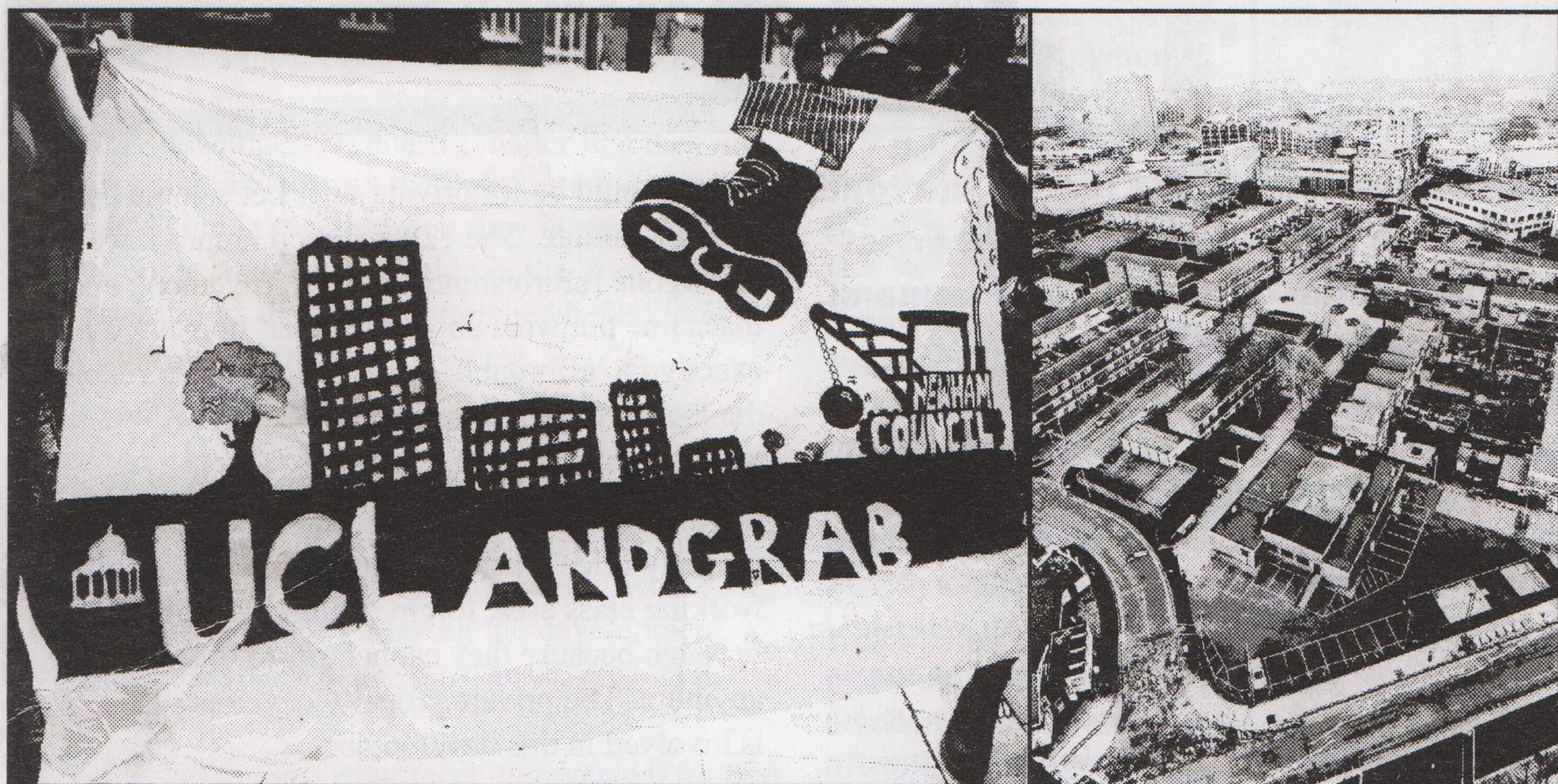




CARPENTERS FLUSHED OUT FOR UNIVERSITY



A £1billion scheme set to demolish a local community and build a vast quarter by University College London (UCL), was agreed by the Mayor and cabinet of Newham on Thursday 25 October 2012.

The decision means the Council will now enter into detailed negotiations with University College London regarding the proposed gentrification of the Carpenters Estate, a 122 year old working class community in Stratford.

UCL's proposals and vision for the site include academic and research facilities and new residential accommodation for students (undergraduate and postgraduate), UCL staff and others. The university quarter would include activities in Engineering, Population Health Sciences and Built Environment.

Out of the original 705 homes on the estate, 318 homes remain occupied, comprising of 156 council homes, 66 leasehold homes and 96 freehold homes.

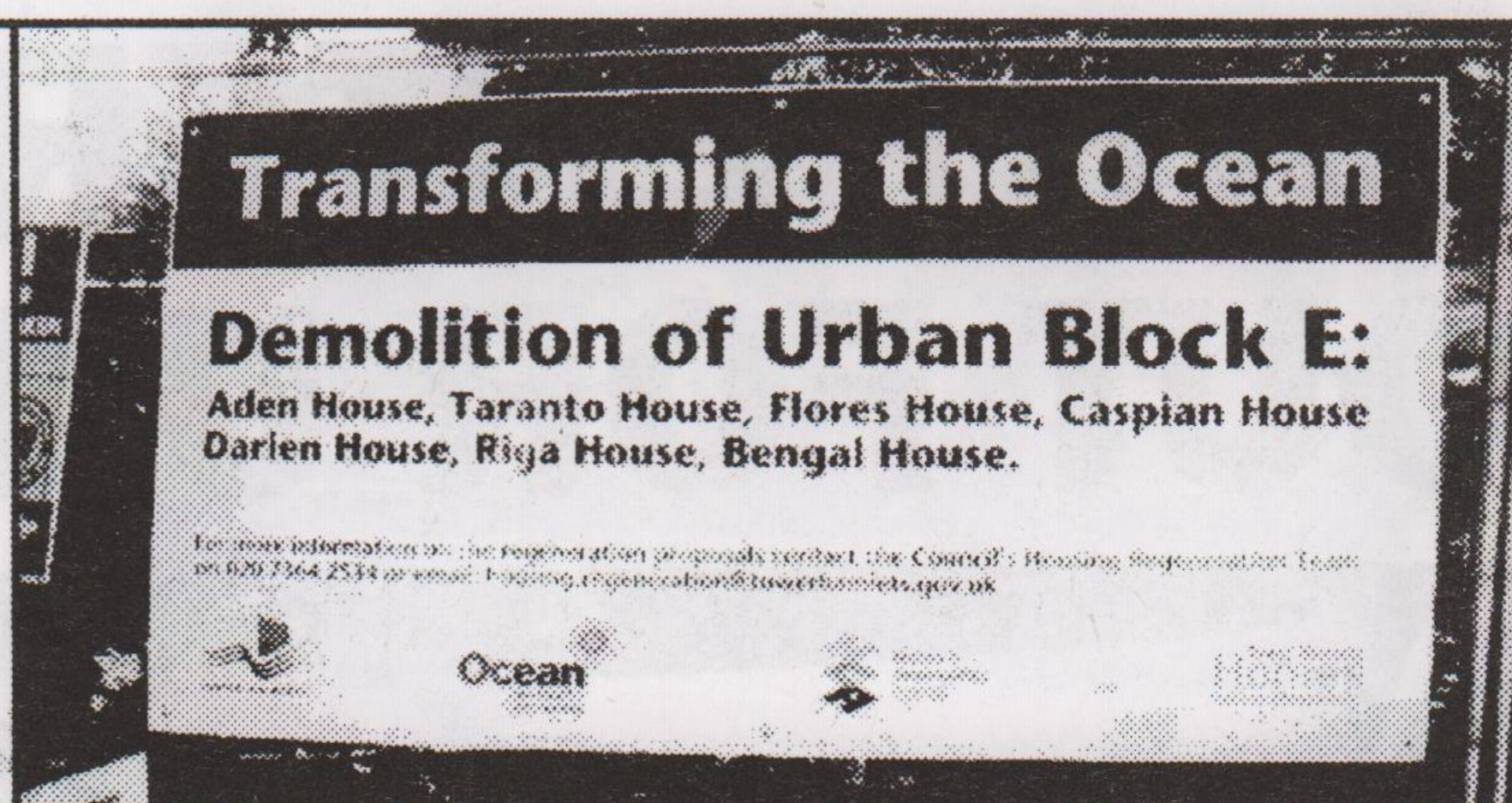
Joe Alexander, the vice-chairman of protest group Carpenters Against Regeneration Plan, said: *"They told us we'd have the right to return but that's not the case. There's no social housing - it's all university labs, student halls and staff facilities. People feel worn down. It's the slow death of a community."*

Mary and Brian Finch have lived on the estate for 42 years after meeting during its construction and said the plans would rip the community apart. Mrs Finch, 72, said: *"If I move, where am I going to move to? I get very upset about the plans."*

Mr Finch, 65, said: *"The estate is well laid out and there is space. It's criminal that they are taking down houses like this when people are crying out for homes. This area needs refurbishment, not regeneration."*

Newham council said officials "do not know" how much social housing is in the plans, adding: *"There's a commitment to allowing residents to return, subject to availability."*

PROPERTY PIRACY AT THE OCEAN ESTATE



Like Carpenters Estate just up the road, the Ocean Estate in Stepney Green is another victim of the property tsunami sweeping through East London.

The Ocean Estate was previously famous for the flying visit by Tony Blair in 2001 when he was pushing his neighbourhood renewal scheme to win back votes from disillusioned inner city residents. BBC news described it: *"The Ocean Estate in Stepney, East London, is one of the most deprived in Britain, ravaged by poverty, crime and drug use. Once known as the cheapest place in Europe to buy heroin, it has few facilities and shoddy, leaking buildings."*

People on the Ocean Estate were eventually treated to a plan for renewal and development, which seemed a good thing at first glance. Previously the Tenants and Residents Association on the estate had seen off two attempts at the proposed handing over of the council housing of the estate to a housing association, the HAT (Housing Action Trust) in 2005-2006. This foiled the plans of the Ocean New Deal for Communities project. In the 1980s and 1990s, tenants had successfully fought off plans to transfer to Housing Associations. One might think that the running down of the estate was a punishment for the resistance offered by the tenants living there.

Finally in 2010 Tower Hamlets Council succeeded in pushing through a New Deal for Communities programme. This meant that 1200 homes would stay in council ownership rather than be transferred to a housing association. However 342 council flats would be replaced by 819 new homes, half of which would be affordable or for social rent, and half of

which would be for private sale. Let's come back to this in a minute. The 1200 council homes have undergone refurbishment and improvement, and that's fine but what about the other homes? What exactly is 'affordable' and to whom? Affordable to the local working class community?

And what about the other 195 flats, now to be privately sold. This will create a beach head for property price hikes and gentrification of a solidly working class area, forcing people to quit the borough because they cannot afford to live there anymore. The private property developer First Base is involved in this development.

The project is being overseen by the quango the Homes and Communities Agency, working with Tower Hamlets Council and the designed for purpose East Thames Group consortium. This consists of Spitalfields Housing Association, and Bellway, a big housebuilding company. Wates Living Space became the main contractor. The project, known as Vivo is enthusiastically touted on the Vivo site. So we get the following laugh-if-you-didn't-cry statement from Vivo:

"Stepney Green is in the heart of London's trendy east end. Sandwiched between Whitechapel, Bethnal Green and Mile End, you can enjoy the rich character of the East End - from market shopping to a stroll along the canal" ...and: "As unexpectedly elegant as it is affordable, Stepney Green attracts the smart money and East End lovers alike. What was once a medieval village is now a buzzy hub in the heart of E1 - and it's as diverse as you want it to be."

From the Vivo site:

<http://www.vivolondon.com/stepney-green>

TOWERING MENACE

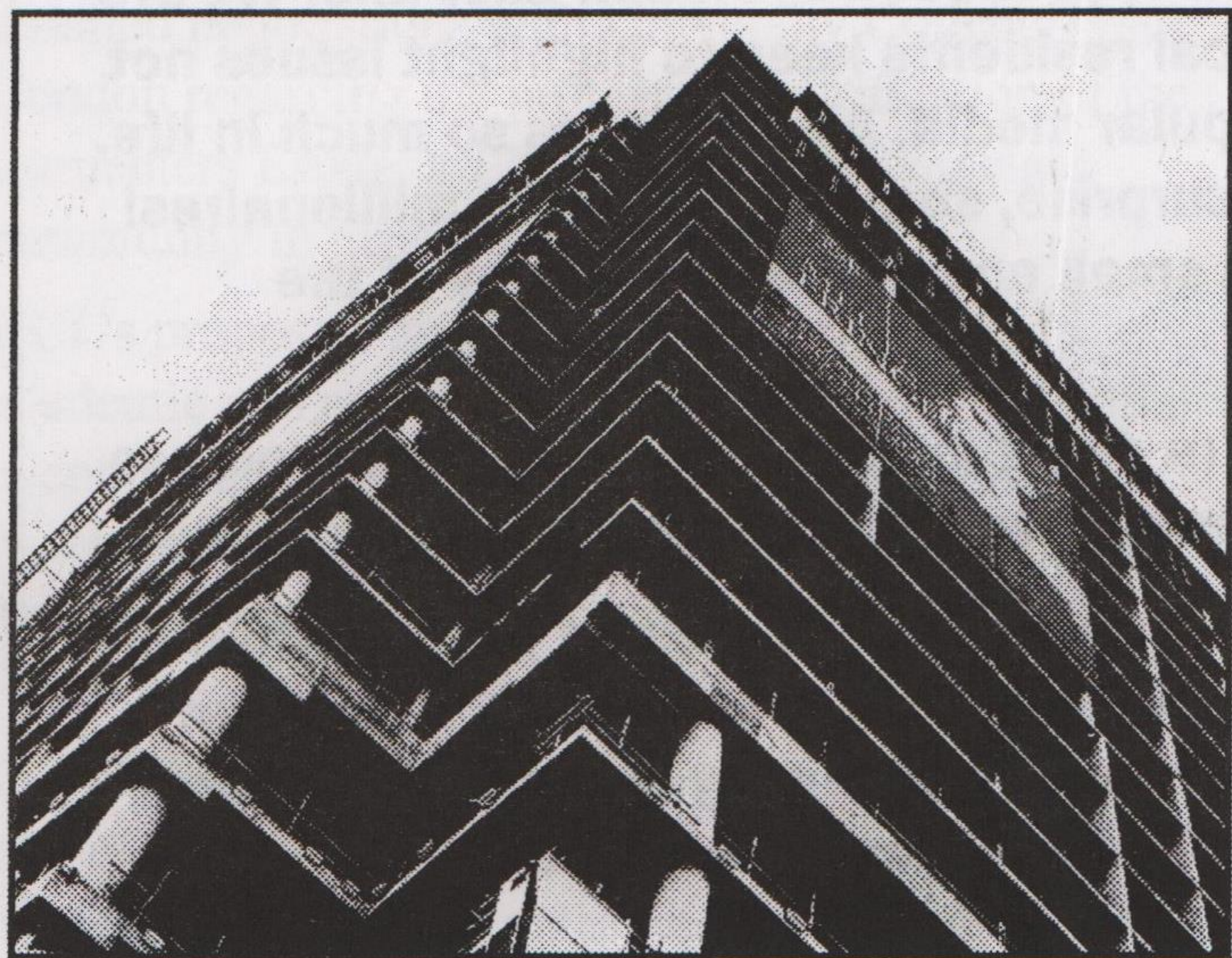
All over East London new high rises have sprung up. Massive blocks have appeared in the run-up to the Olympics and continue to be built.

Property developers have hoped to take advantage of the bubble caused by the Olympics bonanza with big high rise developments - build 'em high and rent or sell 'em dear - with little of a look in for people - that's most of us - who can't afford these prices. High rises mean more rents and sales for the property developers. It doesn't matter that they are eyes sores and block out the light for tenants already living in the area, that they increase the traffic congestion and pollution in the area, that they put pressure on the already stretched health facilities, schools and transport systems.

That's why we welcome the successful campaign by local tenants and residents to stop the building of a 50-storey skyscraper on the Isle of Dogs. They mobilised and put pressure on local councillors to stop the Skylines Village development. Despite the local planning officers okaying the development, a strong local campaign stopped the developers in their tracks.

However, new plans were recently revealed for two more huge skyscrapers, one of which rivals the rejected Skylines building in an equal number of floors, and one which outclasses it at 55 stories!!!

A victory has been won and this should encourage further action to stop these further developments. Why is Tower Hamlets Council continuing to sanction these developments despite local opposition?



ANOTHER OLYMPIC MYTH EXPOSED

Weren't the Olympics meant to increase employment in Newham and Tower Hamlets by providing jobs for local people. That was one of the justifications for the Olympics coming to London. Well unemployment figures ROSE in the Olympics year of 2012 in Bethnal Green and Bow, both in terms of long term unemployment and youth employment.

CHILDCARE SCANDAL

A new report on childcare has shown that Newham comes top in terms of the worst facilities for childcare, with Tower Hamlets not far behind in third place.

Those in the most deprived areas- that's us in Newham and Tower Hamlets - got the worst quality childcare.

This comes in the wake of Government plans to allow childminders and nurseries to up the number of children they are allowed to look after. They will be allowed to take on six 2-year olds rather than four, and for 1-year olds and under , the figure will rise from three to four. But quality is already poor in many areas and this will only aggravate the problem.

Both Newham and Tower Hamlets Councils are axing nurseries in line with their collusion in bringing in austerity measures.

Both these Councils say that their childcare is improving, in spite of this. The Howler thinks that they are both kidding us over their childcare claims!!

HOMELESS THREAT IN NEWHAM

A recent Shelter report revealed that one in thirty nine households are under threat of being evicted or repossessed. Meanwhile property developers are making big profits on the developments they are building for the rich.

FIRE STATIONS ON THE BONFIRE

If anything reveals the real threat to lives that the swingeing cuts being pushed through mean, it's the closure of London fire stations.

Twelve of these are being shut down, at the orders of Boris Johnson, and three of these will be in Bow, Kingsland and Silvertown, areas of high density population. In addition fire engines are being taken away from stations, including one at Whitechapel.

This means that the time between a callout to a fire and the arrival of the Fire Brigade will increase drastically and in turn increase the chances of fires taking hold and spreading.

There are many high rise flats in East London and so the delay in response time is further increased. The fire station closures are concentrated on



socially deprived areas. So once again it is us - the working class of London who must pay for these cuts and suffer the consequences. These consequences could prove to be fatal for some.

TOWER HAMLETS COPS TOOL UP

The police in Tower Hamlets have taken the decision to arm some of its officers with Taser stun guns. These administer a powerful jolt of 50,000 volts of electricity. The use of Taser guns by the police has resulted in several deaths in the past.

Why are these Taser guns being issued now? They were not deemed necessary in the past. The police are claiming that crime figures in the most recent period are FALLING. So why are these stun guns being issued now?



About Action East End



The East End Howler is produced by Action East End. We are a small group of local residents keen to highlight issues not taken up by the popular media. All of this, as so much in life, costs money...and surprise, surprise, we're not millionaires! So please donate a small amount for each copy of the Howler you take.

If you like what we're doing and feel like doing more, please send an e-mail to: actioneastend@gmail.com

We will add you to our mailing list and keep you informed of our latest activities. Alternatively, if you supply us with an address, we will send you a paper copy of our news letter and a free East End Howler through the post.