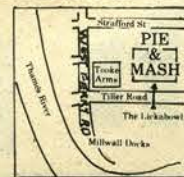




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The road to ruin

Five days before the GLC Transport Committee meets to review its planned highway programme for London, The East End News looks at the disastrous effects the Docklands Northern Relief Road would have for Limehouse and Ratcliffe. If the road goes ahead as planned, hundreds of homes and businesses will be demolished.

THE WESTERN part of the Northern Relief Road, which will cut through Limehouse and Ratcliffe, could cost as much as £100 million, demolish nearly 400 homes and over 50 more businesses, shops and factories.

The route, which has been mapped out against the wishes of the local communities, is still an open question, say officers of the Tower Hamlets Council and the GLC. But a public inquiry would not be held before next year, making a change of plan more unlikely and expensive.

Meanwhile, opposition to the four-lane highway is mounting in Limehouse and Ratcliffe as confusing details emerge, showing that the GLC seriously underestimated the personal and environmental effects of the road.

Six hundred jobs will be displaced with 200 of these lost completely. This is four times as many as at first believed.

More than 350 homes will be demolished to make way for the road, and more than 520 others will need sound insulation costing £340,000.

Tower Hamlets public relations officer, Tony O'Regan, said this week: "Nearly 400 dwellings will have to go to make way for the road-builders, or because the buildings are too old to stand the environmental damage which the road con-

Call to scrap £100m scheme

struction and heavy traffic will cause."

People would be rehoused in the borough, he said. But there are no plans for new housing in the immediate area, and rehousing would mean higher rents for some tenants, says the Action Group.

Tower Hamlets Council rejected the suggestion by most residents in

the area, in answer to a Council survey, that the road should go through derelict land south of Limehouse Basin.

"We threw out this option, because it would have hampered industrial development around the basin and would have demolished a new school," said Mr O'Regan.

The present route, will cut off Limehouse Basin from surrounding areas. Residents claim it will become a protected and isolated enclave of luxury housing complete with marina.

Contrary to the view of the GLC, the Limehouse and Ratcliffe Road

Words by VIVIENNE WALT

Pictures by NICK WATES



How the road, in a concrete box, will pass between St. Anne's church and the Barley Mow Estate. A decision on whether to demolish Kiln Court (bottom left) will be taken after the road is completed.

Action Group's engineer's report claims a tunnel could be built under the Basin, allowing most existing housing estates and firms to remain standing.

"The biggest irony of the chosen route is that the Limehouse Basin Development is now being threatened by the noise and intrusion of the highway, although the route was designed to protect that area," said members of the Action Group this week.

The route chosen by residents would mean demolishing the new Cyril Jackson Primary school in Limehouse, but the Action Group argues that the GLC route will pass only yards away from the classrooms, causing unacceptable noise and disturbance, and perhaps forcing the council to move the school while construction is under way.

They also claim the GLC now "finds itself in a mess" about their road plans, and that the Limehouse section is unnecessary and should be scrapped.

"Six years after first planning the Northern Relief Road, the GLC has committed itself to a route which is undoubtedly the worst for local people, the worst for any development of Limehouse Basin and which destroys forever a vital public transport route," says the Action Group report.

Councillors in Tower Hamlets are beginning to have second thoughts

about their chosen route, they say.

The newly-elected GLC chief, Ken Livingstone, is believed to support the chosen route, but the council's press officer, Ted Holden, said this week "we have not decided anything definite about these plans we've inherited from the last GLC."

Next Thursday the GLC Transport Committee will review the highway schemes. "We have to act now if the decision is to be changed," said a member of the Action Group.

"Now that the full horror of this road has become clear, we hope that the GLC will scrap it completely or at least change the route."

End of the line for new railway

Plans for an exciting, new light railway — the first of its kind in London — serving Limehouse, the Isle of Dogs, Canning Town and Becton, will be destroyed by the chosen route of the Northern Relief Road.

Transport planners at the new Docklands Development Corporation are now seriously considering a scheme to build a rail link from Tower Hill to the Isle of Dogs, running along the existing London and Blackwall railway viaduct.

The lightweight trains would be similar to the underground, but much quieter and faster. Stations would be placed at Stepney Green, Limehouse and Poplar, with tracks branching off to the bottom of the Isle of Dogs opposite Greenwich, and through Canning Town to Becton.

Cheaper

Construction of the new railway would be much cheaper than the Jubilee Line, which was originally intended to link up with the Docklands, but which has been shelved indefinitely, because of the enormous cost involved.

Planners say the railway could be in operation within four years — but the new Northern Relief Road will destroy the viaduct for the railway, unless the GLC decides to change the route.

Chief transport planner at the Development Corporation, Howard Potter, feels the railway should take priority over the road, and that the road route should be reconsidered before plans for the railway are rejected. Kate Heron, secretary of the Association of Island Communities, said this week:

"We've been saying for years we need a rail link to the Isle of Dogs — the road should not be allowed to conflict with that."



Marie and Nathan Rothstein have worked in their shop for 35 years, in West India Dock Road. By the time the road is built, the whole side of the street will have disappeared.

"It's all a terrible waste of time and money taking everyone's shops and houses away," said 70-year-old Nathan. "This new road is ridiculous — we were born and bred in this neighbourhood, and it's our home!"

'Terrible waste of time and money'



A nine-lane highway will go here unless the plan is stopped.

... but all is not lost

LIMEHOUSE residents are determined to stop the road. They are asking the planners to reconsider the route, or axe the road plan completely.

Limehouse and Ratcliffe Road Action Group is urging everyone affected by the road to write to local councillors, newspapers

and Members of Parliament, to fight the planned route. They are contactable at 13 Newell Street, E14, tel: 987 4943, 4 Newell Street, E14, tel: 515 8541 or 4 Kiln Court, E14, tel: 515 1278.

Now turn to page 12 for the full story of old Limehouse

Demolition doom for Limehouse estates

Tenants associations in Limehouse and Ratcliffe are alarmed at the new evidence showing they are in line for demolition and relocation when the road-builders move in.

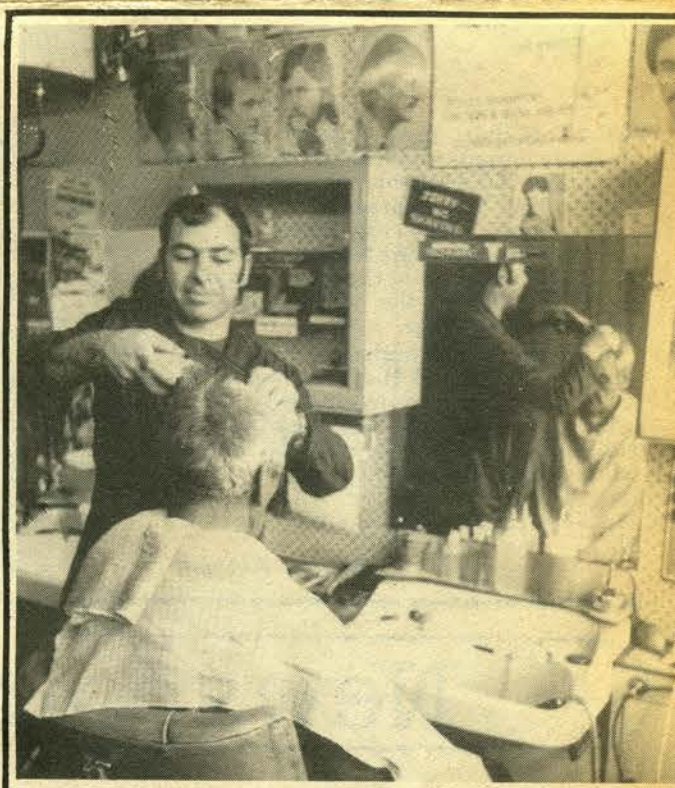
The 55 flats at Kiln Court, on Barley Mow estate, next to Limehouse Cut, were first occupied less than four years ago, just weeks before the route was announced, passing alongside.

"They want us to remain while the construction goes ahead," said Theresa Harding of the Kiln Court Tenants Association.

"The GLC has given us no guarantee of rehousing if they decide to demolish our estate," she said. "Meanwhile we will have to suffer from the noise and dust of the road-building." A decision on whether to demolish the flats will be made after the road is completed.

A tenant who moved into John Scurr House, off Branch Rd. this week said he was told the building was to be rehabilitated — but a spokesperson for the Tower Hamlets Council said the estate "would definitely be demolished."

"It is too old to withstand the construction and traffic the road will bring," said the spokesperson.

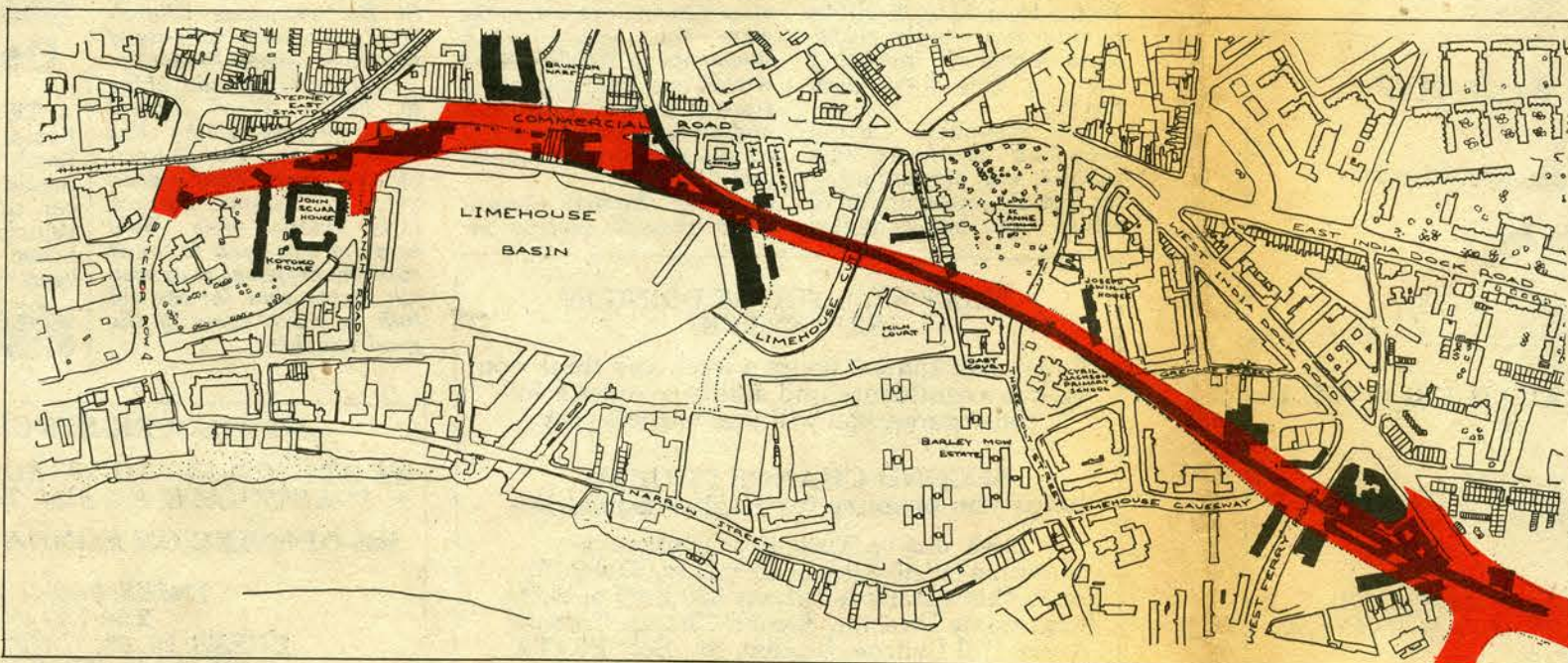


Unkindest cut of all for barber Andrew

There won't be many more customers for Andrew at George's Hairdressers in West India Dock Road — his shop will be bulldozed to make way for the road.

"I'm going to lose my business and be out of work," he said. "Where am I going to get another place?" His customers are angry too. "The nearest barber is over a mile away," one of them told the East End News this week.

This map of Limehouse and Ratcliffe, drawn by CHRIS SHANKS, shows the devastation the Northern Relief Road would cause if the route chosen by Tower Hamlets Council goes ahead. The route is red, while buildings to be demolished are in black.



Toll of the horror highway

Homes Demolished:

Brunton House (Nos 1-35), Butcher Row (Nos 6-8), Commercial Road (Nos 604-608), Hardie House (Nos 1-11), Island Row (Nos 2 and 3), Jamaica House (Nos 1-28), John Scurr House (Nos 1-115), Joseph Irwin House (Nos 1-30), Kotoko House (Nos 1-75), Regent House (Nos 1-40), Ratcliffe Lane (Nos 3-7), West India Dock Road (Nos 84-112 even).

Homes badly hit by noise and pollution: Commercial Road (Nos 653-711 odd), Garford Street (Nos 10-18 even), Island Row (Nos 1a and 2a), Kiln Court (Nos 1-55), Newell Street (Nos 2-23), Pennyfields (Nos 1-85).

More noise will also be heard from the Walter Edwards Estate, Matings House, and all housing south of Poplar High Street.

Homes badly hit during construction: Grenada House (Nos 1-51), Oast Court (Nos 1-42), Pastow House (Nos 1-79), Roche House (Nos 1-100), Trinidad House (Nos 1-38).

What the road does to churches, schools shops and public buildings:

Our Lady Immaculate Roman Catholic Church — noise and pollution; St Anne's Limehouse — ugly concrete box along churchyard boundary; Vincent de Paul Convent — noise and pollution; Royal Foundation of St Katherine — part of grounds sliced off and historic cottage demolished; Limehouse youth club — demolished; Limehouse Library — noise and pollution; Nine historic structures to go.



The Poplar end of the West India Dock Road.

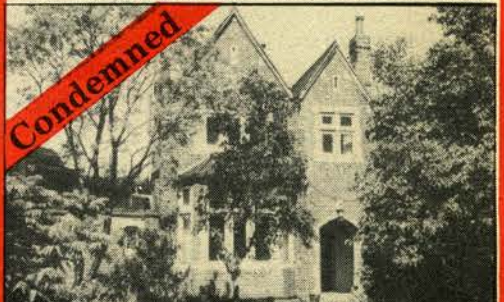
The road's affect on industry and commerce

These are the firms which will have to go: Cromie & Mitchell, 75a West India Dock Road, Charlie Browns pub, 116 West India Dock Road, Ladbrokes, 112 West India Dock Road, Chunis, 110 West India Dock Road, Kettles Cafe, 108 West India Dock Road, Neal Steel, 106 West India Dock Road, Tekmek (Engineering), 102a West India Dock Road, Post Office, 102 West India Dock Road, Stallion Racing, 100



Joseph Irwin House.

West India Dock Road, George's Hairdressers, 98 West India Dock Road, D&S Beattie newsagents, 94 West India Dock Road, Peking Restaurant, 92 West India Dock Road, Davey & Co, 88-90 West India Dock Road, Clothes Care, 86 West India Dock Road, A. Richards, 82 West India Dock Road, Salvation Army Alcoholic Unit, 20 Garford Street, R.W. Bowman, Salter Street, Bullman Bros, 310 Trinidad Street, S/G Autos, 307 Trinidad Street, A & M Motors, 305 Stock Place, P & H Truck, Trinidad Street, Bullman Bros, 11 Grenade Street, T & C Autos, 304 Stock Place, J. S. Christ & Sons, 6-8 Butcher Row, Joseph Ashton, 592



Victorian Gothic cottage at St. Katherine's.

596 Cable Street, D. McConnell, 242 Ratcliffe Lane, Swift Motors, 7-9 Ratcliffe Lane, Shaw & Co, Bokesbourne Street, Skandia Express, 1 Bokesbourne Street, Roberts & Perkins, 11-13 Ratcliffe Lane, G. Cohen & Sons, Regent's Canal Dock, Coborn Press, 600 Commercial Road, Liquorland, 610 Commercial Road, S. Ward & Co, 622 Commercial Road, R.J. Powell, 626 Mill Place, Copenhagen Motors London, 3 Mill Place, S & P Autos, 271 Island Row, R.C. Fryor Transport, Island Row, Peak Litho, Norway Place, Bill Mayes, 616 Commercial Road, Ratcliffe Warehouse & Storage, Regent's Canal Dock, Greyhound, Regent's Canal Dock, MRT Storage & Distrib, Limehouse, Builders Hire Services 640 Commercial Road, W.C. Young 640 Commercial Road, Russel Shutter Engineers, 12-13 Bate Street, Design Works, Bate Street, George Baker & Sons, 8 Newell Street, Eastgate (ES) Ltd, Steel Conduits, 16-28 Salter Street, H.W. Bush, Mill Place. (Note: this hit list covers the Western third of the road only.)