

Is Mudeford To Lay The Golden Egg? Association Committee Holds Emergency Meeting

Christchurch Times March 3, 1961

AT an emergency meeting of the committee of Mudeford and Stanpit Residents' Association on Tuesday evening, members expressed concern at a talk given by Coun. W. E. Tucker, chairman of Christchurch Council's Planning committee, to the C.R.A. in which he said he "looked upon Mudeford as the key to the future of Christchurch".

From Coun. Tucker's comments the association feels that Mudeford is to be the goose that lays the golden egg for the new Town Hall and other developments in the town centre. Coun. Tucker's subject was: "The broader implications of Town Planning."

The following statement was made to the C.T. after the emergency meeting:—

The committee of the Mudeford and Stanpit Residents' Association read the report in your valued newspaper with great interest and something akin to amazement as a letter from the Town Clerk to this association, dated 8th February, stated that he had no information as to when the County Council will be in a position to make the revised proposals affecting the Christchurch town map available for inspection, and Coun. Tucker would appear to be (at the least) premature in outlining proposals which this association has been informed are still in the "confidential" stage.

It would seem that Mudeford is to be the goose that lays the golden egg for the new Town Hall and other developments in the Town centre but the "revealing insight into the statistics of proposed development at Mudeford" presumably was based on the assumption that approval would be given for high density multi-storey flats along the harbour front of which the County Planning Officer at a meeting with the association professed ignorance.

It is to be remembered, however, that the association has received a letter from the Minister of Housing and Local Government intimating that its objections to the proposed developments would be the subject of a public enquiry and it is significant that a similar enquiry at Parkstone resulted in buildings being restricted to four storeys.

Residents of Mudeford and Stanpit object most strongly to the erection of multi-storey flats (nine storeys are proposed at Rushford Warren) entirely out of character with the locality and other dwellings in the vicinity and which would pale into insignificance the beauty of the Priory when viewed from the harbour approach, which is the ancient means of access. It is of interest in this connection that a proposal for multi-storey flats at Wick Ferry was rejected because it would spoil the view from the Bournemouth side of the river.

The association appreciates that development is essential when the present dwellings have passed their usefulness, but why must new buildings tower to the extent envisaged in the proposals? Surely there could be a compromise on the lines proposed by Alderman Mrs. D. Baker and seconded by Coun. Miss M. Vernon that the height be limited strictly to four storeys or approximately that of the Avonmouth Hotel. Needless to say, this proposal was defeated by Councillors living away from the area.

Coun. Tucker's regret at the "colossal" area of beautiful trees lost by bungalow development is very belated; surely our planners approved the schemes or is it to be inferred that plans are "rubber stamped" without a survey of the area and, again, why was not the opportunity taken of preserving at least a proportion of the trees? And yet the needless felling of beautiful trees continues. But the committee appreciates the action of the Council in giving consideration to an alternative proposal of this association which will preserve no less than 28 trees at the Sugar Bowl in addition to all those fronting Mudeford Green in order to widen the road. The contact with estate agents is noted and it is hoped that this did not culminate in the advertisement by one firm offering up to £1,200 for each permitted flat space on the harbour frontage.

Mudeford and Stanpit residents extend an invitation to Coun. Tucker to address them and give them an outline of the development proposals for Mudeford and a re-assessment of the additional rate required for the Town centre developments based on the theory that the objections of the residents to the Mudeford projects are sustained by the Ministry and the number of flats proposed is reduced by 50 per cent, at least.

The residents would also welcome on the platform (in addition to the local councillors) Councillors W. Bingham and J. Higgins who, apart from Alderman Mrs. Baker and Councillor Miss Vernon, are the only ones on the Council who support proposals to preserve the amenities and charm of Mudeford and their views would be greatly appreciated.

Chairman at the emergency meeting was Mr. W. A. Bridge, chairman of the association, which has a membership of 350.