

# HOMES FOR TOLMERS

CAMDEN COUNCIL'S plan to build 300,000 sq. ft. of offices in the Tolmers area was rejected on January 18th by the Labour Party Local Government Committee.

They voted by a narrow majority to adopt instead the plan drawn up by the Tolmers Village Action Group with the help of other Camden tenants and workers.

Perhaps now the Council will take us seriously and agree to our demands for co-operation and effective consultation.

There are 5½ million council tenants in England and Wales who have no real say in how or where they live.

Vital information is withheld or is inaccessible. Important meetings are closed, or when open, the tenants have no vote.

If you scour the Public Notices section of the local papers each week, you may find that technical drawings or plans that really affect your life are being displayed in a little room somewhere in the depths of the Town Hall, and with no one there to translate them into plain English.

*This is what most councils mean when they talk about consultation. And it's our homes, our jobs, and our services that are at stake.*

## SUPPORT

Only one thing will make Camden Council reconsider its position on Tolmers—the tremendous support and encouragement we have received from the labour movement.

As well as massive lobbies in the Labour Party, especially Holborn & St Pancras South, we have received support from the following:

Camden Trades Council  
Camden Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations  
T&GWU 1/524 Branch  
EGA Campaign  
Kingsgate Neighbourhood Association  
Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association  
Camden Square Area Tenants and Residents Association  
Alan Berson of Ridgemount Gardens Residents Association

and now we have received an invitation to speak to Camden Direct Labour Force Joint Shop Stewards Committee—thanks to all for this support.

## DECAY

This united attack on the Council's policies is causing frantic activity within the local Labour Party as elections draw near, and independent Tenants Candidates begin to appear.

Now is the time to mobilise that support and put an end to all such anti-social developments in the borough. If the Labour council wants to retain its majority, it must change course and build what is needed—not what may be the most profitable.

It has been argued that the government's Green Paper, *Housing Policy—A Consultative Document*, by concentrating resources on

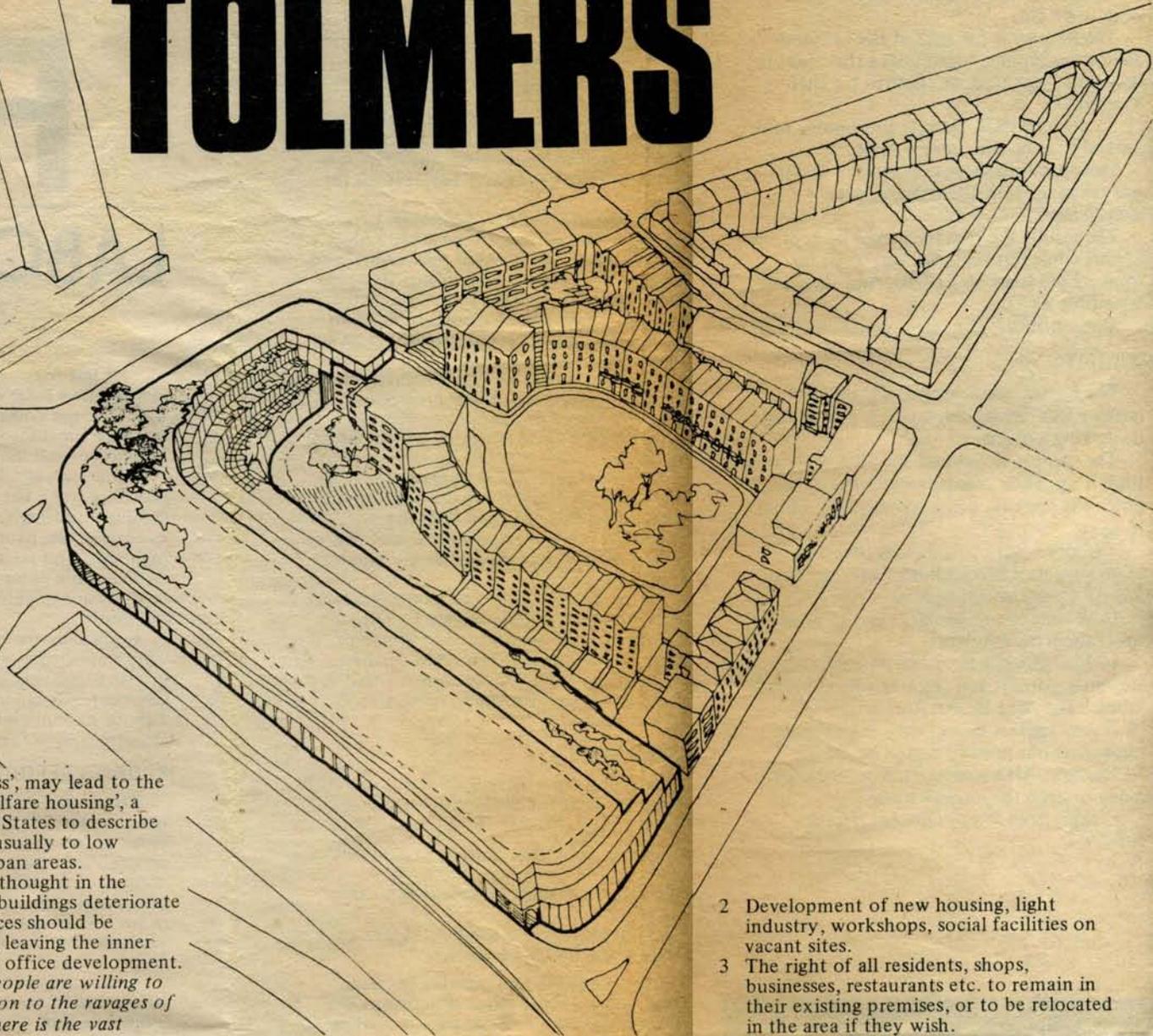
areas of 'need' and 'stress', may lead to the building of so-called 'welfare housing', a term used in the United States to describe high-cost housing built usually to low standards in decayed urban areas.

There is a current of thought in the Labour Party that such buildings deteriorate rapidly, and that resources should be concentrated elsewhere, leaving the inner cities open for yet more office development.

*But even if certain people are willing to relinquish Central London to the ravages of property speculation, there is the vast majority of people who live and want to stay there who have a right to decent housing and must be consulted.*

## NEEDS

The real answer is to take public housing finance right out of the private money market—it is not the job of any council to act as banker/speculator, trying to house the homeless by relying on the booms and slumps of the property market—and to take strong measures to regenerate industry and services to cater for the needs of the people.



- 2 Development of new housing, light industry, workshops, social facilities on vacant sites.
  - 3 The right of all residents, shops, businesses, restaurants etc. to remain in their existing premises, or to be relocated in the area if they wish.
  - 4 That a plan be drawn up for the area, based on social need, by the people who live and work in Tolmers, in conjunction with other residents' and workers' organisations, and with the full co-operation of council architects.
- The plan we have produced is only one example of the possibilities available, and could probably be bettered.

**Does the Council have the courage or conviction to try?**

TVAG, c/o 12 Tolmers Square, NW1.

There is a good case for demanding that funds be allocated directly from central government for providing a socially acceptable development in Tolmers Village.

Tolmers Village Action Group has produced a plan which shows that there is ample scope for a change in policy which will give greater all-round benefits to the people of Camden.

Specifically, we propose:

- 1 Rehabilitation of all existing houses, shops, businesses, and industry where this is possible and necessary.