



■ Students from Halley Primary School at the launch

Youngsters launch study Olympic kits

Pupils from 10 Tower Hamlets primary and secondary schools helped launch an education construction kit for the 2012 Games.

The Big Build kit was launched by Olympic organisers for schools across the country to learn about the building of venues and infrastructure for next year's Games.

They were joined in the stadium by gold medallist sprinter Marlon Devonish and Olympic Delivery Authority chairman John Armit. He said: "The kits give young people the chance to learn how the transformation has been achieved."

Schools taking part were Halley, Kobi Nazrul, Marion Richardson, Marner, Bow, Central Foundation, Morpeth, Mulberry, Sir John Cass and Stepney Green.

Residential skyscraper given go-ahead despite objections

Residents fear Square Mile is 'encroaching on East End'



■ Green light for Principal Place scheme

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▶ A 51-storey skyscraper in Shoreditch – which opponents claim encroaches into a unique heritage area – has been given the go-ahead for the second time.

Planning permission was originally granted in 2009 for three towers containing offices, a hotel, 191 private flats and 50 affordable homes on the Bishop's Place site in Shoreditch High Street.

But the economic climate forced developer Hammerson to redesign the scheme.

Re-christened Principal Place, the site which lies between Norton Folgate, Curtain Road and Worship Street is currently an urban golf course.

The residential tower was redesigned and the height of the office building reduced from 37 to 16 storeys, while more public open space was allowed on Norton Folgate.

The revised scheme was approved by Hackney Council's planning committee last Thursday.

Local conservation groups like OPEN Shoreditch – a co-

alition of residents and business groups – have been unhappy at the Square Mile's encroachment into the East End.

The original 2008 design called for the destruction of the Light Bar, housed in a 19th century electricity substation on the site, but a campaign forced Hammerson to revise its plans.

The group's spokesman Rebecca Collins said: "It's their third attempt at a scheme and it's considerably better than the earlier ones they tried to push through against the community's interest."

"Fortunately the market drivers have changed and, 'I can build taller than you', is no longer lettable."

Concern was raised that in the current economic climate Hammerson would be unable to find office tenants, but law firm CMS Cameron McKenna LLP has already expressed interest in making the site its new head office.

David Atkins, Hammerson chief executive, said: "It will deliver high quality office accommodation alongside a landmark residential tower in a vibrant location."



■ A festival performer

New plays wanted for cultural event

Organisers of a drama season on Bengali culture are on the lookout for writers.

The *Season of Bangla Drama*, which will run from November 5 to 27, commissions original plays which delve into South Asian country's heritage and arts.

Now in its ninth year, the festival has become a "flagship event" for the borough, Steve Murray, head of arts and events at Tower Hamlets Council said.

The festival takes place at the Brady Arts Centre, Hanbury Street, Whitechapel.

Email kazi.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk by July 22 to get involved.

Preference will be given to Tower Hamlets-based organisations.

Star joins choir for debut concert



■ Canary Wharf Choir

Members of Canary Wharf Choir have performed their first concert.

The choir – made up of workers in the business and shopping district – appeared at Canada Square Park on July 5.

Singers were joined by West End performer Michael Cantwell.

Musical director John Tripp said: "The choir brings people together from all around the Canary Wharf community."

"We are doing it for fun, but we are also serious about putting on a really good, polished performance."

Councillor defections are now five

Five Labour councillors in Tower Hamlets has defected and joined mayor Lutfur Rahman's team.

Weavers ward councillor Kabir Ahmed is the latest to join Mr Rahman and four others who announced their move earlier this month, arguing that the mayor's policy is similar to Labour's and that the party should be working with him in the interests of constituents.

It is not yet clear whether the councillors will be able to remain in the Labour Party or be forced to become independents.

Cllr Ahmed said: "If it's a choice between the egos of Labour leadership and the people who elected me, the voters win every time."

Labour leader Cllr Josh Peck has firmly rejected the idea that his party should enter into coalition with the mayor.

He said: "There are some major policy differences and things we have real concerns about."

"Just because we are not in his cabinet it doesn't mean we can't have a positive impact in the borough"

Even without the defectors, Labour is still the largest party in the council, with 27 out of 51 councillors.

Police safety drive outside school

Police have been stopping motorists parking outside Poplar's Mayflower Primary School in a campaign to improve child safety at home time.

Officers from the Lansbury neighbourhoods team joined parents and teachers handing out leaflets to drivers last Friday.

Pc Michelle Hamilton-Levy said:

"We were approached by the school after safety concerns due to drivers parking right outside to drop children off. It was about educating drivers to the dangers of parking directly outside the gates where children cross the road."

Tower Hamlets council has now employed a full-time lollipop person for the school.

PM wants greater 'people power'

Prime Minister David Cameron outlined his plans for public services during a visit to Canary Wharf on Monday.

Speaking at the East Wintergarden, he called for a "people power" revolution. He said: "I know what

our public services can do and how they are the backbone of this country. But I know too that the way they have been run for decades – old-fashioned, top-down, take-what-you're-given – is just not working for a lot of people."

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