

CAMDEN &amp; St. PANCRAS

# Chronicle



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## HOMES BEFORE OFFICES URGE 'PEOPLE'S PLAN'

**OBJECTORS to Camden Council's scheme for Tolmers Square have come up with an alternative "people's plan."**

The new proposal calls for "planning for need and not profit" and has been drawn up by the Tolmers Square Action Group.

They want the council to throw out their plan for 300,000 square feet of office space on the site between Tolmers Square and Euston Road.

Instead they call for over 100,000 square feet of housing and social facilities, 50,000 square feet of industrial floor-space and only 147,000 square feet of office space.

### TOO MUCH?

But defenders of the council scheme say the alternative proposal will cost too much and return too little capital on very high-priced land.

Basically the "people's plan" seeks

- \* The rehabilitation of Tolmers Square housing.
- \* More community and sports facilities.
- \* Space for medium and small-scale industrial workshops.
- \* Less office space.

Councillor John Mills speaking in defence of the council plan admits that some sort of compromise could be reached over the amount of office space to be built.

"We are concerned with the value of the land, which we have invested heavily in," he maintained.

"Less or smaller office space, rehabilitation of existing old houses, provision of industrial workshops will all mean considerable less return on investment."

The "people's plan" basically wants the rehabilitation of the old houses and shops along Drummond Street and the houses in Tolmers Square.

"There are differences of opinion over the best use of the site, but we all recognise the need for office development," he said.

He admitted: "Suitably adjusted the two plans have the kernel of exciting prospects for the area," he added.

The dispute over Tolmers Square has been going on for a number of years... but recently came to a head when the council decided to build 300,000 square feet of office space with only 55,000 square feet of housing provided, including the demolition of Tolmers Square itself.

The plan aroused considerable local opposition and was also condemned by the Holborn and St. Pancras South Labour Party.

The land was bought for £4 million and the council argue that they have to recoup this outlay and the added £700,000 loan charges.

New multiple housing units should be built on North Gower Street and North Hampstead Road.

### VIABLE

The new block between Tolmers Square and Euston Road should provide a cinema to replace the one demolished in 1973, sports facilities, a large public hall and smaller rooms for social services and activities.

The remainder of the ground floor of this new block could then provide space for small industrial workshops.

Office space could also be built above the workshops and social facilities to a height of five stories.

To improve the area the existing Tolmers garden should be landscaped and other open space and gardens should be considered.

The supporters of this plan argue that it is both economically viable and environmentally attractive.

Already there is considerable difference of opinion within the ruling Labour group of Camden Council on how best to make use of the site.

Councillor John Lipetz, who is reputed to be the leader of Labour councillors unhappy with present council plans, is adamant that there is no serious split within the Labour ranks.

## PEOPLE'S PLAN

THERE must be thousands of square feet of offices unused in the Euston area yet Camden Council plan another 300,000 square feet of office space at Tolmers Square with only 55,000 square feet of housing in its long disputed scheme.

No wonder an irate action group in the area have come up with an alternative "People's Plan."

They want the council to give the town hall idea the elbow and instead allocate the largest slice of the site to housing and social facilities with industrial floorspace and only a mere 147,000 square feet for offices.

The rehabilitation of Tolmers Square housing is also loudly called for in the "People's Plan." That is something we have been campaigning for over the years.

Good news is that some members of the council are already murmuring about a possible compromise. May we expect the council's ruling Labour group to again look at this matter — and the rehabilitation bit — when they meet in about three weeks?