

Leave It Alone Says Trader

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A PROPOSAL for the future development of High Street and Castle Street, between the junctions with Millhams Street—"said to change the face of the two streets"— is causing concern among traders. Said one shopkeeper yesterday:"Leave High Street alone; there is too much of this messing and pulling down".

The plan, prepared by the County Planning Officer provides for an overall width of the highway of 62 feet, including a 22ft. carriageway, two 8ft. lay-bys and two 12ft. footpaths. Maximum depth to which any property might be affected in the event of re-development taking place would be 15 feet. Brought up at the November meeting of the Borough Council, the matter was deferred pending views from traders in the sections affected.

The traders were informed of the proposal by letter and asked to submit their comments to the Town Hall. These comments are expected to be put before Tuesday's meeting of the Borough Council.

States the letter: "The object of the proposal is to secure a more commodious carriageway and footpaths. . . It will be appreciated that this proposal cannot be achieved until such time as circumstances permit setting back the Frontages of many properties in the High Street."

NO DATE FIXED

It further states that no date has been fixed for the widening of the street in the manner mentioned and that the establishment of development control lines is not intended to affect any existing buildings. The development control lines operate as an indication of the policy of the Planning Authority with respect to any applications for planning permission for new building or substantial re-development of the existing properties.

The question of acquisition of property by the local authority for the purpose of widening High Street is not being contemplated at the present time, although it might arise if an owner who was redeveloping his property wished the local authority to acquire so much of his site as would, on re-development, be unbuilt upon for the purposes of road widening. "If any acquisition of property does take place, compensation will, of course, be paid," adds the letter.

ALL FOR NOTHING

Mr. A. R. Jarvis, of Jarvis Radios, told the C.T.: "I would say that I was against it, because surely the whole idea of the bypass was to relieve the heavy traffic through the main street which I think it has done very effectively, and I think by pulling the whole place down it will cost a whole lot of money for nothing.

"Even if they intend to re-imburse the shops concerned, it still would not pay for the inconvenience of the business people and the customers. All they are going to do is to drive the business out of the town.

"If it were a question of the roads not being wide enough, the answer to that would be to stop any sort of parking in the road except for loading and unloading."

Mr. Jarvis said that his firm were in process of replying to the circular letter.

Mr. R. Fleet, of Randalls, fishmongers, thought it was "a great pity." He continued: "I don't think it is necessary in a place like Christchurch. I think they have done quite enough. I really think they will spoil the town."

He added: "I suppose it has to come, but I don't like the idea."

"GOOD PROPOSITION"

Mr. H. F. Hardy, manager of Froud Bros. Ltd., said: "I think it is a good proposition. The widening of the High Street would make a vast difference to Christchurch. At times the congestion is impossible and the widening will definitely help ease congestion and make the road safer for pedestrians".

Mrs. E. A. Williams, tobacconist, commented: "A lot of rot. Leave the High Street alone; there is too much of this messing and pulling down. Fancy making lay-by roads in a town like this! Summer visitors comment about the lovely wide road and the beautiful old town".

Mr. W. A. Blackmore, of Smeeds Ltd., felt that "Christchurch is better left alone. As it is, it is a nice little unit. Road widening will change the character of the town and I don't want to see any drastic changes".

Mr. J. F. H. Smith, of Smiths Showrooms, said: "I am convinced, after trading in High Street for many years, that to alter its shape would destroy its character and to cut off the corner would encourage fast traffic and lead to danger.

"The suggested lay-bys would become car parks for the proposed shopping area near the proposed new Town Hall and shopkeepers at this end of the street would grumble at the loss of trade."

A copy of the plan showing the proposed development control lines can be inspected at the Borough Surveyor's office.

The local Ratepayers' Association have arranged for the Deputy Mayor (Ald. J. W. Richardson) to address them at their meeting on February 20 on Town Centre Development. The Borough Engineer, Mr. E. B. Wise, has also been invited to attend the meeting.