

Water fears if Dudmoor Farm plans go through

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HOUSE owners on the proposed Dudmoor Farm site in Christchurch, would need "waders and rubber dinghies," it was claimed this week, if the plan to build over 1,000 homes with a school, church, community centre and shops went through.

Mrs. Joan Garrod, of Winkton, claims that the site is flooded at least once a year and her view was this week supported by a local builder and former town councillor, Mr. Stanley Kermode.

Secretary of the Bournemouth and Christchurch Old People's Welfare Society, Mr. Kermode said that there was water only a few inches below the surface on the site.

Mr. Kermode said he had written to the council about it. He knew about the water because he had worked on the land with his father 30 years ago, he said.

Mrs. Garrod wrote to the Times (see letters, page 5): "I hope the developers of the proposed Dudmoor Farm site will issue the purchasers with waders and rubber dinghies as most of the land is flooded at least once a year."

'ODD'

She adds that last year it was flooded for three weeks and it seems "odd" that the council should approve the building of a village on a site where the water table must be extremely high.

The scheme put in by County Coun. Mr. Max Goode and his brother was approved by the council's development control committee last week

It has to go before the council's policy and resource committee and if they approve it will go to the county council.

The county have already rejected plans for the site the most recent being for 1,500 homes.

There are objections from Burton Parish Council and the New Forest District Council, but the local Jumpers Residents Association have no objection to the principle of development.

If the scheme does go through, Mrs. Garrod says: "I only hope that the prospective residents will not suffer from rheumatism."

Mr. Goode, majority owner of the Dudmoor site, told the Times this week:

"I wish it were flooded, then perhaps I would have some grass.

"People with a vested interest have tried to stop this plan.

"I'd be delighted to see anyone who says it's flooded, I'd pay their expenses to come here, and I'd show them—then maybe they would apologise."

Massive Dudmoor proposals

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A MASSIVE new 150-acre "Education for Leisure" centre is being planned for the Dudmoor Farm site, Christchurch, and will go ahead if the county council again turns down plans for residential development in the area.

The ambitious plan which, if it is completed, will be the first of its kind in Britain, is to strike a balance between sporting and educational activities.

The man with the new plan is Maxwell Goode, a county councillor and majority owner of the Dudmoor Farm site.

DETAILS

Mr. Goode plans to incorporate a museum, country crafts workshops, a gymnasium, tennis and squash courts and a dry ski slope. The riding stables on the farm would be expanded and a golf course could be included in the sporting facilities.

Max Goode described the plan as an attempt to speed up the process for finding a suitable use for the land at Dudmoor Farm. "We have been waiting for a decade for this site to be used for the good of the community," he said, "and it is only right that we should look at other uses."

Original plans for the area to be developed as a residential estate had been rejected once already by the county council." Mr. Goode said it would be at least two years before any decision could be made on the housing plan, and he could not keep waiting around for ever.

Mr. Goode stressed that a lot of work had been put into the plan and the money would be provided by a local consortium if the plan went ahead. He had been all over the country looking at similar centres, and he felt it could bring much needed trade and publicity to the area.

The people most likely to use the centre, he added, would be local residents. and it would fulfil a need for activities for teenagers and schoolchildren.

The museum that Mr. Goode hopes to include in the centre will include his own collection of old agricultural machinery, as well as exhibits from the Red House museum.

Mr. Goode dismissed as rubbish the claims of local people that the Dudmoor site was prone to flooding. A nearby resident had claimed that the land was flooded every year and the tipping of rubbish had worsened the situation.

However, Max Goode said that the centre would be built away from the river, on land confirmed as suitable for building. Experts had proved the area safe, he said, and he called those who criticised his plans "busybodies." They should check on their facts before making comments, he added.

Mr. Goode was optimistic about the project being approved. The County Structure Plan, he said, allowed such a development to be carried out in the Dudmoor area, whereas plans for housing needed the approval of the Minister.

The rodeo held last Monday at Dudmoor Farm, showed that the site could be used successfully, Mr Goode claimed.

It will take up to three months for him to learn if his new plan will be accepted by the local council.

BUILDER'S VIEW

Mr. Stanley Kermode, a former Christchurch town councillor, reinforces the claim that the Dudmoor Farm site is liable to heavy flooding every year, and is unsuitable for building,

Mr. Kermode, a builder says that in past years he has been up to his knees in water, and that no developer could hope to get rid of it. The whole area that Mr Goode plans to use, he says, is frequently under flood in the winter months.

Residents near the Dudmoor site have found that water lies only a matter of inches below the surface, even when there is no flooding.

Mr. Goode has invited anyone to inspect the site, and to find water if they can.

Mr. Kermode told the Times that if people inspect the land they will find no water because this is one of the driest summers on record. But the threat of flooding remains, he says, and the land cannot be reclaimed.

'Stagnation' warning in plea for Dudmoor Farm homes

Times-Herald September 13, 1975

Only two members of Dorset County planning sub-committee opposed the county planning officer's recommendation to reject a scheme to develop 190 acres at Dudmoor Farm, Christchurch, with 1035 homes.

They were Bournemouth's Mr. Bill Wareham and Major E.W. Ruston. Mr. Ruston warned Friday's meeting that unless land "over the border" was released for residential development, Bournemouth would stagnate.

The scheme, which had the backing of Christchurch Council, also included a church, a school, shops, a community centre, public open space and room for light industry.

Mr. Wareham said he was alarmed at the thought of Bournemouth being geographically confined to its borough boundaries in the future because within three miles of the boundary there was no longer any land left for residential development.

"I think we should look at this thing more comprehensively instead of restricting ourselves to the narrow parochial angle of whether Christchurch needs these houses," he declared. Bournemouth has just got to have more elbow room and it means going across the border.

"This site tied up with Hurn Airport development, would be admirable."

So far as the amenity aspect was concerned, Mr. Wareham said he had never seen such a dustbowl as the Avon Valley.

The land had been atrociously farmed over the centuries. Yet over the other side in Bournemouth, lovely agricultural land was being used for development. "Nobody seems to care," he declared, "but I think it is lamentable."

NOT HAPPY

Maj. Ruston was not very happy about the whole matter.

"How is it that Christchurch Borough Council, the people on the spot, are all in favour of this despite all the objections which have been put forward?" he demanded.

"I just don't understand this at all. Is the land which we are told is already available for housing in Christchurch in the right place?"

"Can one build houses on it at once for young people at prices which they could afford? If you are going to build four to an acre that will be no good to young people.

"I feel there is a lot of sorting out to be done here if these people are to have a square deal."

The county planning officer, Mr. Alan Swindall, replied that he might have accepted Maj. Ruston's points about homes for young people at one time, but the Minister had just approved on appeal for residential development on 100 acres at Hoburne Lane, on the very point that the developer undertook to provide low-cost housing for young families on about two-thirds of the land.

Assistant county planning officer Mr. John Scutt reminded the committee that a planning application on the same land at Dudmoor Farm, but relating to 1,500 houses instead of 1,000, was rejected last November.

In the present application there was more open space and there were no houses in the flood plain.

It was felt then that there was no justification for allocating additional land for housing, and the position had not altered.

There was enough land already allocated to serve the housing needs of Christchurch until the middle of the next decade.

This would provide some 2,688 homes and would embrace a population increase of about 8,000.

The 100 acres just approved by the Minister at Hoburne would provide accommodation for about 2,000 more people, making a total population increase of about 10,000.

Mr. Scutt said that the applicants, Goode Brothers, had stated that they intended to appeal. If that were so, the county would have considerable backing from local organisations, 10 of which had lodged objections.

These were Christchurch Preservation Trust, Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group, Dorset Naturalists' Trust, Wildlife (Christchurch) Group, Friends of the Earth (Bournemouth Group), the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Nature Conservancy Council, West Hampshire Wildfowlers' Association and Sopley Women's Institute.

Burton Parish Council and New Forest District Council had also recommended refusal.

Mr. Scutt said Christchurch Council regarded the development as a means of getting a more balanced age structure by bringing in a younger element.

Christchurch Council did not send representatives to the meeting to put their case, but in a letter they pointed out that the development could increase the borough's population by 3,000-plus and provide an integrated community on land at present subject to shanties, unmade roads, illegal dumping of rubbish and stagnant water.

Moving rejection of the application, Mrs. Jill Williams, Bournemouth, commented "I don't think Christchurch considered they had much of a chance as they didn't send anyone to represent them."

'Teaching for leisure' plan for Dudmoor

CHRISTCHURCH could lead the way towards educating people in how to enjoy their ever-increasing leisure time.

With shorter working weeks and earlier retirement in mind, Christchurch's policy and resources committee approved in principle a plan for an Leisure centre at Dudmoor farm,

But the borough planning officer, Mr. David Pratley, called for safe-guards to prevent the centre getting out of hand.

CONTROL

He would like it to be a place where between two and three hundred people could stay for a weekend course, but not a "weekend attraction for 30,000 to 40,000 people wanting to have a good time,"

The committee made it clear that they wanted no loophole left which would enable the development to become like a holiday camp or a second Longleat in the future.

The £1 million - plus scheme includes a nine-hole golf course, sports halls, tennis courts, a dry ski-slope, fly fishing lake and facilities for field sports and other activities.

It also makes provision for a museum of rural crafts.

One of the site's owners, Mr. Max Goode, told the 'Times' yesterday: "It will do a power of good for the whole area. Nationally and internationally people have far more leisure time.

BOOST

"We cannot be parochial about this. We need people from overseas, people who have the spending power to boost the economy of Christchurch," said Mr. Goode.

"The hoteliers would benefit, and so would the traders

"At the moment we are investigating the best way to run the venture. We have written to the Minister, and we have Sports Council backing,

"We are hoping that the Red House Museum might be able to display there some of the items they now have to store because of lack of space in our museum.

"But it's all in a very early stage yet. Of course we are pleased with the approval in principle, but there is a long way to go."

Green light for Dudmoor leisure centre

CHRISTCHURCH will have its own Education for Leisure centre at Dudmoor Farm now that after years of deliberations on the future of the 150 acre site to the east of St. Catherine's Hill, the development control committee has given the go-ahead to the latest scheme.

The borough planning officer, Mr. David Pratley, told the committee the scheme would include a golf course, a ski slope and a walkway by the River Avon, as well as many other opportunities for leisure pursuits.

He said it was the intention of the applicant, Mr. Max Goode, that people should come to the centre to stay and learn leisure and how to enjoy and occupy their time.

Mr. Pratley suggested that the committee approve the scheme in principle, with several conditions—including one which would allow for the envisaged nine-hole golf course to be extended to a full 18-hole course.

He reported that there had been objections to the proposal from the Dorset Naturalists, the Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group, the Friends of the Earth, several local residents and from Burton Parish Council.

Most were concerned about possible effect on ecology.

Mr. Pratley said that if more people were attracted to the area then the wildlife must be affected, but the effect would be nothing like as serious as that which would be caused by the previously suggested residential development.

Coun. Bill Jones told the committee: "I'm very enthusiastic about this. Anything which increases the leisure of the community is to be applauded."

He added; "This could really put Christchurch on the recreational map."

Coun. Miss Caroline Sharp echoed his sentiments.

"I am quite, delighted that something which is going to be a help to so many people is being proposed for this area. It will open a walkway along the river for which I have longed for many years," she said.

Coun. Bill Bentley was also in favour of the scheme, telling members that the Sports Council, on which he is Christchurch's representative, would soon change its name to the "Sports and Recreational Council."

Doubts raised over leisure centre plan Special visit is to be made to Dudmoor

Times-Herald December 13, 1975

THE "education for leisure" centre which Poole county councillor Maxwell Goode is hoping to establish on 150 acres of Dudmoor Farm, Christchurch, did not get a smooth passage through Friday's meeting of Dorset County Council's planning sub-committee.

And at the end of a debate during which many doubts were raised about the feasibility of such a scheme, the impact on the surrounding countryside and the effect of roadworks, members agreed with Mrs. Jill Williams that before coming to a decision they must make a special site visit.

Particular concern was expressed at the possible interference with existing properties at the junction of Fairmile Road with the entrance to the site.

Members had been told by Mr. J. Rogers from the county surveyor's department, that to cope with the sort of traffic which such a development would generate there would have to be a fairly complicated junction at Fairmile, with something in the nature of a mini-roundabout which would mean affecting the dwellings on each side of the junction.

"HARE-BRAINED"

This did not find favour with Coun. Deric Scott. "I am one of the few people who remember when those original homes were built abutting on to this entrance," he said, "and I don't see why the residents should be inconvenienced by some kind of hare-brained development which someone wants to put at the back of these properties."

Assistant county planning officer John Scutt, who recommended approval of the application, reminded members that this was part of an area of 190 acres on which the applicants had been refused permission for a residential neighbourhood. That application was at present the subject of an appeal, which was pending.

The applicant had now put forward a scheme confined to his own 150 acres for an entirely new concept of development.

Described as an "education for leisure" centre, it would run training courses for instruction in various leisure pursuits.

Mr. Scutt said the applicant had in mind zones for various activities, with an area open to the general public around the perimeter of the site, including the riverside,

It was proposed to create a new lake for fly fishing in one of the meadows, a 30-foot high dry ski slope and a nine hole golf course.

There would also be an area for field sports covering such pursuits as archery and a building zone in which the changing accommodation, cafeteria and restaurant would be situated.

There was also a proposal for a building, for rural craft exhibitions and in which such crafts as hurdling, corn-dolly making and the like would be taught.

The whole development would build up in the final phase to a sports hall and gymnasium. Adjoining the building zone would be a park for 360 cars with an overspill area.

Mr. Scutt said it was felt by the county planning authority that the development should be properly phased, and the applicant had said that it was proposed that the first phase would be an extension of the existing riding school and the erection of 100 chalets.

Mr. Scutt said there had been a number of objections to those activities in a natural valley area, particularly from conservationists.

Some people had expressed the feeling that this represented the thin end of the wedge to the applicant eventually getting what he had in mind originally—a residential neighbourhood.

Although he was recommending approval of the application, Mr Scutt said it was conditional upon an agreement with the applicant to cover a number of things including improvement of the vehicular access from Fairmile Road.

It was estimated by the applicant that up to 100 cars an hour would come in and out of the area, a higher estimate than the county planning department had made.

Mr. Scutt said that the private road leading into the site would also need to be improved very considerably. At the moment it was very wet and full of potholes.

The applicant, Mr. Scutt said, was prepared to amend his proposals to include adjoining land which had been included in his original proposals for housing.

VERY UNTIDY

At the moment this area was very untidy and embraced piggeries, refuse dumps, caravans all dotted about. The applicant was prepared to buy this land when the owners were prepared to sell in order to enlarge the nine-hole golf course to 18 holes. This proposal would help to clean up a very untidy area.

The chairman of the committee, Coun. Vivian Braham said it seemed to him that it was a genuine attempt to improve the sporting facilities of the area and to provide for short stays by family units.

Coun. Mrs. Williams said she felt they could not take this proposal too seriously. "We should view it very very carefully from all angles," she declared.

"The computations are so great we may end up with a worse mess than we have got there already. This is a very large slice of land and I think we should see it for ourselves. We can't make a proper decision just sitting here."

Moving a site visit, Mrs. Williams said Fairmile Road already had a considerable traffic problem, and there was a mini-roundabout only a short distance from the proposed one.

Supporting a site visit, Coun. Maj. E. W. Ruston said that they must be seen to do it properly. They should go right to the north-west tip where the caravans and shanties were to be seen.

He was concerned about the fact that an alternative line for Route 10 was along the old railway line. This might conflict with the new development and would certainly be cheek by jowl with it.

He also doubted whether it would ever be possible to enforce the 20-odd conditions which it was suggested should be attached to planning permission. "I think some of them are impossible conditions," he added.

The county planning officer, Mr. Alan Swindall, said that obviously one would not wish to police the place to see that such conditions were kept. But if there were complaints there was a remedy if the complaint had been covered in the conditions.

CAPITAL QUESTION

Coun. Scott asked members if they were satisfied that there was a need for such facilities in the area, and they should also have regard whether in the present economic climate the sort of capital necessary would be forthcoming.

He doubted the wisdom of giving approval to something if there was not the slightest possibility of capital on a sufficiently vast scale to enable it to be done in the immediate future.

Coun. George Knops said his mind boggled when he thought of the number of horses and facilities which would be needed to support 100 chalets for use in connection with an extension to the riding school as the first phase.

"It is our duty to consider the impact on the surrounding countryside, and I feel that this would be absolutely disastrous," he said.

"Frankly, to my mind Phase 1 as suggested is so outrageous as to put the whole project in doubt."

He felt they should seek the advice of various horse-riding societies as to the implications of the sort of activities needed to support 100 chalets.

Asked the vice-chairman, Coun. R. C. Rose: "Are we, in effect, giving permission for a chalet-type hotel in another way?"