

# All Day Hearing Of Objections To Development Plan

C.T. December 26, 1952

**FOR just over seven hours on Monday, Mr. C. E. Pinel, an Inspector from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, heard objections to the Development Plan for Christchurch.**

In the Council Chamber at the Castle, Winchester, the Inspector received local objections concerning the by-pass, the widening of Barrack Road, the amount of land needed for the new civic centre, the scheduling of public open spaces, and residential zoning.

**The question of the by-pass and the widening of Barrack Road were considered jointly and took up the major part of the enquiry. On this alone there were fifteen objectors.** Concerning the widening of Barrack Road, Mr. T. J. Williams represented L. F. Castle, A. F. Davies, M. L. Skinner and Mrs. G. L. Skinner, H. Foxall and A. E. Miller. Objectors to the by-pass also represented by Mr. Williams were Christchurch and District Chamber of Trade, D. E. Newbury, H. F. and R. F. Parker.

In his opening remarks Mr. Williams explained that at this time of the year it was difficult for traders to leave their businesses, and that he was acting both as advocate and objector.

The traffic problem in Christchurch, he told the Inspector, was, like that of many other coastal towns, confined to the summer months. One of the main causes of congestion in the town were the traffic lights at Fountain Corner.

"There is a most awkward left hand bend entering Barrack Road. The building which makes it difficult has been owned by the County Council for something like 25 years, and it was acquired for the purpose of being pulled down in order to make a somewhat easier passage for traffic.

"Years have gone by and nothing has been done; the volume of traffic has increased but the road has remained the same," he said.

The question of a by-pass had caused a lot of heart-burning in the town, he went on. Some felt it unnecessary as there was an alternative route to Bournemouth from London via Cadnam. Others felt that if there was to be a by-pass then it should in fact by-pass the town and not return the traffic to the town centre. He urged that before anything was done about the by-pass other and cheaper methods should be tried. There was nothing to add concerning Barrack Road, he pointed out, as presumably the widening would not be necessary if there was no by-pass.

Mr. J. Atkinson, for the County Council, asked Mr. Williams if he agreed that the two narrow bridges created a difficulty and would continue to do so if the existing roads were retained.

"Their appearance is enough to put motorists on their guard," was the reply. "They are certainly no more difficult to drive over than this archway here is to drive through."

Mr. Atkinson suggested it would be better for traders if through traffic was taken away from the main shopping centre leaving it for local customers.

One of the outcries against the by-pass, said Mr. Williams, was that it would take traffic away and would have a bad influence on trade.

Mr. G. C. L. Payne represented two objectors, Sir Donald Bailey and Mr. F. D. Lane. He submitted a plan from each for a new bypass route.

Mr. J. B. H. Druitt, objecting to the widening of Barrack Road, told the Inspector that if the plan as it stood was put into effect he would lose part of his garden.

It was his opinion that the widening of Barrack Road to take traffic from the by-pass would create a bottle neck at Iford.

## MUST HAVE CO-OPERATION.

"None of these things can be done without the co-operation of the County Borough of Bournemouth. All they have got to do is alter a few sign posts so that people who do not know and who have no particular desire to drive through Christchurch can go out through Ringwood," he said.

Mr. Atkinson told Mr. Druitt that Bournemouth had accepted A.35 (the main Christchurch-Lyndhurst road) as the main traffic route. "Bournemouth and the County Council co-operate very closely in these matters," he added.

Mr. J. H. Marshall appeared for Mr. R. H. N. Mooring-Aldridge, who objected to the siting of the by-pass. He considered that the trouble would arise when the traffic from the by-pass arrived at Fountain Corner.

"One can see the workings of a roundabout in Bournemouth. It's all right when there's a small amount of traffic about but in the holiday season it needs practically every police officer and Bournemouth Corporation bus inspector plus a lot of good luck and control of tempers to get traffic round the Lansdowne and Square roundabouts," he said.

#### CHANGING COURSE

Mr. Marshall referred to the bridging of the river and said that at the particular point where the by-pass was to be sited the river had been endeavouring to change its course. The Catchment Board had spent a lot of money keeping it where it was, he claimed.

He submitted a plan to bring the by-pass out through the timber yard at the top of Bargates.

His main argument with the present siting of the by-pass was that it cut the town in half.

Mr. F. Elliott will lose his shop if the by-pass goes through as planned.

"If ever there was a foolhardy scheme to waste money this is surely it," he told the Inspector. "There will still be three schools, a recreation ground, and a Government Establishment employing 700 on the route. If a new road is necessary the junction should be The Grove and Hurn Rd. I realise the traffic problem must be solved and I hope that if the plan is approved alternative accommodation in the area will be provided."

#### GREATER IN SUMMER.

Questioned by Mr. Williams, the County Planning Officer, Mr. T. F. Thomson, said that although the traffic problem in Christchurch was greater in the summer a problem did exist at week-ends all the year round.

Mr. Williams asked him if he could explain why the road through Ringwood to Bournemouth was not popular.

"I think it's because people like to come through this part of the New Forest and through Christchurch,"

Mr. Thomson replied

Mr. Payne asked about the by-pass. "We don't agree it is a by-pass, you know," he said.

"I think you are right," was the reply, "It's a loop."

Mr. Druitt asked the Planning Officer if steps had ever been taken to ascertain why people came through Christchurch on their way to London.

He was told they had not, and went on to say that he had often spoken to car drivers halted in the traffic queue outside his house

"A large number of them hadn't the remotest idea why they were coming through Christchurch. They simply wanted to get to London as quickly as possible," he said.

Mr. Marshall suggested that the building of a by-pass would attract motorists to use it even if previously they used another route altogether.

"Don't you agree there will be an increase of traffic on the by-pass," he asked. "It may be so," replied Mr. Thomson.

The Deputy County Surveyor, Mr. F. H. N. Elton, said that in the interests of road safety, there could be no doubt that something must be done in the reasonably near future to reduce the serious accident position and to alleviate the intolerable congestion which now existed. "In the thirty-three months from January 1, 1950, to Sept. 30, 1952, 332 accidents were reported to the police between Somerford Bridge and Fountain Corner," he said.

#### SOME DISADVANTAGES.

He explained some of the disadvantages of following the existing road. To provide Ministry of Transport standards of alignment and width in the areas of Purewell and Christchurch there would have to be very extensive demolitions of property.

Quartleys Bridge and Waterloo Bridge were scheduled as ancient monuments. Widening would involve the demolition and re-building of these bridges.

"Such a proposition would meet with the strongest of opposition and might well be considered an act of unnecessary vandalism, since even if the existing road were widened, it would not be possible to reduce the very large number of accesses now existing, each of which is a potential danger spot, or to provide adequate facilities for through traffic," he said.

Referring to the objections of the traders who will lose their premises, Mr. Elton said of each: "It is very much regretted that the objectors' property will be affected by the proposal. There is, however, no satisfactory alternative and compensation would, of course, be payable in respect of any property acquired."

#### WOULD NOT AFFECT THE AMENITIES.

About Barrack Road, Mr. Elton said that the widening was in effect a continuation of the bypass, and it was not considered that it would seriously affect the amenities of Christchurch.

"There is no alternative to the widening of Barrack Road," he went on. "Unsuccessful attempts have been made to locate a route which would by-pass Barrack Road, either to the north or to the south. Any such schemes would involve prohibitive demolitions, and in view of the possibility of obtaining reasonably satisfactory standards of alignment and width on Barrack Road, the additional cost would be out of all proportion to the advantage gained."

Referring to Mr. Druitt's suggestion to divert traffic via Ringwood by sign posting, the Deputy Surveyor contended that the existing road system would not justify any such scheme.

#### TO BE DIVERTED.

"It is intended in the future that as much as possible of the traffic which now approaches Christchurch along A.338 should be diverted at Ringwood so as to approach Christchurch via Matchams Lane," he said. "This is, however, a scheme for the future and will divert only traffic which now approaches Bournemouth from the north and cannot be considered a substitute for the widening and improving of Barrack Road."

The width adopted for the widening of the road was 80 feet.

Mr. Williams asked why the property at Fountain Corner had not been pulled down. Mr. Elton said that there had been a large programme of improvements and something had to wait. If it had not been for the war he was sure it would have been done.

The Deputy County Surveyor mentioned that the Barrack Road scheme would probably not come into effect for something like 20 years.

"Can I tell my clients in Barrack Road that they have nothing to worry about for 20 years then?" asked Mr. Williams.

"No," was the reply, "the narrow section may well be widened before the end of 20 years."

Mr. Elton agreed that a scheme to knock down the obstructing buildings at Fountain Corner and instituting a one-way traffic scheme round the Pit Site would cost about £15,000.

"That is a big difference from £250,000 for a by-pass," said Mr. Williams.

Mr. Elton said that the demolition of the obstructing buildings at Fountain Corner and the enforcing of one way traffic scheme would probably be done before work started on the by-pass. Mr. Payne asked if the proposed 80 feet for Barrack Road would be wide enough in 25 years. Mr. Elton thought it would be in view of the fact that it was hoped that much traffic would travel via Ringwood through Hurn to Holdenhurst Road.

Mr. Marshall pointed out that the by-pass was to bridge the river at the point where it was tending to try and break through. He suggested that the bridging alone would cost something like £250,000.

"The estimate takes all bridges into consideration and is reasonably accurate in that respect," replied Mr. Elton.

Mr. Marshall said that it was estimated that something like three thousand cars a day would arrive at Fountain Corner along the by-pass. He asked the size of the roundabout.

"About 100 feet in diameter," replied the Surveyor.