



PRIVATE EYE

LOCALISM, of course, doesn't always suit the government, which most of the time is anxious to remove as much power as possible from local authorities.

Eye 1355 set out development plans for the large site vacated by the Royal Mail sorting office at Mount Pleasant in central London, to the south of King's Cross. The scheme for covering the site with blocks of flats rising to 12 and 15 storeys has been opposed by the London boroughs of both Camden and Islington, into both of whose jurisdiction the land falls, and also by the active local group, the Mount Pleasant Association.

There is an alternative scheme, one lower in scale which responds to the character of this part of London and the adjacent areas of Clerkenwell and the Lloyd Baker estate. Proposed by a body called Create Streets, this has the support of 90 percent of the local community and the Mount Pleasant Association. It also provides more accommodation and more social housing than the scheme by the developers who acquired the land. So, just as he has done elsewhere, and with characteristic self-assurance and benevolence towards big money, mayor of London Boris Johnson has used the powers he has to override London boroughs and approved a scheme hardly anyone likes. Given the scale and importance of the development, this is clearly a case that should be called in for a decision by the minister. But it won't be, of course, with the posturing Philistine with his eye on No 10 backing the favoured developers. So much for localism.