

# *Garage v council on Purewell site*

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FRIARS Cliff Motors Ltd. appealed at Christchurch on Wednesday against refusal of the local planning authority to grant outline approval for a garage and showrooms with petrol facilities at Stony Lane, Christchurch. The ground of refusal was that the proposed use would be contrary to the Purewell Policy Plan, under which the site is allocated for a local authority depot.

The appellants' solicitor, Mr. David Adamson, said the reason for the appeal was to enable his clients' existing site at Mudeford to be re-developed for residential purposes.

Occupying 1.2 acres and having a frontage of 240ft. to Stony Lane, and a depth of 247ft., it was eminently satisfactory for the purpose proposed.

The Purewell Policy Plan was a non-statutory document, and the local authority appeared to have taken no steps to acquire the land for a depot.

In refusal of an earlier appeal it had been argued that the site was within a proposed green belt, but in the course of subsequent appeal it had been indicated that, in the event of the Minister agreeing to the green belt, an area including the appeal site would be deleted.

## WHAT SIZE

On behalf of the appellants, Mr. John M. Pittard, chief assistant architect with a Bournemouth firm of architects, said he was familiar with the site, which lay some 250 metres south of the roundabout at the junction of Stony Lane with the Christchurch by-pass, and immediately north of the existing industrial developments in Stony Lane.

Inquiries directed to the local authority following the refusals mentioned by Mr. Adamson had established that although some land was required for an engineers' depot in Stony Lane, it had not been possible to determine the actual size required.

He said it was interesting to note that when permission was sought last September to build club premises on the site, none of the five reasons given for refusal mentioned that the site was allocated for a local authority depot.

The proposal constituted a Ford main dealership, and comprised showroom and car sales—both new and second-hand, also service facilities and a parts department, with a forecourt providing petrol facilities. Its design met the requirements of the Ford Company, said Mr. Pittard.

As the only reason given for refusal was the depot allocation, it was assumed that the proposals for access and landscaping could be readily approved under a detailed planning application.

The proposal was in scale with, and was a logical extension of, the existing light industrial development in Stony Lane.

Replying to the presiding inspector, Mr. W. D. Charnley, Mr. Pittard said the plans ensured adequate sight-lines, and in preparing plans those concerned had agreed that access could be most suitably provided to the appeal site by combining it with access to the proposed depot.

Both the land required for the appeal site and that required by the council was in the same ownership.

Giving evidence for the planning authority, Robert M. Wise, chief planning assistant, said earlier applications for development of the site had envisaged a roller-skating rink, a garage with petrol facilities and club premises. All had been refused.

### ONE SITE PREFERRED

Cross-examined by Mr. Adamson, Mr Wise said the authority considered it preferable to have one seven-acre site in which to concentrate all depot requirements, rather than a number of smaller ones, as at present.

But in reply to the inspector he agreed that the council had not, to his knowledge, taken any steps to acquire the seven-acre site in which the appeal site was included.

He thought that, in the event of the land not being used as a depot, its most likely zoning would be for light industrial use.

The borough engineer, Mr. R.G. Mockridge, said his council had four main depots in various parts of the borough, as well as several small sites used mainly for storage of materials.

Problems existed at each of the four main sites, and in addition to those there were problems of management and communication, "identification", car-parking, social club facilities, civic amenity compounds and a refuse transfer system.

It was evident, therefore, that being badly sited, the present depots were fully utilised, and did not meet present-day requirements.

The proposed site would be ideally sited, centrally placed, and with good access off Stony Lane or the proposed Purewell Link Road. It would allow for proper expansion, and meet all the needs outlined.

### LINE OF ROAD

Although the line of the Link Road had not yet been finally determined, it would join the by-pass at the Stony Lane/By-pass roundabout, which it was proposed that Route 10 (a new dual carriage-way to relieve the A35 Barrack Road) would also join.

Re-design of the roundabout by the county council, and/or alignment of the Link Road, could reduce the area reserved for depot purposes.

Alternative development to encroach on to the seven acres reserved for depot purposes would be premature.

But it was unlikely that the money to commence the depot project would be available until the existing sites could be sold for re-development, or until the national economic climate improved.

It was therefore imperative that the whole of the site reserved for the depot in the Policy Plain should remain reserved for that purpose.

Of the main sites, Portfield Road premises were held on a short-term lease from the Ministry of Defence, and the site could be reclaimed by the Ministry.

The site at Stanpit was between a residential area and an amenity area, and would be completely out of place in two years when tipping was completed.

Its buildings were extremely old, and in need of replacement.

Answering the inspector, Mr. Mockridge said that in the event of the appeal site being detached from the seven-acre area, the council's "future options" would be closed.

Possibly six acres might be sufficient for the borough's purposes, but it would not permit facilities to be available for the water authority or other associated bodies.

As far as timing was concerned, the council must think about centralising its depots within a period of from two to five years. Asked if his department would continue to operate

without the proposed new depot, Mr. Mockridge said this would be possible in the short term, but would be very difficult in the long term.

The inspector visited the site. The Minister's decision will be made known later.