

# *Residents Object To Car Park Proposals*

## Court Imposes A Condition After Hearing Grievances

C.T. May 9, 1952

**IN the hope that it might alleviate traffic congestion in Lymington Road, Highcliffe, especially during the summer months, Christchurch Town Council propose to establish a car park on nearly an acre of land adjoining Wortley Road. The proposal has brought objections from property owners in the vicinity who fear that the car park will depreciate the value of their houses and impair the amenities. Three of these residents brought their objections before a special sitting of the Christchurch Magistrates on Wednesday, but their appeals against the Council's decision were dismissed. In one case, however—that concerning Mr. D. G. Jenkins, of 41, Wortley Road—the magistrates made an order that a portion of the land extending 120 feet from the boundary of his property should not be used as a car park for ten years.**

The other two objectors who appeared at the hearing were the Rev. Martin F. Harper, of "The Moorings", Wortley Road; and Mr. R. H. Alderson, of No. 22, Wortley Road. All the objectors were represented by Mr. T. J. Williams.

Setting out the Council's proposals, the Town Clerk, Mr. W. D. Platt, said that for a number of years the Town Council had had under consideration the alleviation of traffic congestion in Lymington Road. Among the suggestions put forward was the institution of unilateral parking, but the Ministry would not sanction this because the road was too narrow. The County Council had suggested a one-way traffic system, but objection to this was raised by the Chamber of Trade and the scheme had been dropped.

### MOST SUITABLE SITE

After a conference between representatives of the Borough Council and the County Council it was agreed that the provision of parking facilities was essential and that the site selected was the most suitable. The site was a rough piece of land to the north of Wortley Road and except for a few poultry houses it was unoccupied. The Council proposed to acquire a strip of land leading from the Lymington Road to the site. As a result of public notice of the proposal being given last December a letter was received from Messrs. Druit & Allfree enclosing a petition signed by owners and occupiers of property in Wortley Road who objected to the proposals. These objections were considered by the Council but it was felt that the need for a car park was so urgent that it was decided to proceed with the scheme.

### NO ALTERNATIVE

Referring to the congestion in Lymington Road, Mr. Platt said that the police were reluctant to take any action to reduce the number of cars parking on the sides of the road because there was no alternative parking place

As to the reasons for the objections, Mr. Platt did not agree that the existence of a car park would be a nuisance or would depreciate the value of surrounding property. Only the Rev. Harper's house would have traffic passing it and there was a thick bush hedge dividing his property from the car park.

Appellants, said Mr. Platt, alleged that there were several alternative sites, but they had not given the Council particulars of them. The proposed car park would be well screened on three sides and could not be seen from many houses in Wortley Road.

Coun. S. Kermode, chairman of the Council's Highways Committee, described the traffic conditions in the Lymington Road during the summer months as chaotic. As one who had had a good deal to do with property, he did not think that the proposed car park would seriously affect the value of properties in Wortley Road.

In answer to Mr. Williams, Coun. Kermode agreed that much of the congestion was caused by commercial vehicles unloading outside the shops. "But in the summer time there is very much more traffic passing through than in winter," he added.

Mr. Williams: I put it to you that there are very few more shoppers' cars there in the summer than in the winter?

Coun. Kermode : I don't agree.

Questioned about the car park in Gordon Road, Coun. Kermode said that it could accommodate only about 25 cars. He thought that the reason it was not used a great deal was that it was not a very convenient location for shoppers.

Coun. Kermode agreed that the site of the proposed car park was in the centre of a residential area and on a site which would be very suitable for building development.

#### TOO FAR FROM SHOPS

He was next questioned about a piece of vacant land west of the Highcliffe schools, and he said that although this belonged to the County Council there were restrictive covenants which prevented it being used as a car park. Furthermore, he thought this land was too far away from the shopping centre.

The Borough Surveyor, Mr. E. B. Wise, told the court that the proposed car park had received planning approval subject to certain modifications to the entrance from Lymington Road.

Mr. Williams: Is this to be a free car park?

Mr. Wise: That has yet to be decided upon.

"I understood that this car park was to be for the convenience of shoppers," commented Mr. Williams. "Now it seems that they may have to pay to park there. This is a very important point and it may affect the attitude of the police. Will they feel justified in directing motorists to a car park, knowing that they will have to pay?"

"

#### MAY BE FREE PARKING

Mr. Wise said he did not think a charge would be made, but no decision had been reached on this matter.

Mr. Williams: Is there to be a car park attendant?

Mr. Wise: That has not been decided.

Mr. Williams: But if there is one who will be responsible for his wages?

Mr. Wise: It would be a charge on the rates.

Questioned about the access to the car park, Mr. Wise said that it was proposed to construct a 16-foot road. Three feet of this would be taken up by a footpath.

Mr. Williams: Don't you agree that it will be difficult — indeed dangerous—for motorists to try and enter this park when travelling from the direction of Christchurch towards Lymington?

Mr. Wise: It would be no more difficult a manoeuvre than motorists often have to make under modern traffic conditions.

The first of the objectors to give evidence was the Rev. Martin F. Harper, and he said that he had been living in Highcliffe since 1945. He said that the present value of his property was round about £5,000 and he thought the establishment of the car park would greatly diminish this value.

"It would also be highly detrimental to the amenities of the neighbourhood," he declared. He also contended that if it were made a free car park people would not use the cliff-top car park where they had to pay.

Replying to Mr. Platt, appellant said that the car park would be detrimental to the amenities because of the frequent flow of traffic, especially at night. "Our road is a quiet one and we think that if this car park is decided upon it will no longer be quiet," he declared.

#### A QUIET ROAD

Mr. D. G. Jenkins said that he went to live in Wortley Road because it was a quiet road. In his opinion the scheme would not make any difference to the congestion in the Lymington Road. There was a car park in Gordon Road, he pointed out, which was not very frequently used.

"Do you know of any restrictive covenants which apply to the use of the land?" asked Mr. Williams.

"Yes," replied Mr. Jenkins, "You cannot use it for a public house or for a business or for a car park, only for a dwelling house."

Cross-examined by Mr. Platt, witness agreed that his main objection would be because the proposed car park would adjoin his house.

Mr. Platt: Would it help if we were to use first the section furthest away from your house and not use the part nearer to you for, say, ten years? Mr. Jenkins: It certainly would help.

Mr. R. H. Alderson, who lives at 22, Wortley Road and is the father of three young children, claimed that the proposal would make the road dangerous for kiddies. It was a cul-de-sac opening on to the recreation ground and was at present used by a large number of children on their way there. It would also be noisy at night times.

#### VALUE WOULD DEPRECIATE

Questioned by Mr. Williams, witness said property in the road was valued at between £4,000 and £5,000 and in his opinion the establishment of a car park there would depreciate its value. He added: "If I were contemplating buying property in the road and I heard a car park was to be allowed there, I should expect a considerable reduction in the price I should pay."

Mr. Alderson said he considered the main reason for the traffic problems in Lymington Road were the delivering of supplies to the shops, the Royal Blue buses, and, to some extent, private cars.

Mr. R. E. Percy, manager of an estate agent's business in Lymington Road, agreed with this statement. In the summer it was worse, he said.

Questioned about the value of property in Wortley Road, witness said that those opposite and adjacent to the car park would immediately be reduced in value, while some might possibly become unsalable.

"Is it true to say that prospective purchasers are already delaying their negotiations until they know whether or not there will be a car park there?" asked Mr. Williams.

"In one instance, yes," came the reply.

"In your opinion will that be the general attitude?" was another question.

Mr. Percy replied that it would be. The magistrates were Brig.-Gen. J. G. Browne and Mr. S. Shave.