

No cars in High St. shock

COUNTY'S £1½m PLANS FOR TOWN CENTRE IN 1984

C.T. May 20, 1966

CHRISTCHURCH'S £1½m town centre plan, providing a High Street pedestrian precinct, a giant Pit Site roundabout, shopping and local government office development of the town hall car park, and using the by-pass as its main access road was unveiled by the county planners on Monday.

The plan spans the next twenty years; it envisages the redesigning of the town centre in four stages and proposes relatively little demolition.

Total capital cost to the borough council is estimated at £1,107,000 on present day prices and the early stages of the plan would be the most expensive. The rest would fall on the county council and the Ministry of Transport.

The first stage in the plan, which could begin within the next five years, is providing car parks to the west of High Street. Three are planned, the largest being behind the telephone exchange at Sopers Lane. It would accommodate 280 cars at first and could be made into a multi-storey one with room for 1,100 cars.

Two smaller car parks, one behind the post office yard and the other fronting onto Wick Lane, will accommodate 270 cars and could be made multi-storey with another 1,100 spaces.

Service roads, giving rear access to the High Street shops will be built around these three car parks.

NEW ROAD

Between the large and the two small car parks, the Druitt Gardens will remain intact. A new road from Pit Site will cut between the gardens and the Wickfield estate to Wick Lane: it will then continue across to Princess Avenue to provide access to the Quay area. Sopers Lane will be closed from Pit Site to St. Margaret's Avenue.

On the other side of High Street, a spur from Millhams Street will provide rear access to High Street shops and encircle the Congregational Church to provide access to the town hall and car park site.

The redevelopment of this site, probably with shops on the site of the town hall and local government offices above and behind, is stage two of the plan. A great deal of this land is at present owned by the council. The car park at the rear of the telephone exchange will provide alternative parking space for that lost by the development of the town hall car park.

Stage three is the construction of a 600-car surface level car park on Millhams Mead — at present common land. Access for vehicles would be from the by-pass at one end and from Millhams Street across a bridge at the back of the King's Arms car park at the other. A footbridge would join the car park with the town hall redevelopment site for pedestrians.

ENLARGED

A new link road from Purewell Cross to Stony Lane roundabout will relieve pressure of traffic on Bridge Street and Purewell. The by-pass will be re-aligned to bend slightly northwards as it approaches Pit Site roundabout, which will be enlarged to demolish the Co-operative shop and adjoining premises to the east and Stour Cottage and parts of Barrack Road recreation ground to the west. The roundabout garden will be four or five times as big: it will be laid out as a park, with footpaths across it. These footpaths will be linked to Bargates, Barrack Road Rec and High Street by pedestrian subways.

The fourth stage is the closing of High Street to traffic, which would arrive by the rear service roads.

Church Street, Castle Street from Millhams Street, Wick Lane as far as the new car park and Church Lane will then be closed to all traffic but buses and that requiring access to properties there. The effect of this will be to force traffic to use the by-pass route to the north of the town as the way in to the area to the west of High Street and to the Quay and Priory.

For the majority of traffic, Bridge Street and Castle Street would become a cul-de-sac leading to the Millhams Mead car park. The car park layout would discourage them from nipping across to the by-pass.

NEW BY-PASS

Deputy county planning officer, Mr. R. S. Stoddart said on Monday that the plan was based on the assumption that a new by-pass would be built for Christchurch before the end of the twenty-year period.

This new road would probably join the Bournemouth Spur road at the planned Hurn flyover, but where it would start had not been decided. The line of the road would depend on the results of the land use and transportation study being undertaken by Hampshire, Bournemouth and Dorset for the area.

The amount of through traffic travelling along the by-pass would be too much for the road, so another by-pass would be necessary unless an elevated motorway was built. The present by-pass and the Pit Site roundabout would take the traffic which couldn't be diverted, that from between Highcliffe and Boscombe.

He said the plan envisaged the exercising of some control over what traffic was allowed to cross the southern end of the High Street.

DECLINE

Inadequate parking space in the town centre until recently had been one of the reasons for the decline of Christchurch as a shopping centre, so car parks were a feature of the plan.

"We have tried to suggest a way in which the main local shopping centre can continue to flourish and pull back a little of the trade which it has lost".

They had provided for an extra 50,000 square feet of shopping space in the centre: this had been planned to a "carefully worked out scheme" of the total quantity of shopping they thought could flourish. The councils had commissioned consultants to deal with this part of the work.

The shopping area was intended to be concentrated in the High Street, and further shopping development in Bargates would be discouraged. At present, Bargates is shown on the Town Map as a shopping area. "Taking it out of the shopping area on the map has not yet been fully approved", said Mr. Stoddart.

PEDESTRIAN

The town hall site would be redeveloped to a comprehensive plan, and Mr. Stoddart thought that a statutory comprehensive development area plan would need approval before High Street could be made into a pedestrian precinct.

Mr. E. B. Wise, borough surveyor, said that two criteria had been mentioned as being essential to a plan for Christchurch; it must make a real effort to preserve the character of the town and make a realistic approach to meeting modern requirements, particularly of traffic. "This plan is a very able attempt to measure up to these criteria. It would seem to me to be the only way in which Christchurch as we know it can remain. High Street has to be preserved in its present character".

He said that the planners had tried for the ideal of a pedestrian way right up to the Priory. "We had to agree, however, that the road across the southern end of High Street was necessary for bus circulation and commercial traffic had to get to the network of properties at that part of Christchurch".

No provision, he said, had been made for a bus or coach station, as there wasn't thought to be a need for one in Christchurch.

A public meeting is to be held at the town hall next Wednesday, when county planning officers will explain their proposals and answer questions. Objections and comments on the plan must be made before June 24 to the county planning office.

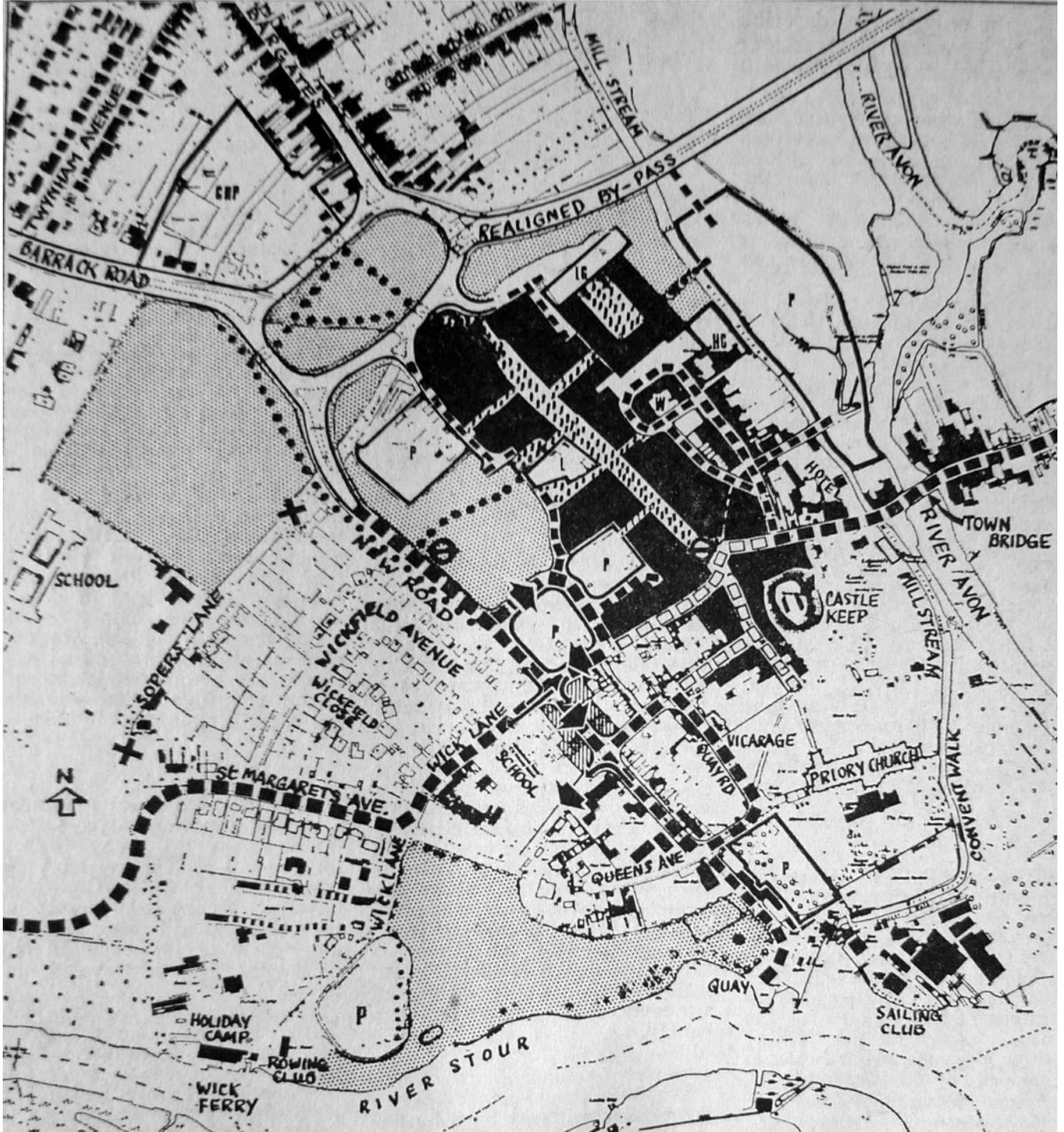
The plan is not a statutory map, and therefore doesn't need to go to the Minister of Housing for approval.

The county planning committee and the borough council will again consider the plan and the objections, if any, of local people.

Copies of the plan and written statement are on sale at 5s. at the town hall, the area planning office, Empress Road, Lyndhurst, and The Castle, Winchester.

MAP SHOWS TOWN CENTRE OF THE FUTURE

C.T. May 27, 1966



	Principal Traffic Routes		Shopping Redevelopment
	Distributor Roads		Public Open Space
	Service Roads		One Way Street
	Limited Access Roads		Permissible Turn at Junction
	Principal Footpath Routes		Road Closed to Vehicles
	Shops and Pedestrian Areas		
	Principal Bus Stops		
	Civic Purposes		
	Car Parks		
	Library		
	Local Government		
	Court House/Police Station		
	Congregational Church		
	Health Centre		

THE shape of the town centre to come is shown in this map published last week by the county planning committee.

The planners have decided that the best way of preserving the present character of the town while meeting the needs of the traffic in the future is to take all

vehicles out of the High Street and put the ones that want to stop in Christchurch into car parks.

The main through traffic will use a new by-pass not yet planned in detail, and the present Christchurch by-pass will become the approach road to the town. To keep traffic across the southern end of High Street to a minimum, Castle Street and Wick Lane will be culs-de-sac to all but buses and vehicles needing access to properties there.

Service roads at the back of shops in the High Street will provide access for loading and unloading.

Pedestrian subways will give access to the enlarged roundabout from the Barrack Road side of the Recreation Ground, from near the town end of Bargates and from the end of the new pedestrian precinct into which the present High Street is to be converted.

The county planners want comments and objections to be sent to The Castle, Winchester, before June 24.