

# Estate Plan 'Inappropriate For Bransgore'

## *-INQUIRY TOLD*

C.T. February 22, 1957

**Among the objectors to a proposal to erect dwellings on land attached to Bransgore House was a resident in one of the flats at the House, a Ministry of Housing and Local Government Inspector was informed, at a public inquiry at Ringwood last week.**

Mrs. A. L. Fraser, owner of the property, was appealing at the inquiry against the Planning Authority's refusal to permit 95 residential dwellings, with construction of roadway and accesses on 17.8 acres forming part of the grounds. Refusal had been on the grounds that development of such a type and scale would be inappropriate to the village, and would be prejudicial to the area's amenities.

Mr. Charles W. Watsham, architectural surveyor and consultant, appearing for Mrs. Fraser, told the inspector Mr. C. E. Pinel, that the grounds comprised, in all, some 32 acres, and that in addition to the land for which planning approval was sought, it was hoped to develop approximately another 4½ acres in the future.

### IMPROVEMENT.

The proposed density of 5.4 dwellings to the acre on the appeal site, it was considered, "would appear to be an improvement on recent development which had taken place nearby."

The centre of the estate was about 600 yards from the ultimate centre of Bransgore. The site had been the subject of three previous disapprovals, and it seemed that, not until the present application, which was inaugurated last May, was a specific attempt made to produce a plan for Bransgore.

Mr. Watsham read correspondence he had had with the planning authorities in which he stated that the proposed development was sandwiched between development already proceeding, so that the area could be regarded as ripe for use. Mrs. Fraser, he added, was quite prepared to agree to any reasonable request from the authorities regarding her plans. Notification of refusal, he went on, was received last August, and Mrs. Fraser had been told that further consideration would be given to the future use of the land when the proposals for the development of Bransgore had been approved.

Mr. Watsham mentioned that Bransgore House itself was now divided into nine flats.

### THE ESTATE.

When Mr. F. W. Pilbrow, Ringwood and Fordingbridge R.D.C Clerk (representing the Planning Authority) asked who would develop the estate, if the appeal was allowed, Mrs. Fraser replied: "We haven't thought who will do it, or how it will be done."

The inspector: Does Mrs. Fraser intend to sell the plots separately, or get a building contractor to take over the whole? Mrs. Fraser: I don't think we have quite gone into that, yet. At this stage, I don't think we can really say.

Mr. Watsham, in reply to Mr. Pilbrow, agreed that it would be possible to sell the land, with planning permission on it. He thought it reasonable to request that roadworks be undertaken before house building started. The land was on a slope, Mr. Watsham stated, in answer to a further question, and water "seemed to go away very well." Whilst septic tanks had been put into the application, for sanitation, alternative methods could be considered.

Mr Pilbrow: Who are the people who are going to live in these houses? Mr. Watsham: You are asking a question no-one in the world can answer. I have had people come into my office and ask if I have any land at Bransgore on which they could build a bungalow.

Mrs. Fraser stated that her husband, who died in 1949, bought the property in 1948. The flats were now her source of income. Regarding the proposed development she said: "I did not think of doing so until I saw these houses going up all round." Some of the proceeds, if the development was allowed, would be spent on Bransgore House.

#### RURAL VILLAGE.

Mr. Pilbrow, addressing the inspector, said he hoped he had shown, from cross examination, that there was no question of the proposed development alleviating any housing shortage for people not able to buy their own houses. If, as was likely, his Council decided to build in Bransgore, they would provide a combined drainage system, with purified effluent discharging into a stream. They had no proposals for sewerage Bransgore, regarding it as a rural village, not suitable for high-density development.

Mr. Pilbrow read a letter which, he stated, he had received that day, from Miss Edith Trotter, C.B.E., living in one of the Bransgore House flats, saying that she could not attend the inquiry, through ill-health, but conveying her "strong protest" against the proposed development.

#### DESTROY AMENITIES.

"It will destroy the amenities of that part of Bransgore, spoiling a very beautiful piece of unspoiled country," the letter went on. "It will depreciate the value of the leases held by tenants of Bransgore House, should they wish to assign their leases to other parties." Miss Trotter concluded that more than half the attraction of the place for her lay in the extensive grounds.

The South West Hampshire Area Planning Officer, Mr. F. F. Freeth, stated that within the South Coast green belt plan prepared for submission to the Minister, Bransgore was shown as a village for which a Village Plan would ultimately be prepared. It had expanded quite appreciably during the last ten years, with a mixture of small houses and a certain amount of low-density development, some of which had been occasioned by the nearby R.A.F. station.

Mr. Freeth said provision had been made in Bournemouth and Christchurch for quite a considerable expansion of urban development, and the land in those places was very far from having been absorbed. The proposed development could only provide for a dormitory population. Further, if there was a demand to meet local needs, there was quite a considerable amount of in-filling within the village which should be substantially completed before large-scale fringe development was permitted. A sprawling outwards would undoubtedly be injurious to the visual amenities of the area, and considerable difficulties had already arisen as the result of septic tank and cesspool drainage in the locality.

Mr. F. J. Hinton, R.D.C., Assistant Building Inspector, gave evidence regarding drainage problems that had arisen from development that had already taken place in the area.

#### 18 RESIDENTS.

Mr. E. W. Mumford, Kingsmead, Cuckoo Hill, Bransgore, submitted to the inspector a document which, he said, was signed by 18 local residents, in support of planning refusal.

Since the war, it stated, about 60 dwellings had been built for R.A.F. married quarters, and about 40 for the R.D.C., private development having been restricted to about 20 bungalows in the Poplar Lane area. He considered the development so far concluded had reflected the reasonable demands of that village community, and he understood not all the bungalows erected had yet been sold.

Bransgore was 5 miles from the de Havilland aircraft factory, and there were surely alternative site for workers closer to their place of employment. Mr. Mumford also maintained that drainage facilities would be "totally inadequate."

Mr. Watsham said he would not dispute that Bransgore was a "nice little village." In most such places it was "quite natural to resent what they call "foreigners" from other areas." Development, however, had already taken place a few yards from the appeal site. If the authorities did not like 5.4 dwellings to the acre—although there were 6 to the acre "across the road"—Mrs. Fraser, he thought, might agree to a lower density, if that was going to help. With all the development proposed, Mr. Watsham said, the people living in Bransgore House would be left with an acre of grounds per flat.

The inspector, closing the inquiry, went to visit the site, and the Minister's decision will be known later.