borough's recent application to build 300 000 square feet of office space there.

Local people have fought for almost 20 years to prevent a large office development and, following a particularly intense campaign two years ago, Camden council bought the land from property developers Stock Conversion and Investment Trust. The council claimed at the time that it would carry out the development with only 85 000 square feet of offices instead of the 250 000 proposed by Stock Conversion. Its current proposals, however, contain even more office space than those of the developers.

The local Tolmers Village Action Group has declared its opposition to the new plans. The case will be watched with interest as it was for precisely this kind of site that the Community Land Act was initially drafted but seems to have so miserably failed in action. Camden council claims that at least 300 000 square feet of offices is now required to enable it to recoup the £4 million it spent buying the land from the developers.

## Wave of hope washes around Brighton pier

'We think the prospects for saving Brighton's West Pier are better than they have ever been,' John Lloyd, campaigning secretary of the Brighton West Pier Society, told the AJ last week. Now that the pier is no longer owned by AVP Industries, Brighton council has undertaken to pay for 'emergency repairs' to the north end. AVP, who were, in Lloyd's words, 'hostile to restoration', voluntarily liquidated their 97 per cent owned West Pier Company to avoid paying for necessary repairs; this despite an estimated £4½ million annual profit.

Although there has been pressure on the council to simply knock a hole in the pier and begin demolition which would have cost as little as £2000, it has decided to spend about £10 500 on a proper repair job. Lloyd hopes that this decision may indicate a change of heart on the part of the council which has previously resisted various means of saving the pier.

### International appeal

The West Pier Society (President John Betjeman) now plans to launch an international appeal to raise an initial £1½ million with which to carry out fundamental structural repairs. After these, the society believes that the pier will be an attractive proposition either for a developer, or, preferably, for the council to take on and then lease out. Anybody interested in joining or helping the West Pier Society should contact John Lloyd, 5 Belle Vue Gardens, Brighton, Sussex.



Calmer days ahead for Brighton pier?

## In brief

### Funds for solar research

Solar energy research and development funding is now available from the EEC for photovoltaic conversion, solar coding, photochemistry, photoelectrochemistry, photobiology and photosynthetic production of organic matter. Proposals for research to be carried out up to 30.6.79 should be submitted by 30.9.77. For technical and submission inquiries contact Peter O'Neill, DOE, Room S 10/12, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1 (01-212 8457).

### Development for inner Liverpool

Detailed proposals for the development of Liverpool's inner area are put forward in another inner area study report published by the DOE (*Economic development of the inner area* £2.50). The report includes proposals for raising the skills of the resident workforce and creating conditions under which public and private investment would stimulate new employment.

## Obituaries

### Naum Gabo

Naum Gabo, the constructivist sculptor, died recently in Connecticut aged 87. Born in Bryansk, Russia, the son of an engineer, Gabo abandoned a medical career in Munich to begin work as a sculptor. Returning to Russia in 1917, he and his brother, the painter Antoine Pevsner (who, unlike Gabo, retained the family name) opposed Tatlin's philosophy and in 1920 published the *Realist manifesto* which began 'We deny volume as an expression of space'. Gabo came to England in 1936 and worked in Hampstead where he was in contact with the group which surrounded Henry Moore and Ben Nicholson and which later included Gropius. In 1946 he left for America, becoming an American citizen in 1952, and was for a short time a professor at Harvard Graduate School of Architecture. Shortly before his death, Gabo presented the Tate with a group of sculptures four of which are now on display in the gallery. The maquette for one of these is the bronze fountain (below) which stands outside St Thomas's Hospital, London.



### John Barker

Bedfordshire county architect, John Barker, died on August 12. He had been county architect for 17 years and before joining Bedfordshire he had worked in Stevenage, Coventry and Buckinghamshire.

## The AJ

Due to a mechanical breakdown at our printers, most of last week's copies of the AJ were despatched late. Sorry.