

Plan To Relieve Town Centre Headache

C.T. April 26, 1963

TRAFFIC proposals passed by Christchurch Chamber of Trade at their meeting on Monday envisage extensions to car parking facilities in the Pound Lane car park and in Sopers Lane, removing the railings at the by-pass end of the High Street and narrowing the island at the junction of Stour Road and Barrack Road. The traders hope their proposals will relieve town centre traffic problems.

The Chamber, whose proposals are to go to the Borough Council, also want the Council to investigate the possibility of purchasing any available back land in the vicinity of the High Street to be used for parking spaces and for trade vans to use while delivering their goods.

The proposals were drawn up by the Chamber's traffic sub-committee, members of which are the president, Mr. Maurice Lynk, Mr. John S. C. Morgan, Mr. G. E. Stebbing and Mr. W. Bentley. The proposals, which were outlined by the president, were all carried, some with additions suggested by traders at the meeting.

Outlining the proposals for Pound Lane car park, Mr. Lynk said the present one was not large enough. Members of the committee visited it on a wet Wednesday afternoon and there were no spaces vacant in the town end of the car park. At the bottom end there were three spaces. The committee had also noticed, he said, that the Pit Site car park, which was not marked out for parking, was three-quarter full.

The committee's first proposal for the Pound Lane park was that the entrance should be from the High Street end only. By doing this the width on to the by-pass could be reduced and as a result the bulbous shaped piece, which at the moment directs people in and out of the car park on the by-pass side, could be reduced very considerably in size.

SHRUBBERY

The shrubbery at the roadside was not very decorative, although it might be in years to come. The committee felt it was taking up valuable space and could be removed so that the kerb of the car park could be carried out a further 8ft. towards the road without any danger at all.

At the town end of the car park, where the telephone kiosk is, there is a very wide pavement and a grass verge. There was no purpose in the verge other than a decorative one, he said, and in the committee's opinion the pavement by the kiosk could be cut in half, the grass done away with, the extra ground taken into the car park and the cycle rack moved out to the edge of the path. The seat in the town end of the car park, also the waste paper basket, could be put somewhere else.

Referring to the bottom section of the car park, he said that the closing of the opening to traffic coming off the by-pass would do away with the braking zone on the road where there was a dotted line and splayed bay. Therefore the kerb could be moved out to where the dotted line is, taking into the car park the braking zone.

There was a large bank in the same place and the soil from that bank should be removed and put at the bottom end of the park which at the moment slopes down to the Mill Stream.

Bearing all those things in mind the committee then consider there would be room for the lower section to be marked out in rows instead of cars being parked out on the perimeter as at the present.

Dealing with Sopers Lane, Mr. Lynk said the committee found there were many trees in the Lane which did absolutely nothing except detract from the beauty of others. The trees down the Recreation Ground side of the Lane could be thinned out and reduced, in this way they would add to the beauty of the other trees and provide valuable space for car parking.

When this is done, the pavement on the Rec. side of Sopers Lane could be done away with

altogether and placed inside the Rec. There was a path here already, said Mr. Lynk, but it only went half way down the Rec. The committee considered that this path could be continued further along to come out by the block of flats.

WITHOUT GREAT LOSS

The space thus gained under the trees could be surfaced and cars parked at right angles instead of parallel with the road under the trees. This would give at least double the number of car spaces that are in the lane at the moment. It would mean taking a little of the Rec. and a piece of grass at the bottom of the lane near the flats, but it was thought that it could be taken without a great loss to the community.

One of the most important features of the whole idea was that it would widen Sopers Lane. At the moment when cars were parked on each side it was extremely difficult for two vehicles to pass in the middle. "If something like our suggestion is not done, then we are of the opinion that the car park in Sopers Lane will be taken away,

"When the new holiday camp opens the traffic in the lane is going to be considerably more than it is now, and if we are unable to widen the road, then almost inevitably the police are going to say cars must not park in Sopers Lane at all".

The committee had been advised that there might be certain legal difficulties about using the Rec. or a section of it in this way. They wanted these legal difficulties over-ridden.

The only major point the committee discussed in the High Street was the railings outside the shops from Rockhards to Bentleys—they didn't serve any real purpose and they did provide considerable hazards for people crossing the road from the Fountain. They used the refuge in the middle of the road and then were confronted with railings they had not noticed before.

If it were impossible for the railings to be removed the committee wanted to see that no cars were allowed to park in front of the opening in the railings near Rockhards' shop.

Dealing with the proposals for Stour Road, Mr. Lynk said that the trolley bus stop in that road was too near the corner and the committee thought it should be moved further down the road towards Tuckton Bridge.

Referring to the other side of the road, the president said that the island on which the traffic lights stood at the junction with Barrack Road was, in the committee's opinion, too wide. There was in fact just room for two cars to park side by side by this island provided the first car was tucked well into the kerb.

"If this island were reduced, and it is unusually wide, there would be ample room for two cars to pass and a white line could be painted on the road indicating two lanes. Then traffic which wanted to turn right into Barrack Road should stop on the right and traffic wishing to go to Bournemouth could stop on the left.

Mr. C. T. Waldron suggested that in addition to the proposals for Sopers Lane the Chamber should include the suggestion that the Borough Council investigate the possibility of purchasing back land in the area for further car-parking. This was carried unanimously.

BACK GARDENS

Mr. L. J. Deeley wondered whether it was possible for the Borough Council, in conjunction with the frontagers of the High Street, to take up some of the unused back gardens behind the High Street so that trade vehicles could deliver their goods to the back of the shops instead of using the High Street. Most of the hold-ups in the High Street at the moment came from trade vehicles and not from customers' cars.

Mr. Lynk said that he had no doubt this idea had been taken into consideration in the new town centre development plan. "I would be very disgusted and disappointed if it had not".

It was decided that the committee investigate parking in the High Street in conjunction with the back land.

The proposals for the Pound Lane car park were carried as was the proposal that the railings should be removed in the High Street.

The Chamber decided that the bus stop should be moved further down Stour Road and that the island should be narrowed. They also agreed that the question of staggering the traffic lights at the cross roads should be considered.