

# A Need For Small Flats- Inquiry Told

C.T. April 6, 1962

**A CHRISTCHURCH builder, who is also founder-member Christchurch Old People's Welfare and Housing Society Ltd. and wants to erect flats, some of which will be occupied by old people, has appealed against the refusal of the planning authority to allow him to erect the flats, over storerooms, on land at Bargates. His appeal was heard at a Christchurch planning inquiry last Thursday.**

The builder, Mr. Stanley Kermode, 77, Barrack Road, was represented by Mr. Robert Hughes, who told the inspector conducting the inquiry that the appellant had been a former member of Christchurch Borough Council and the Hampshire County Council and had served on its planning committees.

Mr. Kermode was appealing against the refusal of the planning authority to permit the erection of storerooms with flats over at the rear of No. 55, Bargates, Christchurch. Reasons given by the Planning Committee for refusal were that the proposal constitutes undesirable back land development providing a serious lack of visual amenities for the occupants of the proposed flats; and that the proposal constitutes serious overdevelopment of this small site and would result in a reduction in the open space about the existing building.

Mr. Hughes said the flats would be for old people—spinsters and married couples without children— and he submitted that these would be the type of people who would have no need of a car or garden. Of the four flats, two would have a living room and two bedrooms, and two would have a living room and one bedroom.

## FREEHOLD

The freehold of four properties in Bargates was acquired in September, 1960, by Pendennis Properties (Bournemouth) Ltd., of which the appellant is managing director, one of which was subject of the appeal. The others were numbers 65, 67 and 69, Bargates.

Plans were prepared to develop the area which the company had acquired and originally the idea was that on Number 55 four shops should be erected with 20 flats above. Those proposals were not approved and one of the reasons had been lack of parking accommodation. The appellant arranged with the British Legion to open up land at the rear of the premises to provide adequate area for parking facilities.

The appellant decided to concentrate on the development at Number 55 and cut down the number of flats from 20 to 12. The local planning authority were prepared to see three storeys of flats at Number 55 but the Hampshire Planning Office advised that the building of three storeys was not acceptable, but approval would be given if one storey of four flats was deleted from the plan. Now Mr. Kermode was asking to be allowed to build the four flats that had been deleted from the plan on storerooms at the back of the premises.

He thought the local planning authority in their "heart of hearts" would quite welcome the extra accommodation, but the County had advised against it.

## HOUSING PROBLEM

Mr. Kermode said he thought there was a need in the borough for relatively small flats near to the shopping area of the town and particularly for people who would not qualify in the normal way for flats which his society provided. The rents of the flats, if permission to build were granted, would be about £3 a week for the smaller flats and more for the larger ones. He

considered there was still very much of a housing problem in Christchurch, particularly for flats and properties to let, land also was very scarce.

Mr. J. Macfadyen, Town Clerk, said that development which would involve a density higher than the Town Map could not be approved at Borough Council level. In that case they could only recommend and their recommendation could be over-ruled by the County Planning Committee. So far as demand for this particular type of property went, in the centre of the town, he didn't think anyone was better placed than Mr. Kermode to give the true position.

"As I see it, you can't go and build flats of this type on any piece of land which might at the moment be undeveloped. The fact that there is a need for these in particular does not mean it would be right to put them in this particular place"

#### COMPLETE LACK

Mr. F. F. Freeth, Area Planning Officer, said the proposed flats would have a complete lack of visual amenity and interest for the occupants, particularly having regard to the fact that, although at the present time a view to the east could be obtained across the rear of the properties fronting Bargates, any economic redevelopment would of necessity involve a greater depth of buildings of a similar height to the proposal in question, which in turn would completely obstruct and nullify the view.

The proposal constituted serious over-development of a small site and would result in a reduction of the open space about the existing building. To introduce flats in the form of an extension at the rear was most unsatisfactory and would be creating living conditions similar to those local planning authorities were constantly attempting to eradicate where they already existed as a legacy from the past.

Objections to the appeal were also raised by Mr. V. J. Whitlock, 16, Avon Buildings, who emphasised the dangers of over congestion of the area, and Mrs. E. E. Squires, 13, Avon Buildings, who said that the proposed development would block a lot of the light from her premises.

After closing the inquiry, the Inspector, Mr. D. I. Pryde, A.R.I.B.A., visited the site. The Minister's decision will be made known later.