

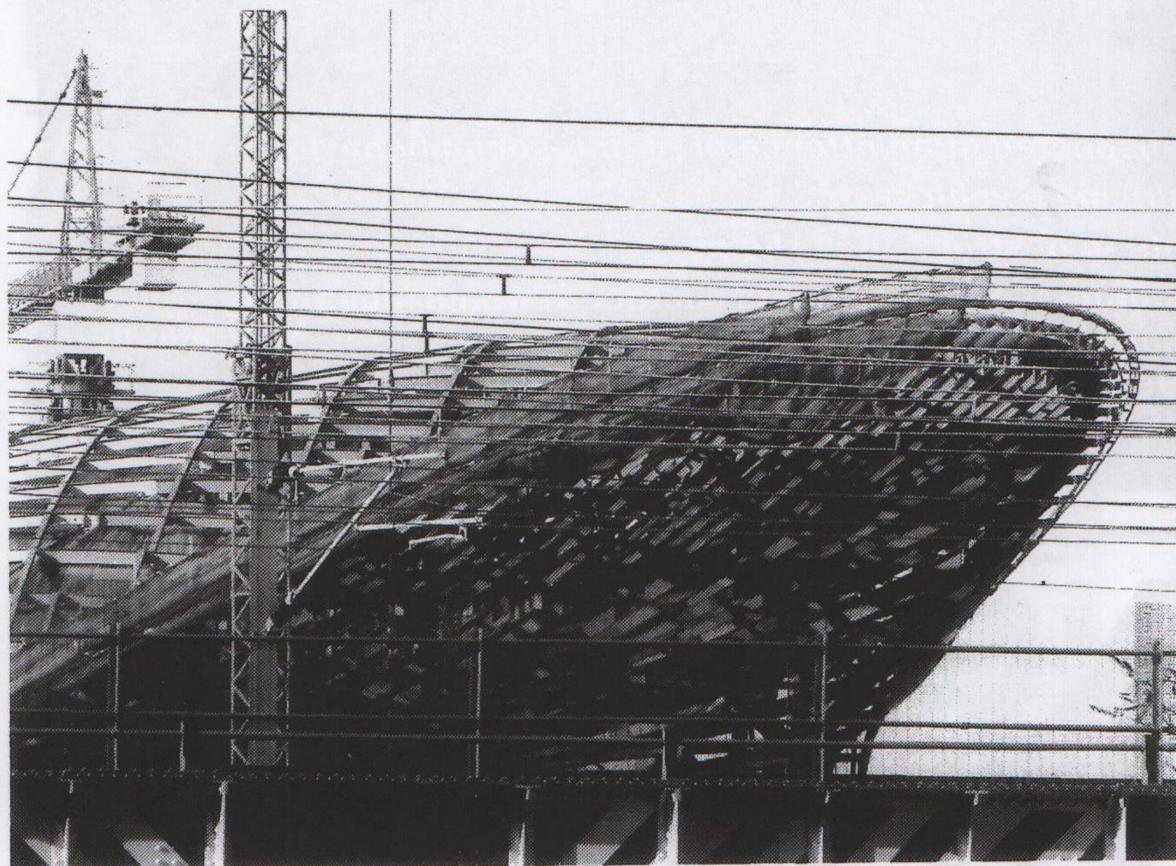


EAST END HOWLER

For
Community
and
Solidarity

— East London's FREE Working Class News Sheet —

SPY OLYMPICS



What are the modern-day Olympic Games? On one level they are an international sporting competition, but really that's just their selling point. Various nation states use it to promote nationalism. This sport-as-politics approach goes back to when Nazi Germany hosted the 1936 Olympics, when the master race's attempts to show that white men were superior were happily shown up by the win of black sprinter Jesse Owens.

Next, the Games are one long advert for their sponsors, huge multinational companies such as McDonalds, Pepsi etc. (and remember they're supposedly about improving the health and fitness of us ordinary folk!). No less importantly, they are a huge property development scam with upmarket housing, shopping centres and industry all for the profit of the wealthy few being massively subsidised by us as taxpayers.

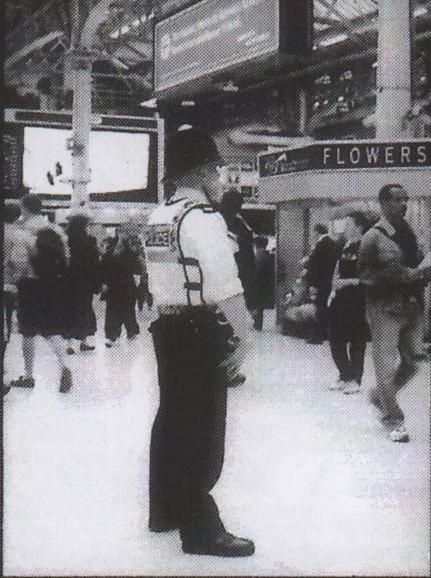
The Olympics are also an excuse and 'justification' for the government to give itself powers to spy on us more, all in the name of security and 'anti-terrorism'. A leaked 2007 Home Office communiqué to Downing Street gave the game away. It proposed wider use of the DNA database, scanning of mail and monitoring of individuals through their use of Oyster cards. Why? Because "increasing [public] support could be possible

through the piloting of certain approaches in high-profile ways such as the London Olympics."

Last year the Metropolitan Police and Olympic officials were legally empowered to enter private homes to seize political posters during the Games "to preserve the official sponsors' monopoly." The Met have announced that they hope to co-opt London's 500,000 CCTV cameras during the Games, in addition to their own 10,000. Tracking technology is being developed so that a "spectator will be tracked from the venue to their home with their [Olympic] tickets."

We say stuff your Olympics and let's support and develop ways to resist property development and speculation and increased government control!

IF YOU GET STOPPED AND SEARCHED UNDER SECTION 44 OF THE TERRORISM ACT...



Be calm and polite, but firm. Make sure they give you a record of the search. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and make sure you ask exactly why you're being stopped. If possible, have someone witness the search for you.

Record the details:

- Time and date
- Where you were stopped
- What happened and why you were stopped
- Name and badge number of the police officer(s)

You do not generally have to give your name, address and date of birth unless:

- You are suspected of an offence or of anti-social behaviour
- You are driving a vehicle
- It amounts to obstruction of the police

For more information on your rights contact Newham Monitoring Project (www.nmp.org.uk) and ask for their Pocket Law on Terror. Additionally, the Legal Defence and Monitoring Group have good general advice on dealing with the police on their website: www.ldmg.org.uk

FLUSHING OUT THE CARPENTERS

Right on the edge of the Olympic development looms the starkly contrasting architecture of the neglected Carpenters Estate. The council have been gradually emptying the estate of tenants for a few years now. This is the first half of a two-part interview with one of the tenants there.

Action East End: *D'you know anything about the history of the Carpenters Estate, when it was built?*

Carpenters Tenant: The flats went up in the mid 60s. One of the things people are upset about is having to move out of the estate, and it worries me as well, in that it is very quiet and it's statistically one of the least crime-ridden estates in the whole of London. There is a bit of a community there and it just seems like the council is wilfully destroying what everyone who lives there thinks is a bit of a haven in order to send us to places that we might not feel as safe in or as settled in. A lot of the older people who live there have been there since the blocks went up. Historically what happened was a lot of people who had two- or three-bedroom council houses were re-housed in tower blocks in



in the 1960s. Their children would have moved out and they would have been given the choice whether they wanted to move into a tower block, and a lot of them did at the time. So these were the people who went in there at about 1966 and there's still a fair few of them.

AEE: *So if you could just run through, starting from the beginning, what's been going on with the decant at the Carpenters Estate?*

CT: The main issue at the moment is the tower blocks on the estate, of which there are three. One of them, the one nearest to the main road, James Riley Point, is virtually empty. A few years ago that was overrun by ants, and they couldn't get these ants out the block, and so they decided to demolish the block. And it should have been demolished years ago, but a couple of leaseholders are still in there who didn't get the deal they were looking for and are refusing to go. And so there's about two or three households still in that tower block.

So I guess the best place to start with what's been happening on the estate for our tower blocks, the other two, Lund Point and Dennison Point, are that a few years ago, or maybe a decade ago, they decided that they wanted to refurbish the tower blocks. We were told that this was going to happen, we were told that it was because there were various structural issues, some people had cracks in the ceiling, there was some water coming down into people's flats. Also there were some issues of asbestos in the flats. They assured us this [the asbestos] wasn't endangering anyone, but it needed to be taken out. They did take some of the asbestos out, but to get a lot of it out they basically had to move people out. So they came up with this thing called a "master plan" which they paid millions, literally millions, to an architecture firm to come up with. They planned that we would all be moved out, it would be refurbished, and then those of us that wanted to move back in could move back in. It was to be kept in council ownership and managed by the tenants' management association. There was earmarked £15m to do this. They basically did a sort of thing, they had stalls in the foyers, and they were showing people the architectural plans, they were asking for feedback, they had a big consultancy session ... It must have cost millions, this consultancy. And then we didn't hear anything for a few years. And then they came up with another "master plan", I think this was after they found out that they were getting the Olympics,

and they decided that they wanted to do the estate up a little more plushly than they did in the previous one. So they showed us these models and plans which involved building some restaurants and cafes around the square, they were gonna build some green areas. They were gonna build a launderette downstairs in the flats, all this sort of thing, again they were gonna refurbish the flats ... and then we heard nothing else after it. For this we were quite enthusiastic, most of the tenants were pretty enthusiastic about that because it was going to look really nice. And then ... I think we were then surveyed about the refurbishment and I think we were given two choices - either we could be completely re-housed or we could be moved out while the refurbishment was happening and then moved back in. But the trick of that was that they said that they couldn't guarantee that we would be moved back in in less than six years. By that time you've got a new home really, so I don't think many people were really very keen on that. That completely changed. In fact, I thought, and I think other people thought, that basically they wanted people out but wanted to still be seen to be giving people the option of moving back in. Then I suppose about a year ago there was a meeting with the mayor, Robin Wales, and he basically more or less unilaterally decided that the flats were going to come down. We weren't consulted about that, they just said they're gonna be knocked down. The reason that was given was that the council could no longer afford to refurbish them. The cost of refurbishment had gone up in the decade since they first started talking about it and the £15 m that was earmarked had been spent elsewhere, so it was no longer available. [Robin Wales] came and spoke to people on the estate, and he did say to a couple of people that the entire estate was to be flattened, he'd taken that decision.

AEE: *So the low-level houses as well?*

CT: As well, yeah. Which has obviously had a lot of the leaseholders in those sort of houses really panicking. Then there were various people who started campaigning a little bit about this. Because a lot of those homes anyway are still not up to the decent homes standard, most of the tower flats aren't up to that. So there'd already been campaigns about that in the past, there'd been banners unfurled over the flats. So they started up a new campaign, the banners were gonna come out again. The council and the mayor were very careful to say that

this was nothing to do with the Olympics but of course we all know that that land is worth millions, probably the most valuable piece of real estate in the East End.

AEE: *It's virtually on the Olympic site.*

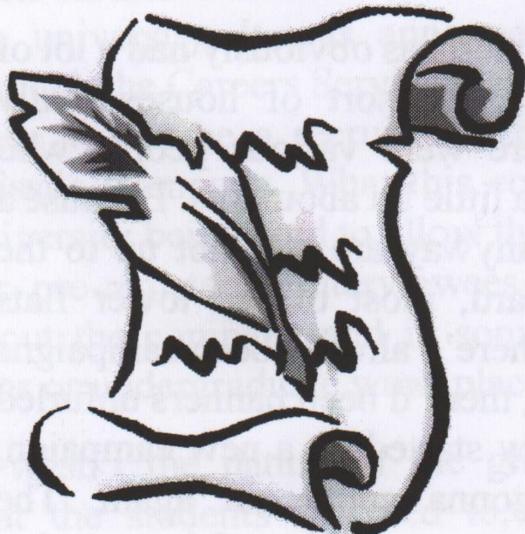
CT: Yeah. And the BBC have hired the top floors of those tower blocks.

AEE: *Really?*

CT: Yeah, to build a studio. And we weren't consulted over this, the people who live on the estate aren't getting any profit out of it, this is a deal that's been done between the council and the BBC and we only got to hear about it through the grapevine really. So we've now been told that we have to move out within four years. The tenants have now been told that they can either be re-housed by the council, in that they'll be given two choices and if they don't like those two choices they'll have been thought to have made themselves intentionally homeless. But if they don't like that then they can go on that bidding scheme. But at least with that you get more than two choices on that, and we'll be prioritised, obviously. The reason I chose to go on the bidding thing rather than them re-housing me is because I did ask for re-housing about a decade or so ago, I was having problems with my living conditions. They offered me a place which was, for one, a housing association place, so I'd have lost my secure tenancy [as a council tenant], and secondly it was a box flat, and I needed more space. So I said no. So if I was to say now "re-house me", what's to stop them doing that

again? And if they do it twice, I've said no twice and then [I will have been thought to have made myself intentionally homeless]. So there was a campaign going on and it was meeting fairly regularly, and probably still is but I've sort of lost touch with it because I have a lot of work on. The thing is there was not that much interest from people there, after the initial couple of meetings, there was not a lot of interest in keeping the campaign going. Most of the people who were going were older women really, basically people who had the time to go. Most people on the estate work, they haven't got the time to go to a meeting. A lot of the meetings were on in the day time or at about half past six, and if I was working that day I wouldn't get home until about seven. And there wasn't a great deal of communication that went on outside of the meetings. So I don't know, maybe that's still going on. The council were supposed to give us a charter, a rights charter. They said it was virtually the same as they had given the people at James Riley [the tower block that has been mostly emptied] but with a few differences. But we've never actually seen this charter yet. We have seen a couple of clauses, which are very vague, but there's nothing legally binding about the charter anyway. I think most people there feel that they have to move and that they'll deal with the council as individuals. Someone from the council has been round to see me and she's been round to most of the other places to talk about circumstance and that sort of thing. And she has now said that, I think, from February, that she'll start trying to help people get new properties. So that's the situation.

We have a fan...



Dear East End Howler,

Thank you for existing. I stumbled across your newspaper while I was scouring the floor of East Ham tube station for pieces of used chewing gum. I like to collect chewing gum. If it's a very rare specimen then I like to preserve it in my special presentation case. More common sorts of chewing gum I use to stick together pieces of gravel and eventually build a scale model chewing gum factory. I've got as far as the reception. Anyway a particularly rare and charming bit of chewing gum (Latvian, exported to USA but discontinued in 2007 due to health scare) stuck together pages 3 and 4 of a copy of the East End Howler which was lying by the central ticket machine. So I had to pick it up to get my specimen. Since then my life has changed immeasurably. You've been like a light into my life, when my life was previously dark, it is now light. I used to read Shakespeare, but now I read The East End Howler. I will certainly tell all my friends about it as soon as I get some.

*Yours Regardingly,
Henry Gunter*

SAVE QUEENS MARKET!

Queens Market, also called the Green Street Market, sits next to Upton Park underground station. Which is why Newham, the local council, thought that it would be a nice location for luxury flats stacked up in tall, tall tower blocks. They gave the job to their developer friends, a firm called St Modwen.

Of course this meant that the existing market would have to go. A new market would be built, owned and controlled by the developers. The 80 small shops which surround the market would go, to be replaced by high street chains and an Asda store. Also for the chop was the Queens pub, favourite hang-out of West Ham supporters.

The council is still shaken by the fury their plan aroused. They blame the campaign group Friends of Queens Market. But the campaign group only kept going because of widespread community support. Twelve thousand people signed a petition in 2005, 200 people went on a protest march in 2006, and 2,500 people entered written objections to the council's plan in 2009.

Why? One reason is FOOD. We are all targeted by advertisers to eat anything BUT fresh fruit, veg, fish and meat. But for people who have escaped this brainwashing, or people from healthier food cultures, the market is a must. The food is cheaper than the supermarkets, with wider variety. Pak-choi, dill, guava anyone? Long queues form for the fresh affordable meat and fish. And there are other BARGAINS: fabrics, cut-price handbags and costume jewellery to lift the spirits of some of East London's poorest and hardest-working women.

When Friends of Queens Market campaigned to save the market, a number of professional people brought us their very welcome expertise – like the legal, planning and community workers at Friends of the Earth, and social scientists who wrote about the market and pointed out that it's a SOCIAL SPACE. When some people need a bit of company they just drop in to see who is around. Stallholders, unlike poor overworked checkout people, can socialise with customers. And because 80 different languages are spoken in the market there's a lot of good mixing up between people of different cultures: most people don't make a big deal of this but our sociologists flagged this up as COMMUNITY COHESION.



Asda got the message and pulled out in 2006. But the developer stayed on and Newham Council passed their plans. We salute Councillor Sheikh of Respect who was the only councillor on the planning committee to vote against the plan.

But the Mayor of London gets to have the last word on a development of this size and in May 2009 Boris Johnson threw the plan out. How come an Eton-educated born-with-silver-spoon-in-mouth Tory like him was more in sympathy with the people of a mega-poor borough in Newham than our own Labour councillors? A question to ponder ...

Newham Council is now back-peddalling like crazy. The roof which they claimed was beyond repair is being fixed. New stallholders are welcome. They have even promised to paint the market. We think the council is trying to reassure everyone that there is now no threat to the market and hoping that Friends of Queens Market will quietly dissolve.

We're not silly! The council still has a contract with the developers. The council likes money and doesn't like poor people, hence its enthusiasm for gentrification or as they say "mixed communities". So how can we trust them?

The council is always urging Newham citizens to look out for each other, to join together as a community and defeat vandals: that's exactly what Friends of Queens Market will do to save the market from the anti-social behaviour of council and developers!

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

email: friendsofqueensmarket@yahoo.co.uk

or call/text: 07956 649696.

Check out our website:

www.friendsofqueensmarket.org.uk

FIGHT AGAINST THE ARMS TRADE

A large percentage of the UK population will go through the university systems at some point during their lives. These institutions are portrayed as progressive-minded free from privatisation and alien influences, and concerned with seeking liberal or radical interpretations of the society around them. Yet for years now arms companies have been financially invested in by the universities themselves and allowed to run extensive graduate recruitment drives there too.

Over the past months there has been a large-scale fightback against this by the students, and nowhere more so than at Queen Mary, University of London.

During the spring of 2009 students at over 20 universities across the country, such as SOAS, LSE, UEL, Kings College London and Queen Mary, went into occupation. This was triggered by the Israeli occupation of Gaza and a huge part of this was a campaign to get such universities to de-invest in arms companies that were supporting such struggles (e.g. Kings College had £16,983 of GKN shares and Queen Mary a total of £167,620 in GKN and Cobham). There was widespread success and at Queen Mary the Principal promised to de-invest entirely.

Yet despite these promises at Queen Mary, there has been further action between arms companies and the university. It was announced and advertised through the Careers Service that on 23rd November there would be a recruitment drive from MBDA Missile Company. What this consisted of was the university being paid to allow them to book a room for pre-registered interviewees to find out more about the company and in some cases be offered jobs or undergraduate work placements.

It wasn't the nature of the graduate recruitment that the students objected to, but the nature of the company itself. MBDA are owned by and

produce arms for three of the major international arms companies.

- BAE Systems, who were recently investigated for fraud regarding bribery in Tanzania, South Africa, Romania and the Czech Republic. They have also supplied weapons to repressive countries such as Saudi Arabia (their deal was described by the Financial Times as "the biggest [UK] sale ever of anything to anyone") and Indonesia, where their weapons were used to bomb East Timor during the war for independence, a war that claimed more than 100,000 lives over 25 years.
- EADS, a French/German company involved in the manufacture of cluster bombs and French airborne nuclear missiles. They have also been subject to allegations of corruption.
- Finmeccanica, an Italian conglomerate that supplies Libya with border control equipment to prevent refugees escaping.

Such action by one of the leading university institutions was not acceptable to the students at this university, and with several societies and the student union on board they ran a successful campaign and MBDA pulled out.

One victory isn't sufficient however, and it is essential that university institutions cease to invest in companies that are helping to create enormous human suffering.

Queen Mary Autonomous Group has been hugely involved with this campaign.

It is a group of students at Queen Mary who oppose the injustice caused by capitalism and the state.

We believe in socialism from below and direct democracy.

We are active in a wide variety of causes both on campus and in the local area.

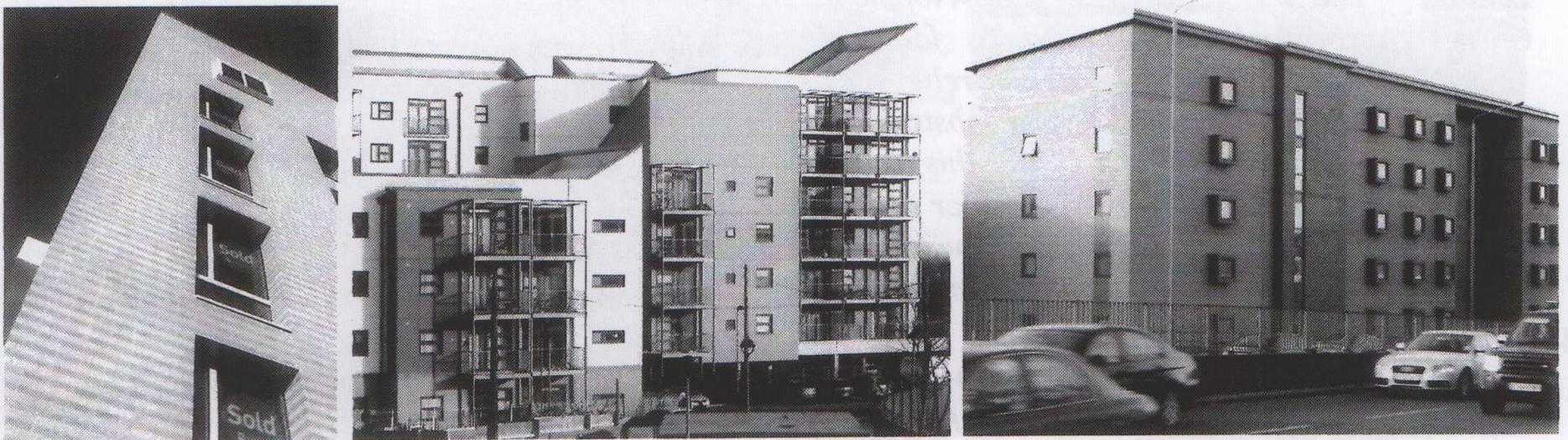
NEWHAM AND DISTRICT CLAIMANTS UNION meets on alternate Thursdays at 7.30pm at 8 Neville Road, London E7 9PX. We work together to help each other sort out benefits, pension credits and any other problems.

Some people fill in forms: others just listen and give ideas. We don't take money from the council or government because from time to time we have fights with them (and often win!). Please turn up on time and bring your papers with you.

Next meeting on Thursday 25 February, and fortnightly thereafter. All welcome!

www.newhamclaimants.org.uk

OVERDEVELOPMENT



The Howler has previously reported on the Barratt St Andrews development next to Bromley-by-Bow station, a series of “high density” residential blocks, including plans for a 27-storey tower block. It now appears that Tesco is also cashing in on the “potential” of the area to make massive profits. There is no doubt that many local residents would welcome more shops and community services within walking distance. However, there are a number of questions that are not fully addressed in the glossy promotional material.

1 *As with the St Andrews development, the focus is on “high density” residential development. This is part of Boris Johnson’s strategy for East London. But we still need to ask how multistorey blocks are appropriate for local families. It seems that the main focus, as seen in most of the ads for property in the area, is on “young professionals” who want to get their “first step” on the property ladder. Therefore any talk of “homes for the local community” is not completely honest.*

Bromley-by-Bow is one of the most historic areas in the Lower Lea Valley. It is a focus for new development and has been identified by the Mayor of London and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets as a location for a new town centre to support the transformation of the wider area.

from ‘Design for London’ Website

Tesco town planned next to 2012 site

Tesco is building a new “supermarket suburb” next to the Olympics site which will house hundreds of families and come with its own high street, park, library and primary school. The 11-acre site will have a 24-hour Tesco Extra hypermarket at the centre, with 18 other stores that will make up a pedestrian high street. There will also be a 90-bed budget hotel on the site, and Tesco will build a library, called Idea Store, for the community. It will create a local park on the bank of the river Lea, and a plaza area for residents. Tesco will also part-build 460 homes in the area by securing “costly” planning permission for them. Social housing bodies are expected to build the homes, but Tesco may retain the freehold.

Abdul Taher Evening Standard (14.10.09)

- 2 *Bromley-by-Bow residents do not have many shops nearby but have access to Stratford and Canary Wharf. Currently, Westfield is building a mall that will be one of the biggest in the country at Stratford. It is questionable whether "another town centre" is needed. In addition, apart from Tesco, the other shops in the area are small businesses and not part of any chain. What will be the impact on current local businesses if Tesco sets up a shopping district that will most likely be dominated by the normal chainstores?*
- 3 *The target area for this "new town" is currently used for a variety of industrial purposes. In addition, there is much empty land. It is unclear what will happen to current businesses. Also, there is much potential to turn the area into green spaces both for people and wildlife. The London Thames Gateway Development Corporation refers to this area as follows: "Further south down the River Lea, derelict sites and utilities lands dominate and obstruct a stunning waterside setting." Now this could mean that it would make a great park for people – or it could mean that it is a prime location to build luxury residential accommodation.*
- 4 *As with the St Andrews development, there is little mention of the fact that a 20+ storey building is part of the plan. This would house the hotel and be topped by several floors of luxury flats. This would mean the area would be overshadowed by two enormous towers, with an impact on light and the general character of the area.*
- 5 *Traffic at a standstill on the northern approach to the Blackwall Tunnel is a regular feature of the evening rush hour. This is the main access road to all the proposed developments. Whatever is said about using public transport, we know that both residents and shoppers will seek to use cars. When the congestion charge was implemented, Central London businesses claimed that they would lose business. Tesco already has a huge car park. If the shopping precinct is built, together with residential blocks, then there will inevitably be an increase in traffic. It is hard to see where this traffic will go. They will have to grab more land for car parking space, and they may also lobby to have more roads built into the area. This will further encroach on any land that might go for green spaces as well as causing even more traffic problems than there are already.*

We at the Howler suspect that this recent "regeneration" proposal that has so many supposed advantages for the "local community" is nothing but a smokescreen for another set of companies to cash in on the Olympics and the general transformation of the area. "Tesco Town" will benefit enormously from the huge increase in higher-income residents that are the target of the majority of the new developments. In addition, the plans do not seem that well thought-out. The cost of the impact on the infrastructure will eventually be borne by the taxpayer. We could end up getting very little and may even be worse off, especially in terms of traffic and other problems of crowding too much in one area, whilst the corporations themselves make huge profits.

About Action East End



We at Action East End want to see an alternative, one based on a genuine sense of community and solidarity. Action East End is a local group based in East London that wants to contribute to resistance, both defending ourselves in our communities and workplaces, and ultimately helping co-ordinate activities to improve our quality of life. This we believe can only be done through our own initiatives, outside the agenda of the local authorities or political groups, and by taking collective action for ourselves. This is no flight of fancy but the basis from which radical change springs, and we would urge others to join us or get in touch.

actioneastend@googlemail.com