

Harpenden Urban Design Group

58, Crabtree Lane,

Harpenden, Herts.

14th. August, 1972.

39

Dear Mr. Bowran,

As I shall be on holiday on 21st. Sept. I will give you this short report on the Public Inquiry on 26th. July into the redevelopment at Roundwood Park which took up the whole day. It was well attended both in the morning and afternoon but, surprisingly to me, no member of the public spoke in support of the Council's refusals other than those residents represented by Counsel.

I attach Proofs of Evidence and plans submitted by witnesses for the appellants, also the report in the Herts Advertiser ~~which was published in the next day's paper~~ which deals more fully with the earlier part of the inquiry. I am unable to attach a copy of my own Proof as by the time I had supplied copies to the Inspector, the appellants and other Counsel I was left with one copy only which I passed to the Press - it was prepared following the site visits by Mr. Brown and Mr. Nixon who came to the conclusion that the Society should support the Council's refusal of the two development schemes on the grounds that if permitted, it would result in the virtual destruction of Round Wood on the West side of Roundwood Park.

The appellants claimed that the existing houses were obsolescent, that many of the existing trees adjoining the road were planted by the owners after the partial clearance and redevelopment of the Wood some 30-40 years ago and that existing hedges and trees mainly on the perimeter would be retained and so preserve the outline of the Wood. Witnesses for the Council, including a landscape architect from the County Council strongly disputed this view as too optimistic as did the local residents. The latter also made a case for not permitting this development on traffic grounds.

The appellants argued that the Inspector must judge the applications on their merits and not be concerned with what might happen to other large properties in the vicinity if this development was permitted. Nevertheless other developments that have been permitted in Roundwood Park such as that of Davis Estates and that proposed for Nos. 48 - 54, Roundwood Park were put forward in justification of this appeal!

On behalf of the Society, I put forward the case for the retention of Round Wood on the appeal site not only because it was an exceptional local amenity but also because it was a skyline feature visible in particular from the rising land on the east side of the Luton Road. Despite the original development much of the old Wood remained and in summer the houses built in it could not be seen from this viewpoint whereas the development in Ridge Wood, which was quoted as an example of what could be achieved, could be seen very clearly. I was given a short cross-examination by Counsel for the appellants and the Inspector asked what was the membership of the Society.

The Inspector viewed the site the same evening and I would expect the result of the inquiry to be available by the time of the Committee meeting or shortly after.

In conversation prior to the inquiry opening, Mr. Cecil White suggested that I might join the group of local objectors but I felt it would be better for the Society to make its own case. I gave their Counsel a copy of my Proof of Evidence so that use could be made by him of any point that I proposed to make.

Yours sincerely

Alan Squires.

A. O. Squires OBE. ARICS.