

all time high, the cheap must surely be a long one. The question also

There's enough ammunition here to arm either side of the argu-

status look to how their living, they

DEBATE

Do local campaigners have too much power?

YES

Piers Gough
Architect



The deification of the destructive whinge culture is incredibly bad for us spiritually and physically.

The public's prejudices are already too well represented in the planning system. The government's central policies and local government UDPs are constraining and protective of the uses and scale of development. The public is invited to add its views at every stage of their adoption and the route is as close to public interest coercion on private developers as is possible short of nationalisation. On top of this, edicts from CABE, EH, the Environment Agency et al represent public attitudes in their bolier-than-thou armchair advice.

Increasing coercion leads to increasingly complex application requirements with ever more opportunity for errors. The public is encouraged to object to all applications in any recreational way it pleases regardless of the facts. The supposed objective system of planning officers presenting to councillors is then gerrymandered by political self-interest, on the basis that there are more votes in refusal than approval. It is no coincidence that the most interesting buildings of the last 20 years tend to have no residents nearby. Some quite reasonable people become rabidly reactionary and nauseatingly self-righteous as local incidents.

That the judiciary should ponder to this unrepresentative protracted process that planning has become is an example of the fantastic dereliction of institutionalised inaction.

No doubt it will get worse.



King's Cross campaigners are fighting to save the Culross Building.

NO

Simon Jenkins
Journalist and author



London is at the crux of this debate. Local people have every right to demand a say in the evolution of their city, as do those campaigners who simply love London and whose lobbying has given the city its invaluable international reputation.

The power balance between developers and existing residents is always tense. This tension is supposedly resolved through local democracy, but councils too can have vested interests, especially with the spread of section 106 agreements — in effect buying the appearance of London. It is clearly unfair that a massive financial interest in development should be considered "on equal terms" with those whose sole

interest is the beauty, dignity or continuity of an area. Given that money is usually to be made by demolition, the system is heavily biased towards those with money to spend gaining permission.

I cannot think of a single part of London which has not had to be defended against over-development by locals pleading the public good and having to spend their own money to do so. This applies to Covent Garden, Mayfair, Seven Dials, Bloomsbury, Chelsea Embankment — areas that London's promoters now boast as part of its urban heritage. Not one of these, when threatened, was defended by the developer lobby. "Lost" battles — London Dock, Easton Tower, Stag Place (Victoria) — are now blots on the landscape. And so too is the present developer-led campaign for high buildings at random.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Add your views at www.bdotonline.co.uk

BOC

Political I

Kinsho Kurokawa's become the next Tokyo already in trouble, after he is bidding for the 2012 Olympics because it would hit the ecosystem. And to remove the cat from Tokyo — to f How lovely to die conscience, even

Home tru

Squatters have as the longest run in architecture. When the Commonwealth the clapped-out a that EH claims is most important p of its period in Lo Squatter's scaled perimeter gate of was empty and h themselves in. W

Job swap

During a compel climate change a week, the govern scientist David Ki once dreamt of b architect, while R Jack Pringle reve being a physicist, have swapped ca said. It's never to

I, Calatra

Spanish web site that Santiago Calatrà municipal a ramp (pictured) Arata Isozaki to a bridge. He claims rights have been.



Ramping it up: Ca

leu) or
(st)
Aler)
H
TO
Adman)
e
son)
ing
for
I manager
I manager
North
Cameron
South
South-west
South
London,
to Gardner
manager
a manager
em Graphics
r Colchester
de
A building with
a green roof
and a solar panel