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NINE HOTELS DEMOLISHED —CLEARANCE PREMATURE SAYS COUNSEL at INQUIRY

COUNSEL for the owner of five houses in Euston Street, N.W.1, on land to be compulsorily acquired by the LCC, accused them at a public inquiry at St. Pancras Town Hall on Tuesday of having no immediate plans for the site.

Mr. John Taylor, counsel for Mr. A. J. Ricketts, said it might be ten years before the council's plans were implemented on the ten-acre comprehensive slum clearance site of which the property subject to the compulsory purchase order was only a small part.

The order made by the LCC on December 12, 1963, was for land "zoned in the Administrative County of London Development Plan for commercial use." However, consideration is being given to the redevelopment of the land for comprehensive mixed housing and commercial development, the LCC stated at the time of the order.

If the order is confirmed 59 families and a total of 148 people will be displaced and rehoused by the council, who state they require the land "in order to safeguard it from piecemeal development, and pending a decision as to the form of redevelopment."

The public inquiry, at which two objectors were present, was in connection with houses in Euston Street, Cobourg Street and Starcross Street, certified by the LCC's medical officer as unfit for human habitation. The most satisfactory method of dealing with the houses, according to the LCC, was to demolish them.

'Spent £800'

The area involved consists of about half an acre and a total of 26, three- and four-storey terrace houses, including a shop, a lodging house, a guest house and two stores which, according to the LCC, have defects including disrepair, dampness and insufficient natural lighting and ventilation, as well as inadequate facilities for the storage and preparation of food.

There were written objections from a number of residents in the houses Nos. 1-26 Starcross Street and from a Mr. A. Hossein and Mr. Kadir as well as from the Ayrshire General Property Co. Ltd., Starcross Street.

district," said Mr. Rackham, who stressed the urgent need for that type of accommodation as at present supplied by Mr. Livermore's lodging houses and hotel in the Euston Street area.

"If the houses are acquired by the council to save the area from piecemeal development as they contend," said Mr. Rackham, "they would be demolished or remain vacant for several years."

He also contested the medical officer's report that the property was unfit for human habitation, and said that the property condemned by the medical officer was, in fact, in reasonable structural repair and that a clearance order for the property was premature and unnecessary.

His client would continue to improve the property, if he remained in possession of it, said Mr. Rackham, who quoted the White Paper preceding the Housing Act of 1961 in Mr. Livermore's favour. In this paper he said the local authorities were authorised to revoke clearance orders and to substitute the improvement of certain types of properties by the owner including the installation of any lacking amenities. This his client was willing to do.

Mr. P. B. Creightmore, counsel for the LCC, called three witnesses, Dr. C. H. H. Robertson, assistant principal medical officer for the LCC; Mr. H. Ridler, inspector in the public health department, and Mr. Charles Edgar Amies, valuation surveyor and principal assistant in the valuer's department of the LCC.

'A miasma' P.T.O.

Accusing the LCC of creating a "miasma" and making a "crab-like entry" on to the

hoped it would be less than five years before the comprehensive plan was completed which would result in a 100 per cent. housing gain.

The comprehensive redevelopment plan covered areas between the Hampstead Road and to the east of Melton Street and took in part of Euston Street, Cobourg Street and Starcross Street, and would be on the lines of the Buchanan Report, said Mr. Amies. It would consist of split-level buildings of two storeys with shops and pedestrian access to them at first-floor level. Certain roads would have to be closed and bridged over at first-floor level as a result.

The development had been retarded by work now being done by London Transport on the new Victoria-Walthamstow line tunnel.

Speaking on behalf of Mr. Ricketts, Mr. P. Maynard Brown, partner of Howard Healey & Co., surveyors, pressed that the inspector consider a clearance order rather than a compulsory purchase order as "more sensible."

For parking

The property could be released after acquisition and demolition and used for parking and storage if the LCC would give permission for such an arrangement for two or three years, said Mr. Brown.

Mr. Taylor accused the LCC of "nebulous planning."

"It isn't right that a public authority should be allowed to do this. The appropriate thing is to have proper inquiries made at the proper time and in the right forum. There is nothing to justify saying that a clearance order is not in order instead of a compulsory purchase order."

Mr. Creightmore, replying for the LCC, said it was quite wrong that the LCC should be regarded as "a dispossessing juggernaut." He said the question was, would the freehold be vested in the LCC or the present owners?

Mr. Creightmore asked that the inspector (Mr. B. R. Matthews), represent the

Theatre site plan rejected

The future of the Bedford Theatre site, Camden High Street, is still undecided. Latest request for conversion turned down by St. Pancras Borough Council came from developers who planned to convert it, together with sites in Arlington Road, into a supermarket and warehouse.

A close shave Plender Street

THE last occupant of property on the Plender Street-Curnock Street site to be developed by the St. Pancras Borough Council as a major housing scheme, was escorted by a barber's shop at No. 16 Plender Street with his family, on Tuesday this week and police.

Mr. Voss Timini, who was given notice last August to leave the premises and had received a number of extensions, was engaged in shaving a customer when the escort arrived.

BUOYANT JOBS POSITION

THE North London unemployment situation is following the London and South-East trend of a reduction in the seasonal increase. Figures released this week show that in the London and South-East region there was a fall of 4,340 in the unemployed compared with October last year. Holloway, King's Cross and Camden Town labour exchanges reported similar falls.

Mr. A. J. Brewer, the manager at Holloway, told the "North London Press" this week: "The extent of the seasonal rise is certainly smaller than usual. We have



All went off a housing company man said Mr. has known to have to move for years, within removal, signed for a new house on Plender Street.

The council, rehousing tenants made a compulsory order for the site on the site in 1962, confirmed by the council in 1962.

Complete

Builders will complete the site early next April, 1967.

The work will be the council's own department under the management of Mr. A. Ulmer.

When complete development will include flats as well as an underground parking garage. Although the