

14 Sept 77

## New plan for Tolmers Square

If Camden Council insists on building an office block at Tolmers Square, it should build it over the Euston Road underpass, says the Tolmers Village Action Group in formal objections to the council's application to build 300 000 square feet of offices on the site (AJ 31.8.77 p383). The action group wants to see Tolmers Square itself rehabilitated, and the surrounding area developed with a mix of uses including 'housing, craft workshops and studios, shops, restaurants, pubs, small scale offices, light industry, cinema, launderette, surgery and open space'.

### 'A bit far-fetched'

The group is opposed to offices because it claims 500 000 square feet of offices on the Euston Road are already empty. But if the council is determined to build offices (in order to recoup the money it spent buying the land) they should be built over the underpass on land which is already in public ownership. A spokesman for Renton Howard Wood Levin who are consultant architects to the council for the scheme said he thought it was 'an interesting idea' but 'a bit far-fetched'. 'Anything is possible', he added, 'but whether it is feasible or not I don't know.'



Plenty of room for an office block on top of the underpass. The cinema in the centre of Tolmers Square and some other buildings at the bottom of the picture have been demolished since this photo was taken in 1968.)

## Masonry blocks may leak

The GLC has found that most masonry blocks suffer high water permeability. Walls made of such blocks, subjected to moderate wind driven rainfall, could develop severe conditions in the cavity—water runs down the internal face of the outer leaf. An item published in GLC Development and Materials Bulletin 103\* gives guidance on preventing rain penetration of cavity construction. It describes how factors such as the height of work, choice of block, jointing, dpcs, weep holes and clean cavities affect performance. The more important points are:

- Permeability varies greatly according to the manufacturer. Hollow blocks should be avoided as water can be trapped in the voids.
- A 1:1:6 cement:lime:sand mortar should be used with well graded sand. Finished joints should be flush and not recessed.
- Dpcs in parapets, at corners and at the head of jambs of

\*Available from Materials Information Group, Room 169 North Block, County Hall, London SE1 7PB (01-633 7593). Price 75p.

Building Design

16 Sept 1977

# Tolmers Square 'about face' on office development

**THE leader of the London Borough of Camden, Roy Shaw, has angrily dis-counted an accusation that his council have "broken faith with their electorate" in applying for a massive inner-city office development on the controversial Tolmers Square site.**

The accusation was made last week by the Tolmers Village Action Group, a squatter-based organisation which has campaigned for several years to save the square from the developer's bulldozer.

The group proposes that most of the decaying housing should be rehabilitated, and the rest of the site should be redeveloped with industry, housing, open spaces, small-scale offices and social facilities.

But a few weeks ago the Labour council put in an outline planning application to itself for 300 000 sq ft of offices. This, claim the group, was an about-face on the council's pledge to

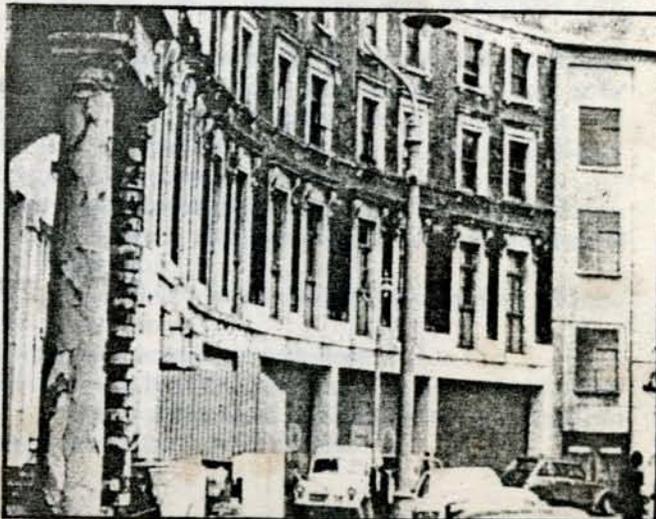
build a more socially orientated scheme.

But Shaw told *BD*: "That's a lot of balls—and you can print that."

There had never been any doubt, he said, that the council would have to build a large office development on the site in order to recoup the £4m it spent when it bought the site two years ago from the property firm Stock Conversion and Investment Trust. An office development permit for 300,000 sq ft was granted in August 1976.

"There has been no decision whatsoever on the amount of office space going on this site," said Shaw. "The planning application was put in purely to maintain the ODP."

The row is now in deadlock. The action group states there are "acres of space" around Euston station which could be developed for offices instead while Shaw says that Tolmers is the only suitable site of its size. The group has now filed a 1,000-word formal objection with the council.



The decaying housing of Tolmers Square