



GRAVEL FACTORY AT BEKESBOURNE

A Public Enquiry is to be held at Bekesbourne Village Hall at 10 a.m., 18th September next, to hear the Appeal by Robert Brett & Sons against the refusal of Kent County Council to permit the excavation of sand and gravel and the erection of a processing plant at Howlett's Farm (H. Mount & Sons) Bekesbourne.

The proposed 72 acre site, which is partly orchard and partly meadow, lies just north of the railway embankment, immediately east of the Patrixbourne/Littlebourne Road. On the south-east the site is bounded by the bed of the Nailbourne. The source of the Little Stour and the Well Chapel are nearby.

The outline plan calls for the excavation of a total of 2 to 2½ million tons of gravel, at an average of 150/180,000 cubic yards per year, to a maximum depth of 35 feet and an average depth of 23 feet. (If each lorry should carry 10 cubic yards, this means 15,000 to 18,000 lorry loads per year, plus the returning empties.)

Therefore, in addition to the scar on the landscape, the tall and unsightly factory erections and other buildings, large piles of over-burden, gravel etc., lorry parks and the constant dust and din, there must inevitably be a large number of heavy lorries filling the narrow roads, with drivers presumably working to a time schedule. These loads can only reach the A2 at or near Bridge via Patrixbourne or go north through Bekesbourne Hill (a narrow lane) or to the Canterbury/Sandwich Road at Littlebourne. These roads are tortuous and hazardous, especially to pedestrians and schoolchildren (there are no footpaths).

The effect of the excavations on the underground water and the head springs of the River Stour are difficult to estimate, but there must be some risk to the source of the Little Stour and to water supplies, and of possible pollution, especially to the watercress beds just downstream.

Across the road from the site lies Howlett's Zoo. This is no ordinary commercial attraction but an establishment with an international reputation for the care and breeding of certain species which have not been bred elsewhere in captivity.

There are many residents in this area whose personal amenities will be affected and whose properties must be devalued by the intrusion of an industrial plant, for a considerable number of years if not for ever.

It is appreciated that gravel and sand are required in vast quantities for building and for roads. Thousands of acres of land are eroded for this important purpose every year. One can also appreciate the desire of a landowner to exploit the mineral wealth under his land. But this particular erosion of our agricultural and scenic assets should be resisted most strongly. This could be the thin edge of the wedge - once industrial interests get a foothold on a rural area their activities tend to proliferate and after gravel processing we might get pre-mixed concrete or other kindred operations.

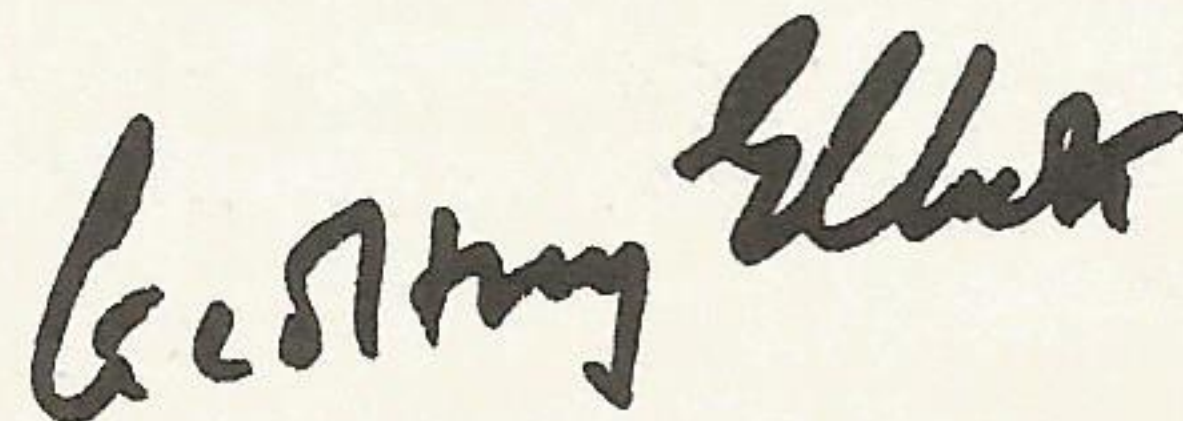
In this case our elected representatives have already said NO, but they now face a counter-attack designed to reverse this wise decision. It is easy to say that the arguments against this commercial threat to the environment are overwhelming and that we can all relax and leave this matter to local authorities.

However, H.M. Inspectors' reports have been over-ruled by Ministers - "in the public interest", whatever that may mean. Also, there is no doubt that the appellants, in their urgent need for gravel, will produce some convincing and carefully prepared arguments and also present various palliatives, e.g. the planting of screen trees (which take some years to grow) and the careful restoration of the site, after the long years of endurance, with a boating lake or some other popular attraction. These are some typical examples of such operations in the valley of the Great Stour near Canterbury at Chartham and at Sturry. There may be undertakings to restrict the numbers of daily journeys or to control the direction of road traffic to certain routes, but who will be able to check and enforce such limitations?

Surely there must be ample resources on and around our shores to meet our national requirements for gravel and sand? With proper coordination, consideration and planning by Government and/or County Councils, and the expenditure of initial capital by the industry on the necessary dredgers, barges, jetties and other equipment, it should be possible to exploit marine resources (as for oil and gas) and far more expedient in the long term than 'nibbling away' at our limited and ever decreasing agricultural acres. Use of estuaries, rivers and canals for this bulk transport should reduce the amount of transport on country roads, a major factor in this type of 'mining'. Expensive and time consuming Inquiries, which inevitably follow intrusion on the environment, might be avoided.

The Nailbourne Protection Society and other associated Societies are, of course, supporting Kent County Council and will be represented on the 18th September. Anyone who has the preservation of this part of Kent at heart can also help, as there is no doubt that informed and vocal public opinion still carries some weight. First, by urging Parish Councils (not that this should be necessary) to write to local authorities and to the Secretary of State for the Environment expressing their views on this matter. Secondly, by writing personally to the Secretary of State, *quoting the reference Application ES/6/72/228*, stating that they object to the proposed gravel workings and the reasons for supporting the County Council's decision. It would be of great help to my Society and to their legal adviser if these letters could be posted to me at the address given below as soon as possible. They will then be photocopied and the originals sent in bulk to the Department. We shall then be able to correlate all your opinions and apprehensions. Thirdly, anyone with direct interest should appear at the Inquiry and, if necessary, voice their opinions.

We all have the right to say in what sort of countryside we want to live. We must be on guard against development which changes the character of our countryside under the guise of 'progress', or 'in the public interest'. These changes may appear to be necessary in the short term, but may eventually be ruinous in their cumulative effect on our limited natural environment.



Geoffrey G. Elliott,
Hon. Sec., Nailbourne Protection Society,
The Paddock, Bishopsbourne,
Nr. Canterbury, Kent

Telephone: Bridge 830337

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL KENT

Chairman :

Philip H. Toy, F.R.I.C.S.

1, HOLMESDALE TERRACE,
FOLKESTONE. Phone 52333

Hon. Secretary :

Lt.-Col. R. F. H. Drake-Brockman

16th July, 1973.

Dear Geoffrey,

Application No. ES/6/72/228

I am sorry I have been so long in replying to your letter of 25th June. It arrived in the office a couple of days after Sylvia and I had returned from a three weeks' holiday in France. I was appalled at the amount of work which had accumulated during my absence, and only now do I feel that I am more or less up to date. My biggest task has been to write our annual report, which takes up a great deal of time.

If I am not able myself to give evidence at the public local inquiry which starts on 18th September, we will certainly be sending written representation. I am trying very hard to find someone to take over from me, as I am really beginning to feel rather tired. The work is, of course, quite fascinating. I want to hand over after our A.G.M. on 8th September.

If your Society is to be represented by a solicitor, can C.P.R.K. come in under your umbrella, and be one of your witnesses?

If you go to Western Australia, and especially anywhere near Perth, mind that Rosemary lets it be known that she is a D-B. All houses

/will

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL KENT

will then be open to you.

My tabek ² to Rosemary,

Yours. aye

Rupert

Colonel G.G. Elliott, D.S.O.,
The Paddock,
Bishopsbourne,
Canterbury,
Kent.

25 July 73

C. RAVEL

Dear Tony -

The brochures have been issued to those who have agreed to distribute to possible interested parties in the 4 Parishes. I hope the news will be published in local press on Friday.

I have found a 'Star' witness. Mrs Riccini 'Farms' large orchards at Oakleigh Farm, right opposite the proposed site on Beckingham Hill. She is anxious on 4 accounts.

1. Damage by dust to young fruit trees -
2. Interference with her vital water supply which are pumped up from under the road, and into yard from the proposed quarry.
3. Traffic.
4. Her own house looks over the gravel site.

Her solicitor are Furlong & Page, but I am sure that I have persuaded her to join with Spencer etc, and the New Thorough is still not properly organized. Her farm manager, A. Hayes, is away, but I have asked Mrs Riccini to write her objections, for transmission to you, and to discuss with her manager with a view to his appearance at the

Inquiry as a witness. Incidentally there is a good view from her orchards, for photos, for the Inspector, of the site.

I have conducted a limited amount of canvassing
among local people around the Beckingham X-rds (v.1129 hall) -
all are very much opposed - but few are anything but
apathetic when any action on their part is suggested.

However, having viewed Mrs Rice's situation, I am more

than confident that Betty's chances are not good.

I will arrange a meeting in about a week's time,

when people will have had more time to consider.

I have had a letter from Bridge P.C.C. and they will

definitely send a speaker to support K.C.C.

Yours sincerely

Arthur

Tel: BRIDGE 830288

THE BARTON,
PATRIBOURNE,
CANTERBURY,
KENT CT4 5BP

July 20/73

Dear Col Elliott,

Thank you for your letter & broadsheet giving details of the proposed gravel extraction at Bellesbourne.

I am putting in a note in the Parish Magazine which comes out on the first of each month: it has quite a large circulation for a lot of people read it - who aren't churchgoers as they want to know the local gossip! The magazine covers Bridge, Patribourne & Bridge & I will put in a follow-up note in the September issue. The August issue should be out next week end.

Yours sincerely

Paul Greenwood

PARISH COUNCIL OF BRIDGE

CLERK:

E. G. DOWN, M.B.E.

59 Bridge Down,
Bridge, Canterbury,
Kent CT4 5BA

(Bridge 830626)

Dear Sir,

23rd July 1973.

Gravel Workings - Bekesbourne.

Your letter of the 26th June was before my Council on the 12th July.
It was agreed to support your Society at the appeal on September 18th.

We would however like to have details of the proposed gravel extractions and processing involved to enable whoever represents this Council ~~may~~ to be briefed.

Our Council meets on September 13th and I will, following this meeting tell you who will be coming from Bridge.

Meanwhile if you have any documents on the subject and would like to let me have a sight of them I will return them at once, We feel that this extraction of gravel will cause loss of amenities and extra traffic on the inadequate roads of the rural district.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

E.G. Down

Clerk of the Council.

G.G. Elliott Esq,

Nailbourne Protection Society.

*Littleham Mrs P. Hill
72 St Vincents Close
Littleham.*



Nailbourne Protection Society

The Paddock, Bishopsbourne, Canterbury, Kent.

23.7.1973

Dear Sir,

A forthcoming local issue may be typical of similar cases elsewhere, and therefore of general interest. Kent County Council has refused a planning application by Contractors to excavate and process some 2½ million tons of sand and gravel from 70 acres of orchard and meadow in the valley of the Nailbourne and Little Stour at Bekesbourne, near Canterbury. The Contractors have appealed against this decision, and this conflict between the interests of industry, and of agriculture and the environment will be argued at a Public Inquiry at Bekesbourne on 18 September next.

The total and essential requirements country-wide for sand and gravel must be enormous, but it seems wrong that farmland and scenery should be eroded (even though some measure of restoration may be possible after many years) at the rate of thousands of acres per year, if there is any reasonable alternative source of supply of these basic minerals.

Surely with initiative and coordination by government and the expenditure of capital by the industry, as with oil and gas, it should be possible to exploit our vast marine deposits offshore? The initial burden of capital would be heavy - on prospecting, dredgers, lighters, unloading wharves and other mechanical plant - but in the long term should be more economic and expedient than the present 'ad hoc' methods. Furthermore, greater use of coastal transport, in estuaries, rivers and canals, and the adaption of parts of existing ports (some of which seem to be in need of extra custom) might reduce the weight of bulk transport on country roads.

In addition to the benefits of more efficient use of resources and transport, and preservation of our limited agricultural acres, it might reduce the number of Public Inquiries which inevitably follow any such proposed operations. These Inquiries consume much official and personal time, and are costly both to tax and rate payers, and to amenity societies and to individuals trying to preserve their homes and countryside from industrial intrusion.

Yours faithfully,

Geoffrey G. Elliott,
Hon. Sec. Nailbourne
Protection Society.

The Editor,
"The Daily Telegraph",
135 Fleet Street,
London EC4



NAILBOURNE PROTECTION SOCIETY
The Paddock, Bishopsbourne,
Canterbury, Kent (Bridge 830337)

July 1973

Dear

The letter enclosed is self-explanatory. It is being distributed to press and to residents in the Bekesbourne area.

The Committee on 7th September 1972, decided to oppose the excavations, and in accordance with this policy, we have initiated certain action. The Society, in conjunction with local residents who are closely concerned, will be represented at the Public Inquiry by Mr. Anthony Harvey, M.C., L.L.B.

The Finance Sub-Committee discussed this matter at a meeting held recently, and we decided that we must support Kent County Council energetically, but not to total financial involvement. There are many people in the Patnixbourne-Bekesbourne-Littlebourne area who are not members, and it was considered that they should assist in defending their own environment. We therefore decided to contribute 50% of the legal costs of representation, with a limit of £200, with the assumption that more closely involved residents would contribute the balance. We will also use the Society's organisation (and about £30) on publicity, printing etc. This decision was explained to a gathering of interested parties, and the legal adviser, at Mr. Spencer's at Bekesbourne on 5th July 1973.

If any member of the Committee disagrees with the above decision, or has any suggestions or advice, please inform me soon. (I am trying to avoid the necessity of calling a Committee meeting at this time, but if there should be any major difference of opinion, we should meet).

The Ickham, Wingham and District Residents' Association attended this meeting and gave useful advice from their past experience. This Society is giving active support, but not financially, as it is involved with bore-hole problems.

The sudden death of Walter Whigham leaves us with the sad necessity of electing a new Chairman of the Society at the next A.G.M. We had planned this A.G.M. for early 1974, subsequent to audit for the year ending December 1973. I suggest that we leave this election until then, as the calling of a Special General Meeting would be both time-consuming and expensive. George Cobbett was elected Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee and can be regarded as Acting Chairman for the time being.

Nevertheless, I would be grateful for your personal recommendations for Chairman, if possible by 1st December 1973, and also for Secretary and Treasurer, or for any other changes or additions to the Committee. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer were combined as a matter of expediency, but I am unable to carry out both duties with any satisfaction, except in periods of comparative inaction.

Finally, you should know that we assisted in the formation of the new ELHAM Village Society, and contributed £20 to the Channel Tunnel Opposition Association, in the cause of the preservation of East Kent.

GEOFFREY ELLIOTT
Hon. Sec./Treasurer

To Committee Members,
Nailbourne Protection Society

Issued 18 July

GIRLING, WILSON AND HARVIE

Solicitors

158 High Street,
Herne Bay, CT6 5NP
Kent.
Telephone: Herne Bay 3874

J. William Girling, O.B.E., (Notary)
Anthony Harvie, M.C., LL.B.
Douglas M. Wagland
Brian Sharratt
Paul C. Girling, (Notary)
J. Anthony Girling, (Notary)
Reginald W. L. Jarrett
Peter B. Morgan, M.A. (Oxon)
Craig King
Christopher Byrne, LL.B.

Jack G. Iggulden (Consultant)

And at: Margate, Canterbury,
Birchington and Whitstable

13th July, 1973.

Your Ref.

Our Ref. H/MJ/27

Dear Geoffrey,

The Gravel Pit.

As promised yesterday evening, I have pleasure in enclosing two re-typed copies of the suggested letter. I have made one or two very small alterations to the early part, and altered the last part quite a bit where we are dealing with the question of letters of representation.

As I dictate this note, it just occurs to me that perhaps at the end of the penultimate paragraph of the letter we ought to say something like this:-

"If you decide that you can help by writing a personal letter to the Secretary for the Department, it would be helpful if you would do so by not later than.....and I do emphasise that it is essential to quote the Inquiry reference."

Yours sincerely,

Tony.

Colonel Geoffrey G. Elliott, D.S.O., M.A.,
Hon. Secretary Nailbourne Protection Society,
The Paddock,
Bishopsbourne,
Canterbury,
Kent.

Encs.

TEL. BRIDGE 203.

COBHAM COURT,
BEKESBOURNE,
NR. CANTERBURY.

28th June 1973

Col. Elliott,
The Orchards,
Bishopsbourne.
Nr. Canterbury.
Kent.

Foreman

Dear Geoffrey,

I am enclosing a report on the evidence submitted by the Sand and Gravel Association to the Advisory Committee on Aggregates, published in the Financial Times on Saturday 23rd June 1973.

I refer you to the penultimate paragraph of the report which is, in my view, of material importance when we submit our case at the Enquiry to be held on the 18th September, regarding gravel digging at Woolton Farm.

Mr. Harry Twyman owns the land between David Spencer at Garrington and Littlebourne. This being part of Lee Priory. I suggest that you give him a call to see whether he will support the Nailbourne Protection Society as he is materially interested. However, I am not certain whether he is in favour of the diggings or not but I do know, (I say this in complete confidence), that he and Slade Powell are like red rags to a bull to each other.

Yours sincerely,

W.H. Whigham

W.H. Whigham.

P.T.O.

P.S. Perfectly alright to have my office on
the evening of July 5th.

L. M. D.

5 July Meeting at
Lower Carrington

GIRLING, WILSON AND HARVIE

Solicitors

158 High Street,
Herne Bay, CT6 5NP
Kent.

Telephone: Herne Bay 3874

J. William Girling, O.B.E., (Notary)
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Reginald W. L. Jarrett
Peter B. Morgan, M.A. (Oxon)
Craig King
Christopher Byrne, LL.B.

Jack G. Iggulden (Consultant)

And at: Margate, Canterbury,
Birchington and Whitstable

26th June, 1973.

Your Ref.

Our Ref. H/MJ/27

Dear Colonel Elliott,

The Nailbourne Protection Society -
Bretts' Proposed Operations.

I attended a meeting of the above Society on the 7th September last when we were concerned about proper representation at any Public Inquiry arising from applications by Bretts to extract further gravel in our area. This is the briefest possible way of putting it.

I really thought that the matter had been abandoned, but only this morning Walter Whigham telephoned me to say that we now have notice of an Inquiry on the 18th September. I shall deal with this matter myself and, unless anybody feels very strongly about it and is prepared to go to the expense, I have no intention of taking in Counsel.

Mr. Whigham told me that he would not be available at the time of the Inquiry and was really handing the entire organisation of our representation over to you. We have rather less than three months in which to get ready and, while this sounds quite a satisfactory time, there is a lot to do and we should prepare ourselves forthwith.

What we must consider is not only the arguments to be raised at the Inquiry, which are obvious enough, but the evidence that we ought to call. I am not thinking in terms of technical evidence at all; most of this will come from the County Council and in particular, I hope, from the Roads Officer. I shall be in touch with the County Council to see exactly how they propose to pitch their case.

Remembering our meeting on the 7th September, what I am more concerned about is the ordinary sort of person who thinks that he or she may be severely prejudiced by these operations. There were one or two ladies present who would, I thought, have made very good witnesses from the housewife point of view. All these are points for consideration.

John Aspinall is, of course, a case on his own and will be separately represented, as I understand it. I am writing to him to ask for permission to be in touch with his solicitors and Counsel if possible so that we are working hand in hand and do not get our lines crossed.

Phoned 27th June

Cont'd.....

I have attempted to telephone you today, unsuccessfully, and I should be very glad if you would get in touch with me to see when we can meet with your Committee. I fully appreciate that, in matters of this kind, I must accept evening meetings; I would prefer to avoid weekends but, if no other time or times can be arranged, I will gladly co-operate.

This is, I fear, a very general sort of letter and I look forward to meeting you for the purpose of being a great deal more specific.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Stanley

Colonel G.G. Elliott, D.S.O., M.A.,
The Paddock,
Bishopsbourne,
Canterbury,
Kent.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL



M. A. BAINS
Clerk of the County Council

COUNTY HALL
MAIDSTONE
KENT

ME14 1XQ

My Ref: D4/TP ES/6/72/228

Your Ref:

Telephone: 54321

Extension: 498

Colonel G.G. Elliott,
Secretary of the Nailbourne
Preservation Society,
The Paddock,
Bishopsbourne,
Nr. Canterbury,
Kent.

19 June 1973

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION ES/6/72/228: EXCAVATION OF SAND AND
GRAVEL AND ERECTION OF A PROCESSING PLANT AT
HOWLETT'S FARM, BEKESBOURNE AND LITTLEBOURNE

With reference to your letter of 2 May, the
above-mentioned appeal has been lodged by
Robert Brett and Sons Limited and a local inquiry
has been arranged for Tuesday, 18 September 1973,
at 10.00 a.m. at the Bekesbourne Village Hall.

Yours faithfully,

W. J. A. Davies

for Clerk of the County Council
ES

LMK

THE ELHAM SOCIETY

Chairman: Mr. W. G. Martin, Loriners, High Street, Elham. Tel. 225

Secretary: Mr. E. V. Burrows, 17 Hog Green, Elham. Tel. 409

24th July 1973.

Dear Colonel Elliott,

Thank you for your letter of the 18th of July, and enclosure, giving details of the action taken by the NPS Finance Sub-Committee regarding the proposed Bekesbourne gravel excavations.

Contrary to your footnote, although the "item" may, you suggest, be far from us, I would expect, or at least, hope, that my Committee would be alive to the consequences of the scheme, if it transpires.

If the appeal succeeds, Brette are surely likely to get a share of the M20 business. From our (self-interested) point of view the routing of their lorries via Canterbury and Ashford would be the best we could expect. Otherwise there are only two routes to the Ashford-Folkestone M20 section, one via the Stone Street and the other via Elham.

Elham High Street comprises two nasty bends, a short straight, two bottle-necks, and a string of parked cars. Knowledgeable truck drivers already avoid these hazards by using the straighter but very narrow "Old Road", which has no pavements and many listed buildings. Damage to porches and other projections is taking place. The prospect of a constant procession of gravel trucks along the valley and thundering through Elham fills me with dismay, and I shall surely not be alone. This Society will certainly take some action. Meantime, for a start, can you send me two dozen leaflets.

As for the other matters, I am, it follows, in agreement with the £200 donation towards the expenses of legal representation at the public enquiry.

As regards nominations for the Officerships, I hardly feel myself qualified to make any suggestions relating to existing members of the Committee, as I have only really met Mr. Rumary and your self. If Mr. Cobbett is prepared to accept the Chairmanship, and you are prepared to carry on as Secretary only, the problem of filling the much lighter job of Treasurer may perhaps be capable of solution. I am not myself drawn in any way to accounting, and I am quite as busy already with my own secretarial duties as I want to be, rather more than that, to be truthful.

Duncan Skillbeck, a former principal of Wye College, who lives here, has a very suitable background for a Chairman for the NPS, and knew Mr. Whigham quite well, I believe, but is, I fear, already a very busy pensinner.

Our activities are proceeding quite well, I suppose, as we already have some 130 members, including 20 life members, but I am rather disappointed in various respects. More about this when I see you next, which may be fairly soon now perhaps, with this new action on the go.

Yours sincerely,

E. V. Burrows

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To --: Hon. Sec. Nailbourne Protection Society. ✓

Chairman, Bridge Parish Council.

Chairman, Bekesbourne Parish Council.

At a meeting of the Patricxbourne Parish Meeting, IT WAS RESOLVED to register a strong protest against the excavation of gravel and erection of processing plant at Howletts Farm, Bekesbourne because this will increase lorry traffic very considerably and the narrow and tortuous roads in this Parish will become more hazardous and dangerous than ever especially to pedestrians and children.

E. Greenwood

Acting Clerk,

July 26/73.

Patricxbourne Parish Meeting.

The Parish Council of Bekebourne

A. H. CROUCHER,
Clerk.

TELEPHONE
CANTERBURY 65924

1, THE DENE,
NACKINGTON ROAD,
CANTERBURY.
CT1 3NW.

31st July 1973.

G. Elliott, Esq.,
The Paddock,
Bishopsbourne,
Nr. Canterbury.

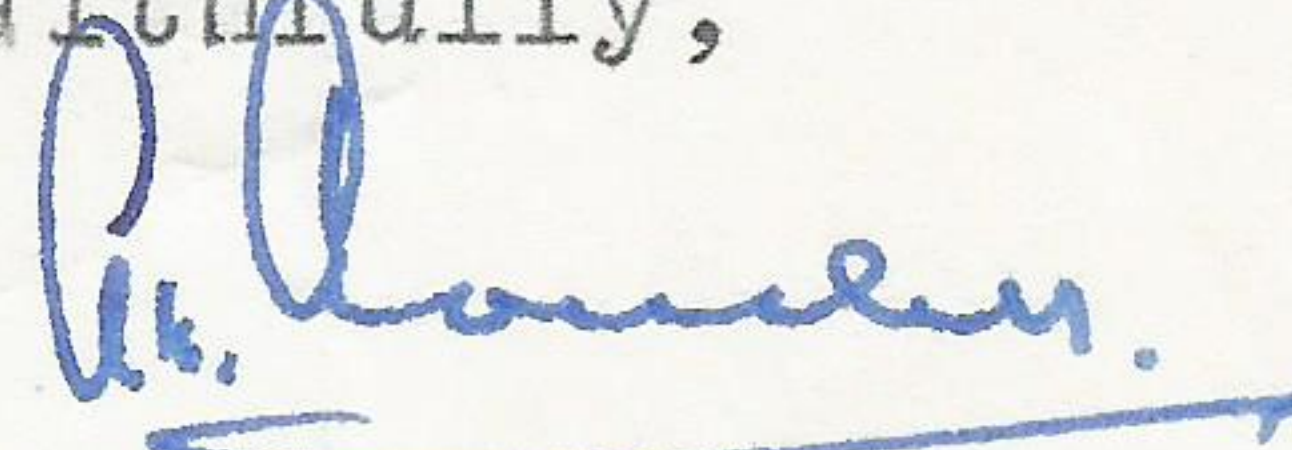
Dear Sir,

Planning Appeal - R. Brett & Sons.

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Mr. G. F. Tyler, has shown me your letter to him of the 18th July and the memorandum enclosed regarding the Appeal by Robert Brett & Sons Ltd. which is to be heard at a Public Inquiry on the 18th September. The Parish Council have already lodged objections to this proposal to the District Council when the original planning application was submitted, and a meeting of the Council is to be held on the 21st August when the question of representation at the Inquiry and matters relating thereto will be further considered.

I understand from Mr. Tyler that you may have a copy of Brett's outline plan giving details of their proposals, and, if so, I wonder if I might have a copy. I shall be pleased to take a photo copy and return your copy to you if this would help.

Yours faithfully,



Clerk of the Council.

A

BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL.

E.G. Down,
Clerk of the Council.

59 Bridge Down,
Bridge,

Canterbury CT4 5BA.

Secretary of State for the Environment,

6th August 1973

ES/6/72/228

Dear Sir,

Extraction of Gravel and Erection of Processing Plant at
Hewletts Farm, Bekesbourne.

My Council object^{to} the proposed gravel workings and support the Kent County Council in their refusal to grant permission for the works. If agreed there would ~~be~~ inevitably be a large number of lorries using the existing narrow roads towards the A.2. through Patricbourne, either via Bridge (which already has its problems) or Bekesbourne Hill towards Canterbury direct, similarly if using the roads via Littlebourne. These roads would be totally inadequate and dangerous to say nothing of the dust and pollution problem which would be created. The personal amenities of many residents in the area would be affected and pedestrians and especially schoolchildren would be at considerable risk.

We feel that this particular erosion of our agricultural and scenic assets should be resisted most strongly and urge the Secretary of State to support the Kent County Council in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

E.G. Down

Clerk of the Council.

Copies to:-

Kent County Council.

Bridge-Blean Rural District Council.

Nailbourne Protection Society. ✓

Kent Federation of Amenity Societies

(Registered with the Civic Trust and affiliated to the C.P.R.K.)

President: Sir Henry J. d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Bt., D.S.O., M.C., M.P.

23rd August, 1973.

Col. G.G. Elliott,
Hon Treasurer,
Nailbourne Protection Society,
The Paddock,
Bishopsbourne,
Canterbury, Kent.

Dear Colonel Elliott,

Application ES/6/72/228
Excavation of Sand and Gravel
Erection of a Processing Plant
at Howletts Farm, Bekesbourne/Littlebourne.

I am sorry not to have been able to reply to your letter dated 24th June 1973 earlier.

A copy of the document headed 'Gravel Factory at Bekesbourne', you sent at a later date has been passed to our Chairman, Mr Arthur Percival and our Hon Editor, Mrs M. Peckham.

The Federation had intended sending a representative to the Public Enquiry on the 18th September but it is regretted that one will not now be available. The K.F.A.S. is very much in sympathy with the problem and offers its support to the Nailbourne Protection Society's protest against the appeal.

On behalf of my Committee, may I take this opportunity of wishing your Society every success in its efforts in preserving the natural environment of Howletts Farm land.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Bragg

Hon. Secretary: Mrs H.M. Bragg, Holbeam Cottage, Stalisfield,

Chairman: Nr Faversham, Kent. ME13 0HN.

Vice-Chairman:

Hon. Treasurer:

Hon. Editor:





KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

M. A. BAINS
Clerk of the County Council

COUNTY HALL
MAIDSTONE
KENT
ME14 1XQ

My Ref: D4/TP ES/6/72/228

Your Ref:

Telephone: 54321

Extension: 498

23 August 1973

Dear Sir,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

APPLICATION ES/6/72/228: EXCAVATION OF SAND AND GRAVEL AND THE ERECTION OF PROCESSING PLANT ON 72.84 ACRES OF LAND AT HOWLETTS FARM, BEKESBOURNE AND LITTLEBOURNE

An appeal under Section 36 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971, has been lodged with the Department of the Environment by Robert Brett and Sons Limited, against the decision of the Kent County Council as Local Planning Authority to refuse permission to the above-mentioned application. The application was refused on the following grounds:-

- (i) the introduction of gravel excavation into this secluded and remote valley would seriously damage its considerable natural beauty which in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority should be conserved;
- (ii) there would be a long period of serious damage to the environment of the locality by the operation of plant and machinery and the passage of heavy vehicles along its country lanes;
- (iii) the development would create undue hazards to road safety;
- (iv) the Local Planning Authority is not satisfied that the development would not cause a diminution in the flow of the chalk springs which issue at Well Chapel to the general detriment of the River Little Stour and to commercial interests in the locality; and
- (v) in the opinion of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food there is strong objection to the proposed development.

The Secretary of State for the Environment has instructed one of his officers to hold a local Inquiry into this appeal and he will attend at the Village Hall, Bekesbourne on Tuesday, 18 September 1973, at 10.00 a.m., for the purpose of hearing representations regarding the matter. The Secretary has asked me to give notice of the Inquiry to those owners and occupiers of property in the vicinity of the site who are likely to be affected by the proposed development in order that they may attend the Inquiry and at the Inspector's discretion give their views or may, if they cannot or do not wish to attend or have someone attend on their behalf, give their views in writing. All written representations made will be disclosed to the appellant, the Local Planning Authority and the Inspector.

Written views should be sent either to the Secretary, Department of the Environment, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 3EB, quoting reference APP/1953/A/72/3200 or if time before the Inquiry is short to the Inspector at the place of Inquiry.

Further particulars of the proposal can be obtained by attending at the Divisional Planning Office, Kirby's Lane, Canterbury (telephone Canterbury 64645), or the offices of the Bridge-Blean Rural District Council, Old Dover Road, Canterbury.

If you are not the owner of the property you occupy, please bring this letter to the attention of the owner.

Yours faithfully,

W. J. A. Davies

WJA Clerk of the County Council
8/5

WHITE GATES,
PATRIBOURNE,
CANTERBURY, KENT.

'Phone : BRIDGE ~~451~~ 830451

4th August, 1973

Proposed Gravel Workings at Bekesbourne

Dear Colonel Elliott,

Dr David Pratt has given me a copy of your circular headed 'Gravel Factory at Bekesbourne', and in accordance with your request, I enclose my personal objection to the scheme, based as you will see on some of the points given in your circular.

This house is at the upper end of Bifrons Park and as I got your circular by chance through David Pratt, I wonder whether others who are concerned in this area have had copies? From the A2 opposite the road to Pett Bottom, the lane passes St Stephens Cottage (Giles Rooke, Esq., Barrister at Law), Cornerways (Brian Arnold, Esq. farmer at Chartham); on the corner opposite us, R.T. Watson at Bournes Corner (Solicitor); next door to us, Dr J. Forsaith (anaesthetist) at Lindisfarne, Bekesbourne Road; then Mungo Barr, Esq., Dearnley, Bekesbourne Road; then J. Tilleard, at Laleham, and ~~xxxxxx~~ J. Eastwood at Fence End. One more: B. Geen, North Hill. Towards the village of Patribourne there is P. Waters at Upper Lodge and M. Lawrence at Lower Lodge. Opposite the Lower Lodge is Soudes House - I have forgotten the name of the owner. And so on along the road to the station and Howletts. I am sure most of these would want to support your case - and if I were not unwell, I would do a bit of door-to-door canvassing. But perhaps it is all in hand? If so, forgive me.

I hope my letter will lend a little support
- this project must be stopped if possible.

Yours truly,

R. J. Hooke.
(R. J. Hooke)

Colonel G. G. Elliott,
The Paddock, Bishopsbourne,

Kent Federation of Amenity Societies

(Registered with the Civic Trust and affiliated to the C.P.R.K.)

President: Sir Henry J. d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Bt., D.S.O., M.C., M.P.

29th August, 1973.

Col G.G. Elliott D.S.O., M.A.,
The Paddock,
Bishopsbourne,
Nr Canterbury,
Kent CT4 5HT.

Dear Colonel Elliott,

Application ES/6/72/228
Excavation of Sand and Gravel
Erection of a Processing Plant
at Howletts Farm, Bekesbourne/Littlebourne.

Thank you for your two letters dated 23rd and 24th August 1973.

It is unfortunate that we are now unable to send a representative to the Public Enquiry, however, I have written to The Secretary, Department of the Environment, copy of which I enclose. We shall be interested to hear the outcome.

Trusting you will enjoy your trip to Australia and that you will return feeling refreshed after the change of environment.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Bragg

Hon. Secretary: Mrs H.M. Bragg, Holbeam Cottage, Stalisfield,

Chairman: Nr Faversham, Kent, ME13 0HN.

Vice-Chairman:

Hon. Treasurer:

Hon. Editor:



Kent Federation of Amenity Societies

(Registered with the Civil Trust and Charities to the C.F.R.K.)

Mr Henry J. d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, St. D'O. N.C. M.P.

29th August, 1973

28th August, 1973.

The Secretary,
Department of the Environment,
2 Marsham Street,
London, SW1P 3BB.

Dear Sir,

Application ES/6/72/228
Excavation of Sand and Gravel
Erection of a Processing Plant
at Howletts Farm, Bokesbourne/Littlebourne

I have been requested by the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies to inform you that they support the Kent County Council's action in refusing Robert Brett & Sons Limited an application for gravel and sand to be excavated from Howletts Farm, Bokesbourne/Littlebourne, for the same reasons given in their letter ref. D4/TP ES/6/72/228.

It is also felt that, although this firm is most reputable and would successfully partially reinstate the land, this area is of unspoilt country with particular beauty and should be preserved in its natural form.

Hon. Secretary
Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Hon. Treasurer
Hon. Editor

Mrs H.M. Bragg, Holbeam Cottage, Stalisfield,
Nr Faversham, Kent. ME13 0HN.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs H.M. Bragg, Holbeam Cottage, Stalisfield,
Nr Faversham, Kent. ME13 0HN.

19th December, 1974.

Your Ref.

Our Ref. H/MJ/27

J. William Girling, O.B.E., (Notary)
Anthony Harvie, M.C., LL.B.
Douglas M. Wagland
Brian Sharratt
Paul C. Girling, (Notary)
J. Anthony Girling, (Notary)
Reginald W. L. Jarrett
Peter B. Morgan, M.A. (Oxon)
Craig King
Christopher Byrne, LL.B.
Mark Kedman
Jack G. Iggulden (Consultant)

And at: Margate, Canterbury,
Birchington and Whitstable

Dear Geoffrey,

Gravel Inquiry at Bekesbourne

Last week, the instant I heard of the result, I telephoned you and left a message with Mrs. Elliott but I really should have written to confirm.

The Inquiry, as you know, was successful from our point of view and encouragingly so because the zoo element seems to have cut no ice at all. Reading the letter of recommendation and decision and the Report, it comes down once again to the fact that it is the strong amenity society that succeeds and esoteric considerations like private zoos do not really cut much ice.

I assume that you have not been sent a copy of the Report, but there are many in the area and I can lend you my copy if you want it. Jack Slade-Powell has one and so has Jack Mayo-Perrott.

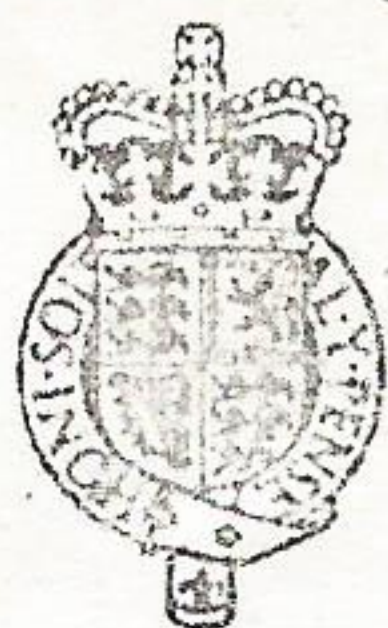
I must keep a copy permanently in my possession in case of some further application which we might feel that we have to oppose. I have a whisper that Brett's are thinking of an application in the area of Hoath; this seems to be outside our purview and I am not sure of my facts about it and, in any event, I know of no Association there which would be likely to tackle the matter.

With kind regards, and with every good wish for Christmas and the New Year,

Yours sincerely,

Tony.

Col. Geoffrey G. Elliott, DSO., MA.,
The Paddock,
Bishopsbourne,
Nr. Canterbury,
Kent.



Department of the Environment
Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1 H 9LZ

Telephone 01-834 8540 ext 565

JOHN PURCHASE ESQ

MILL COTTAGE,
BERKESBOURNE,

Your reference

Our reference ALB/1953/A/72/32

Date

10 DEC 1974

Dear Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971

The attached copy of the decision letter/and Inspector's report on an appeal/~~application~~ is forwarded as requested.

Yours faithfully

M. N. A. HAMID

ENC.



Department of the Environment
Room Caxton House Tothill Street London SW1H 9LZ

Telephone 01-834 8540 ext

Your reference

Messrs Furley, Page, Fielding, Pembroke
Solicitors
39 St Margaret's Street
CANTERBURY

Our reference

APP/1953/A/72/3200
Date

90 DEC 1974

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971
PROPOSED EXTRACTION OF SAND AND GRAVEL,
ERECTION OF ANCILLARY PROCESSING PLANT AND
CONSTRUCTION OF ACCESS ON LAND AT
HOWLETT'S FARM, BEKESBOURNE, CANTERBURY, KENT
APPEAL BY ROBERT BRETT AND SONS LIMITED

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to say that consideration has been given to the report of the Inspector, Mr F H Meeres Young, BA, BSc, CEng, MICE, who held a local inquiry into your clients' appeal under section 36 of the 1971 Act against the decision of Kent County Council to refuse planning permission for the extraction of sand and gravel, erection of ancillary plant and construction of access on land at Howletts Farm, Bekesbourne, Canterbury, Kent. A copy of the Inspector's report is enclosed.
2. Bearing in mind his findings of fact, the Inspector's conclusions were as follows (paragraph numbers quoted correspond to those in his report):-

"378. There is no doubt that the present rate of demand for gravel in East Kent will not be met after about 1977 unless further sources of supply become available. The council's view of the problem gives the impression that they consider the operators have the solution in their hands, if they wish it, by taking suitable steps to bring more applications forward for consideration. On the evidence available, the most likely further source of supply in this area would seem to fall on land-won gravels, in the absence of suitable alternative materials and inadequate facilities, as yet, for bringing into the area larger quantities of marine-dredged gravels or crushed stone.

379. In my view, the working of the permitted Stodmarsh site, or of a part of it, in the near future, is most unlikely if the land is to be restored to agriculture, because of the uncertainty of a source of suitable filling materials, together with the estimated high capital costs that would be involved in removing and transporting the excavated materials away from Stodmarsh in whichever manner it is done.

380. At Milton Manor there is a much better gravel yielding site, probably less costly to work but it is a question of whether the council will alter their attitude towards that site, in view of their previous refusals to allow it to be worked.

381. The borehole logs do indicate a large, very high-yielding deposit of good quality gravel at the appeal site but there are very strong objections to working it. Without any evidence of a source of suitable filling materials for restoring all of the land to agriculture, other than that materials might become available from the construction of the Channel tunnel, the agricultural objection itself debars the working of the site if grades I and II land must be restored to agriculture.

382. There is the possible difficulty of enforcing the use of a specific route by the gravel lorry drivers, especially when they notice that much use is made of all the local roads by vehicles just as large, if not larger than theirs, in connection with agriculture during the fruit picking season. There can be little doubt that the introduction of 12 movements hourly of wide gravel lorries along the C203 would aggravate the present traffic difficulties of the local residents.

383. A gravel working at the site would be a noticeable intrusion into this environment merely by its presence, probably disturbing at first but becoming more tolerable with the elapse of time. Except on some occasions, the general level of noise emission from the operations should be acceptable if the noise reducing measures are carried out properly. There would be glimpses of the fixed plant and of the dragline excavator jib perhaps but these would not be prominent, and for most of the period of working the site, there would be little change in the rural scene if the proposed landscaping was carried out effectively.

384. In my view, the disagreement of the hydrologists over the effects the working would have on the underground flow of water in the gravel must be interpreted that there would be a risk to the Well Chapel springs and the watercress beds. This possible risk must be a valid objection to the proposal.

385. There is no definite evidence whatever to establish that the animals at Howletts Zoo would be so disturbed as to upset their breeding potential or habits. The degree of vibration, smell and noise these animals are now experiencing from the present day volumes of traffic along the C203 past their cages, especially in summer, is probably greater than would be the attenuated degrees of these things that would derive from the working of the site. Whether a combination of these things from the 2 sources would have a deleterious effect upon the animals is conjectural.

386. It must not be overlooked that no gravel workings have yet been started in this part of the Nailbourne/Little Stour Valley but should other large deposits be found in it, then it is likely that there would be great pressure to exploit them if the present proposal is allowed. Much of this valley might then become sheets of water.

387. The general need for further sources of gravel supplies remains whether the appeal site is worked or not. The objections to it being worked are cogent and in my view outweigh the appellants' particular needs at the present time. They have other reserves available to them, some with permission and others for which permission could be sought or resought. They are very familiar with the area and it should be possible for them to make new finds, if the gravel is there to be discovered in it and worked without giving rise to very strong objections. If none such can be found anywhere, then it might become necessary, in the light of circumstances at the time, to reconsider the question of working the appeal site.

388. In the event of the appeal being allowed, it would be necessary to impose the usual conditions, including having regard to the draft conditions suggested by the local planning authority and by Sir Derek Walker-Smith.

389. On the face of them, the legal submissions made by Sir Derek appear not to have any direct bearing on the issue but these may be a matter for legal opinion."

The Inspector recommended that the appeal be dismissed.

3. The Secretary of State agrees generally with the Inspector's conclusions. With regard to the question of need for aggregates, it is accepted, on the evidence given at the inquiry, that in the absence of further planning permissions for gravel working the expected demand is unlikely to be capable of being met much after about 1977 from existing permitted areas in the combined Dungeness and Rye and Canterbury and Ashford Service Areas, referred to by your clients as the East Kent area. It was stated at the inquiry that in the Canterbury and Ashford service area your clients had a total of 142 acres of unworked land with planning permission, giving an estimated yield of 1,728,000 tonnes of gravel and representing about 2½ years' supply at the present production rate of 13,500 tonnes per week (these figures excluded 3 sites which your clients consider it uneconomical to work). To support the production rate figure, your clients provided details of weekly production from the pits now being worked by their group of companies at Lydd, Faversham, Sturry and Westbere (together with the estimated life of each of those pits). However, the Lydd pit (said to be producing 6,500 tonnes per week) is in the Dungeness and Rye service area. This leaves a figure of 7,000 tonnes (not 13,500 tonnes as stated) for the current production rate for pits in the Canterbury and Ashford service area, suggesting that your clients' reserves in that service area should amount to almost 5 years' supply. Moreover, the submitted documents giving details of the manner in which the total of 1,728,000 tonnes has been calculated (document 3 annexed to the Inspector's report) suggest that your clients may have underestimated the life of the 2 workings at Faversham. The production rate given by your clients for Faversham was 2,000 tonnes per week and the estimated life 3 years; but document 3 shows the estimated yields from these workings as 585,766 tonnes and 53,576 tonnes respectively. This would appear to indicate a life which may be appreciably longer than the 3 years estimated by your clients. Nevertheless, your clients will lose production of 2,500 tonnes of aggregates weekly when the Sturry-Fordwich sources are exhausted in 2 years' time and it must be accepted that they have established their own fairly pressing need for a new source of supply. Also it is agreed that the most likely source of supply for the service area would be land-won gravel. With reference to the Inspector's conclusions at paragraph 387 (quoted above) it is by no means clear from the evidence produced that gravel-bearing sites which may be worked without giving rise to strong objections will be easy to discover. On the other hand, information is lacking about the land holdings and prospects of the 3 other companies said to be operating gravel workings in East Kent. In any event, the urgency of any need for the gravel in the appeal site must be weighed against the current objections to working it.

4. The Inspector's assessments of the likely effect of noise from site operations and disturbance from road traffic are broadly accepted, although it is noted that evidence was not given about the cumulative effect of all the individual potential sources of noise involved. It is confirmed that planning conditions cannot control the passage of vehicles on the highway and although the highway authority talked of promoting vehicle width restriction orders for certain roads, in the event of the appeal being allowed, they were uncertain that such orders would be generally acceptable. No firm conclusion can be reached about the effects of the workings on Howletts Zoo, where there is a unique private breeding collection of wild animals, although it seems at least a possibility that an appreciable local increase of activity could have some detrimental effects. Expert witnesses disagreed over the possible effects the working of the site would have on the underground flow of water, and the Inspector's conclusion, that the possible risk to the Well Chapel springs and the watercress beds is a valid objection to the proposal, is accepted.

5. On the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Agricultural Land Classification Map the appeal site is shown as containing about 46½ acres of Grade I land and about 27½ acres of Grade 3 land, but the representative of that Ministry considered, after the taking of samples, that the land shown on the map as Grade 3 land is Grade 2 land. Published government policy is to ensure that as far as possible land of a higher agricultural quality is not taken for development where land of a lower quality is available. The Ministry's representative indicated that there was a degree of flexibility in this, and that if the land could be restored to agriculture after being worked, the agricultural objection would be removed. In his view, if full restoration were carried out in a reasonable manner, the land could well become of high agricultural quality again after 5 to 10 years. In their evidence on the hydrology aspect of their proposals your clients said that no imported back-filling materials would be used, but later said that they would accept a planning condition requiring progressive restoration of the Grade I land subject to filling material being available. However, the only source of suitable material they could suggest was dependent upon the Channel tunnel development. It is considered that the availability of fill for progressive restoration from that source is too conjectural to be relied upon in this context. The prospect remains, therefore, that working the appeal site would entail a permanent loss of about 43½ acres of Grade 1 and 2 land and a temporary loss of about 30½ acres, mostly Grade 1 land. It is considered that these losses of high quality agricultural land constitute a major objection to your clients' proposals.

6. On balance, it is considered that the need for the minerals on the site does not outweigh the objections to the proposed development. Accordingly the Secretary of State accepts the Inspector's recommendation and for the reasons given hereby dismisses the appeal.

7. Your clients' attention is drawn to the annexed memorandum relating to the provisions of section 245 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant

B. TYERS

B TYERS
Authorised by the Secretary of State
to sign in that behalf

Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street,
LONDON SW1P 3EB

RIGHT TO CHALLENGE THE DECISION

Under the provisions of section 245 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 a person who is aggrieved by the decision given in the accompanying letter may challenge its validity by an application made to the High Court within 6 weeks from the date when the decision is given.

The grounds upon which an application may be made to the Court are:-

1. that the decision is not within the powers of the Act (that is, the Secretary of State has exceeded his powers); or
2. that any of the relevant requirements have not been complied with, and the applicant's interests have been substantially prejudiced by the failure to comply.

"The relevant requirements" are defined in section 245 of the Act: they are the requirements of that Act and the Tribunals and Inquiries Act 1971 or any enactment replaced thereby, and the requirements of any order, regulations or rules made under those Acts or under any of the Acts repealed by those Acts. These include the Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1974 (SI 1974 No 419), which relate to the procedure on cases dealt with by the Secretary of State.

RIGHT TO INSPECT DOCUMENTS

Under the provisions of rule 13(3) of the Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1974 any person entitled to be notified of the decision given in the accompanying letter may apply to the Secretary of State in writing within 6 weeks of the notification to him of the decision, or the supply to him of the Inspector's report, whichever is the later, for an opportunity of inspecting any documents, photographs and plans appended to the report. Such documents etc are listed in an appendix to the report. Any application under this provision should be sent to the address from which the decision was issued, quoting the Department's reference number shown on the decision letter and stating the date and time (in normal office hours) when it is proposed to make the inspection. At least 3 days' notice should be given, if possible.