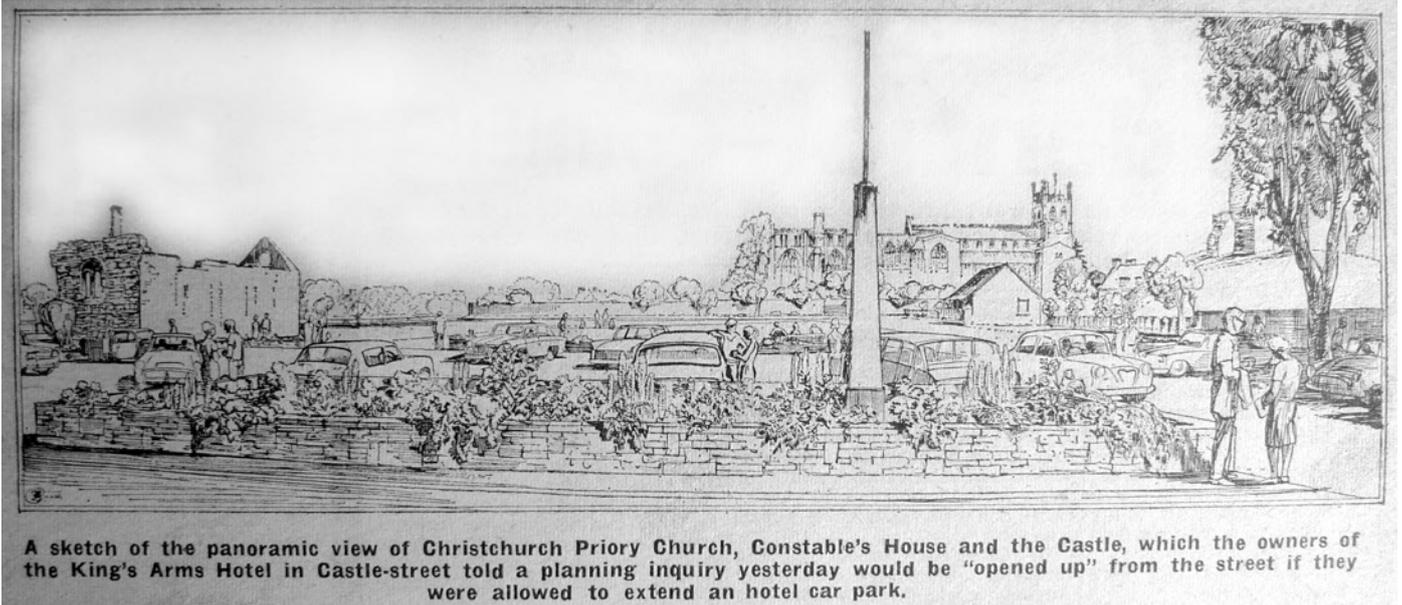


# CREEPER KEPT CREEPING IN

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A sketch of the panoramic view of Christchurch Priory Church, Constable's House and the Castle, which the owners of the King's Arms Hotel in Castle-street told a planning inquiry yesterday would be "opened up" from the street if they were allowed to extend an hotel car park.

**A CREEPER kept creeping into the talk of a planning inquiry at Christchurch yesterday at which a famous view was at stake---the view from Castle-street, Christchurch, across a garden and bowling green to the Norman Priory Church, Castle Keep and Constable's House, the view that IS Christchurch.**

Frequently described by Mr. Stephen Tumin, counsel for the brewery firm of Charrington and Co. Ltd, owners of the King's Arms Hotel, in Castle-street, as "virulent" (it had climbed trees), and on one occasion as "a considerable menace" (clearly it was killing the trees), the creeper was part of a shrubbery in the foreground of the view which the brewers, the inquiry was told, wanted to clear away to make room for a larger car park for the hotel.

The clearance, said Mr. Tumin, which would also involve the bowling club's pavilion and some potting sheds being removed from their present positions, would "open up" a panoramic view of the three ancient buildings and could only improve the scene.

The brewers' appeal to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was against the refusal of Christchurch Council to permit the existing small car park to be extended to accommodate 35 instead of 12 cars.

The reason for the refusal was that the proposal would be "detrimental to the visual amenities of this section of Castle-street which contains buildings of considerable historic and ancient value."

One of the objectors, Ald. Mrs. Dorothy Baker, representing the Friends of the Red House Museum, defended the creeper. It was greatly valued by botanists, she said. She also appealed for the protection of a Siberian crab tree and a yew tree in the garden.

"VERY DEARLY"

As for the view—that was a thing which "touches our borough very dearly," said Ald. Mrs. Baker. We feel the encroachment of cars is nibbling away just one more bit of our ancient heritage." She added that "great play" had been made by the brewers about moving the pavilion. "They appear to be almost moved to tears because of it obscuring the view. You would have imagined they would have moved it sometime ago without enlargement of the car park," she commented. The Town Clerk of Christchurch, Mr. John Macfadyen, who understood the common name of the creeper was Russian vine, said there could be little doubt the situation of the proposal happened to be the corner of the borough which was most treasured, particularly by older inhabitants.

It probably remained in the minds of visitors more than any other part of the town when they had gone home after their holidays.

The manager of the King's Arms, Mr. Anthony Pinkham, said their present parking facilities were "hopelessly inadequate." Nobody who knew Christchurch could deny that.

In addition to the small park they were dealing with in front of the garden opposite the hotel, there was a park beside and behind the hotel holding 51 cars. But cars bringing patrons to functions at the hotel could number 150 in an evening—and then there were those of the normal guests and patrons at the three bars.

### "CHAOTIC AT TIMES"

Congestion both in the car parks and on the highway stretching the entire length of Castle-street and in Millhams-street at the back of the hotel was at times "chaotic."

The inadequacy was felt not only during the "function season" from the end of September to the end of April, but throughout the year, for in the summer there was the increase in seasonal trade.

Mr. Pinkham said the proposal could do nothing but "enhance the lovely views of the Constable's House, the Priory and the Castle ruins by opening up the entire vista from whatever direction the viewer looks."

Mr. Douglas Adams, the appellant's architect, pointed out that the bowling green and garden were maintained, at considerable cost, to a very high standard by his company, and it must not be taken for granted that this aspect was a public amenity.

He mentioned that a flower bed proposed to be constructed at the front of the car park would form a partial floral screen to the majority of the cars parked.

### "SHORT GLIMPSE"

Dr. Ernest Deane, president of Christchurch Rotary Club, speaking in support of the proposal, said he drove past the spot several times every day and had long felt the pavilion, trees, and potting sheds obscured the view to a large extent. Only a "short glimpse" was possible to anyone driving past. Mr. Tumin said the King's Arms was more than an ordinary hotel—it was a centre and rendezvous for almost every local club and association. It was important to a wide section of the community for cars to be parked there with reasonable convenience.

It was also important to get as many cars off the road as possible because this would mean fewer cars parked outside people's houses.

He commented that these were undisputed points.

From the aesthetic angle, he said, there was no question of bringing cars to a place where no car had ever soiled the prospect before. The car was already there. Surely the advantage of opening up the view counteracted the appearance of a couple more rows of vehicles.

He added that there was no question of lorries or buses or anything high being allowed to obtrude across the view.

It was the "earnest wish" of his clients to make the view as sightly as possible—obviously it would be entirely against their own interests in a place like Christchurch to do anything else. And they would be prepared to preserve those trees the local authority asked them to.

The Town Clerk said that obviously they had to balance the needs of the hotel against the loss of certain amenities people had been accustomed to over many years.

He suggested the need to preserve these particular amenities, with their long historical association, outweighed the other most strongly. He observed that no objections had been put forward by the bowling club, the Ministry of Works, owners of the Castle and Constable's House, or residents of adjoining buildings in Castle-street, several of which they had heard were scheduled as being of historic interest.

The Area Planning Officer, Mr. K. C. Jeremiah, said the existing view was across a foreground of immaculate turf, bounded by a mellow brick wall. Foliage beyond provided a transition between the brick of the wall and the stone of the Priory.

The shape, limited capacity and parking pattern of the existing car park fortunately did not greatly affect the value of this foreground. The proposal, however, offered instead a larger, angular area, accommodating three times as many vehicles.

The angular penetration into the hotel garden would entail the loss of the front lawn and flower beds and bring the parked cars close to the bowling green and to within a few feet of the Constable's House, which, would suffer most.

All three of the buildings would be viewed across the tops of stationary vehicles which would be yet another case of environment spoilt by parked cars.

"UNSYMPATHETIC "

Mr. Jeremiah admitted, however, that the removal of the bowling pavilion would improve the prospect of the Castle and Constables House.

Questioned by Mr. Tumin, he commented that the proposed arrangement of the new car park in relation to the bowling green would result in completely unsympathetic treatment of the landscape and no aesthetic satisfaction being achieved.