

# TOLMERS NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE TOLMERS VILLAGE ASSOCIATION.

Edited this week by Pedro George and Nick Wates.

## 6 OCT. 1973

## FIRST ISSUE

The TOLMERS NEWS will hopefully be published every two weeks from now onwards. It has two aims. First to keep local people informed about the latest developments of plans affecting our area and second to provide people who live or work in the area with a means to express their views about what is happening. If you would like to write a letter or article for the next issue please bring or send it to : TOLMERS NEWS, 160 North Gower Street.

## THIS IS OUR AREA

THIS AREA WILL BE PULLED DOWN IF PRESENT COUNCIL PLANS GO AHEAD. ONLY A FEW BUILDINGS WILL BE KEPT.



To be retained

This actually means that the buildings will not be pulled down. Buildings to be kept are :

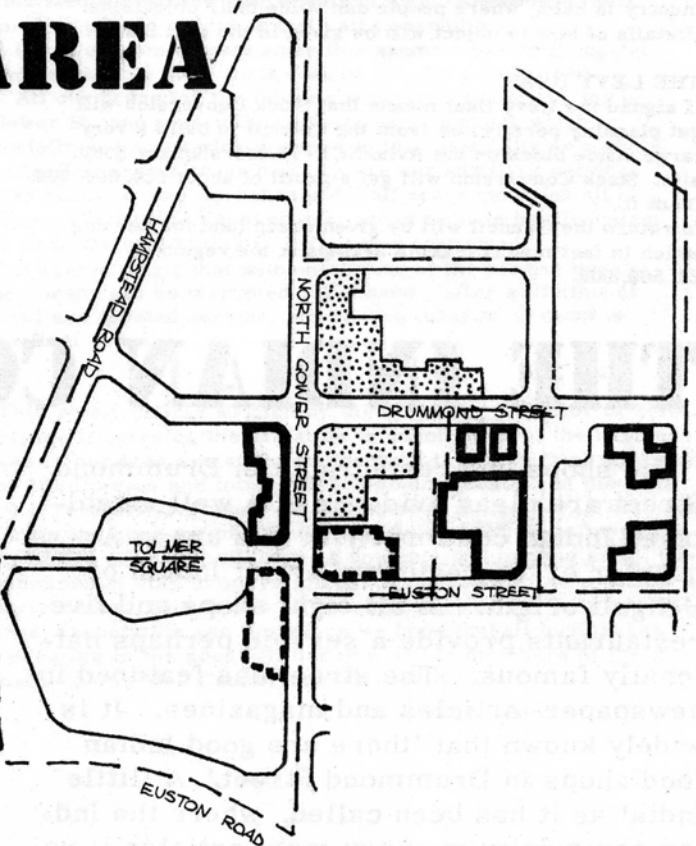
- 183 to 187 North Gower Street.
- 203 to 209 North Gower Street.
- The Cecil Residential Club.
- The Transport and General Workers Union Building.
- The London Transport Sub-station.
- Buildings at the junction between Drummond and Melton Streets.
- Also the Crown and Anchor and the Exmouth Arms Public Houses are to be retained.



Possible Retention

This means that the survey conducted by a firm of architects for the Council recommended that the buildings should be preserved and converted. Buildings in this category are :

- 174 to 188 North Gower St. but excluding numbers 180 and 182.
- 190 to 204 North Gower St.
- 102 to 122 Drummond Street.
- 125 to 135 Drummond Street.



Draft Statutory

This means that the building is considered of some architectural merit and is not likely to be pulled down. It is scheduled for conversion.

- Buildings in these conditions are :
- 174 to 178 North Gower Street.
  - 183 to 191 North Gower Street.

## FOR HOW LONG ?

# EDITORIAL

STATE OF PLAY ON FRIDAY THE 5th OF OCTOBER.

The Council has not signed any deal whatsoever with anyone. The future is still open. On Monday (8th October) there will be a meeting of Camden's Labour Councillors so that they as a group can decide whether to support the Levy Deal or the Claudius Properties Deal. Then on Wednesday (10th of October) at a full Council meeting the final decision will be made.

Whatever they decide there are going to be long legal battles but eventually a deal will be made with either Levy or Claudius.

After that Compulsory Purchase Orders will be served and residents and businesses will be given notice to leave. After this notice is received it is very important that everyone who wants to object does so in order that a Court of Inquiry is held, where people can voice their objections. (Details of how to object will be given in the next issue).

## THE LEVY DEAL.

If signed the Levy Deal means that Stock Conversion will get planning permission from the Council to build a very large office block on the Avis-NCP-TolmersSquare South site. Stock Conversion will get a profit of about £20, 000, 000 from it.

In return the Council will be given cheap land for housing which in fact means making savings in the region of £3, 500, 000.

## THE CLAUDIUS PROPERTIES DEAL.

What Claudius are offering to the Council is a deal whereas the profits from the development of the office block in Euston Road will be given to the Council and at least part of it brought back into the community. That is us!!! Camden would also get the housing land free.

## WHY WE SHOULD OPPOSE THE LEVY DEAL AND SUPPORT THE CLAUDIUS PROPERTIES DEAL.

We should oppose the Levy Deal because if Stock Conversion go ahead with their plans here nothing will stop them doing the same thing to the next area. That happens to be Camden High Street, where we do most of our shopping. . . Stock Conversion have started buying up property there as they did here way back in 1962.

This deal will also mean the destruction of Tolmers Square as we know it.

We should support the Claudius Properties deal because whatever sort of redevelopment is envisaged for our area, if the Council count on the profits from the office development it will be able to provide more and better houses, more and better social facilities, less disturbance during actual redevelopment for the community

There is time still. Nothing is decided yet. The Tolmers Village Association is going to send a representation to the Council meeting on the 10th to put forward our case. It will be stronger if it has behind it the active support of all the people living and working in this area.

DO BECOME A MEMBER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE .

# THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

The shops and restaurants in Drummond Street are clear evidence of a well established Indian community in this area. A quarter of the residents are of Indian or Bengali origin. In all eight shops and five restaurants provide a service perhaps nationally famous. The street has featured in newspaper articles and magazines. It is widely known that 'there are good Indian food shops in Drummond Street.' A 'little India' as it has been called, where the Indian community may buy most articles it requires, not only foodstuffs, but medicines, clothing and utensils.

Such a significant street exists because it provides low rental shops near central London. Most businesses are individual affairs of low income and necessarily low outgoings. Indians first started coming to the street over 20 years ago. Patak's, the first Indian shop established, has developed an international reputation such that it now supports a factory employing over 50 people and exports throughout the world. A move

from this area, forced by redevelopment would severely harm business.

The threat of redevelopment in the near future has limited activity in the street. Shopkeepers are reluctant to spend money on improving or maintaining property. They may no longer import special goods which they cannot be sure of selling.

For the majority of businesses, however, redevelopment will bring higher rents, and with a lack of similar accomodation elsewhere, effectively put an end to trading. It presents a forbidding future they can see no escape from - the break-up and scattering of a close-knit community which has successfully built itself up in the area, which is now home for themselves and their children. In North Gower Street the Muslim community established a religious meeting place some 6 years ago, which serves hundreds of people, both from this area and the rest of London. It has grown, they say from a seed into a tree, and must not now be cut down.

Barry Shaw

# REASONS FOR STAYING

R. G. Cooper, Managing Director of R. & E. Simmonds Ltd.

Having been associated with the neighbourhood for some 80 years, the contemplated Compulsory Purchase Order would literally extinguish a family business known throughout the world as the place which has on offer the largest selection of second-hand goods in London.

All our business is done on personal recommendation and much of it is done verbally. "Our word is our bond" has long been known to our customers as our motto.

We have served over the years more than one hundred con-schools, homes, hospitals, clubs and County Councils with goods unobtainable elsewhere. Our knowledge and experience is such that during the war we were asked to help legislate for the Government on the schedule of furniture; we gladly did this with Captain Waterhouse.

Our film and television (theatre) hire service expands every year but now we are faced with this dreadful end to our business.

We know the effects of a C. P. O. from past experience. Although it only meant moving our business a mere 150 yards (from 242 Euston Road) it took us seven years to re-build trade to its previous level. Now that we are back on the right road and looking forward to handing on the business to our sons and daughters, this terrible blow occurs.

At great expense we re-built 180 N. Gower St. to accommodate the goods from our old premises. To demolish a building in this condition is nothing short of wanton destruction.

To move to other premises of comparable size (30,000sq. ft.) in this neighborhood is impossible as they simply do not exist. To move to another vicinity would destroy not only the work of many years but also our identity and goodwill, even if such premises could be found.

If our premises were old dilapidated and neglected we would only have ourselves to blame, but it seems that human endeavour, industry and sheer hard work are not to be taken into account in the face of this totally destructive acquisition. Surely the existing houses could be rehabilitated as in other boroughs, and the life of the community be allowed to continue without this devastating upheaval. These houses are not falling down and could in many cases be re-instated without the vast wheels of local Government obliterating all and sundry in their all powerful path.

On an economic basis alone this seems a perfectly logical and reasonable step, as it does no less on a social one.

All our hopes for the future are centred on our staying in Gower St. and peacefully carrying on a business which is socially and economically useful to the community as a whole.

Another aspect of the problem are our auxiliary services. Two garages, one workshop and staff accommodation all in close proximity to the business, would become totally useless to us in the event of this C. P. O. being confirmed.

It seems tragic that with one stroke of the pen the lives of so many can be disrupted out of hand, after a lifetime of loyal and devoted service, which even today must count in the final advent.

This small article written by the Managing Director of Simmonds illustrates the situation in which most of the businesses in our area are at the moment. If the Levy Deal is signed by the Council and total redevelopment goes ahead they will be irremediably pushed out of business altogether. This confirms the need for piecemeal redevelopment, keeping as many of the existing buildings as possible and helping small businesses to stay in operation by, if necessary, subsidizing their rents. This is one of the objectives of the Tolmers Village Association and therefore we hope that all businesses operating in the area will become active members of the Association as Mr. Cooper has already done.

The Editors.

## LETTERS

4. 10. 73

Dear Editors

I am sure everyone would agree that our area at present is in a mess. Many of the houses are empty, others are in poor condition, many shops have closed, there is a lack of social facilities and play-space. There are several derelict sites with wire round them. But this does not mean that the area has to be flattened. For the past ten years the area has been deliberately run down by most landlords, mainly Stock Conversion, Hampstead Investments Trust and the Council. They have not bothered to spend any money on modernization or redecoration. Why not? Because they want to flatten the area so they can make more profits for themselves.

I would like to see new life put into the area without knocking everything down. I would like to see those buildings which are structurally sound modernized and restored, the empty shops reoccupied (we badly need a launderette), new buildings built on the empty sites and trees planted along the streets and in Tolmers Square. Above all I would like to see the community of residents, small shops offices and businesses and workshops remain intact.

Your Faithfully

C. Rieger

ello little Joe  
sittin on yer pile  
gribby grabby little Joe  
you'll ave to wait a while



ADVERTISEMENTS

Ads will be printed in future issues.  
Cost : 5p per line. Displays 25p per column inch.

If interested contact the Editors at  
160 North Gower Street.

SERVICE AVAILABLE

If our houses and streets look nice, maybe they won't be so keen to knock them down. We are organising some people to help you with any odd jobs around your house, like painting, cleaning windows, clearing rubbish. If you would like something done, contact anyone at 12, Tolmers Square. There will be no charge.

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# WHAT IS THE TOLMERS VILLAGE ASSOCIATION ?

The Tolmers Village Association is an organization started by local people who are concerned about the future of our area. Its objectives are :

- \* to represent the interests of the people who live and/or work in the Tolmers Square area.
- \* to ensure that the planners concerned with redeveloping the area consult local people fully before taking decisions.
- \* to lend support and protection to residents threatened by eviction or harrassment, and to ensure that no-one is forced to leave the area against their will.
- \* to support residents in their attempts to secure proper

maintenance of their homes.

- \* to promote social activities etc. among members and generally contribute to the life and character of the area.

The only way our individual wishes are going to be heard and considered as an important party in any deal affecting our area is to form a powerful and representative association. At the moment there are already 82 members. If you have not joined yet please fill in the membership form on the back page and bring or send it to : 160 N. Gower St. Membership costs only 20p per year.

# HAVE YOU JOINED ?

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PLEASE ENROL ME AS A MEMBER OF THE TOLMERS VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Name.....

Resident ( )

Address.....

Worker ( )

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Signed.....

Date.....

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