Stukely inquiry starts tomorrow

TOMORROW (Wednesday) sees the start of a public inquiry that will decide the future of one of Holbeach's most controversial buildings.

The inquiry (10am start), in the Community Centre, Fishpond Lane, will investigate the dispute that has dogged Stukeley Hall since 1989, when Lincolnshire County Council announced plans to bulldoze the hall to make way for 29 executive homes.

Following public outcry, the Environment Secretary called in the plans and decreed his department would decide the hall's future.

An inspector has been appointed to carry out the inquiry, estimated to last one-and-half-days, with representations being made by the county council, district council and other interested bodies.

The inspector will consider the contribution the hall and grounds make to Holbeach conservation area; steps taken to find suitable alternative plans to retain the hall; and suitability of the site for housing.

It is unlikely he will announce a decision immediately after the inquiry - protesters may have to wait several months.

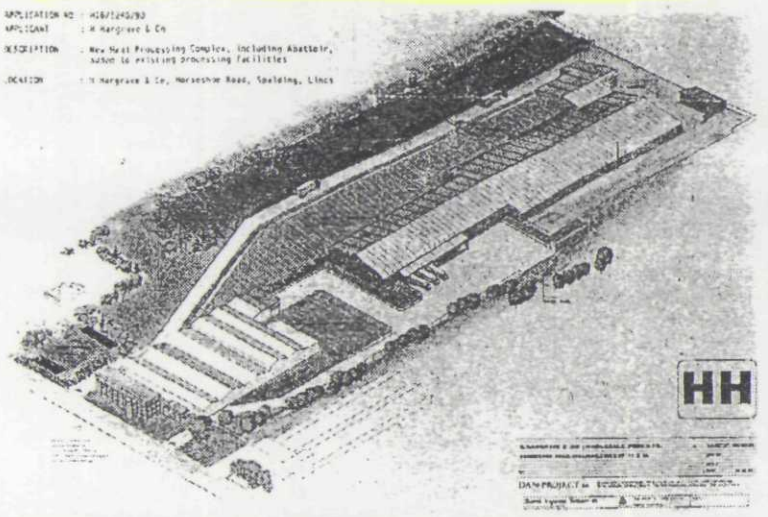
When county first announced plans to pull down the hall and develop the site, protests persuaded the Department of Environment to intervene and ask for details, directing county to hold fire.

A hotel developer offered to buy the property for over £500,000 to turn it into a luxury health spa and business centre, but was thwarted by the council county, bound by law to gain the best price for the site.

Don't spoil our peace and quiet



● SOUTH Holland councillor Robert West (left) with disgruntled residents Peter Rawding (with petition), David Baverstock, Anne Enderby and two-year-old Louise, Tony Ball and Tom Maxey. (G1417/23).



● THE controversial planning application which has angered so many residents. Bottom left of the diagram is the Horseshoe Road entrance, behind which is the existing meat complex. The planned new complex is situated in the middle and to the rear of the site, with a lairage attached at the far end. There would be car parking for staff and guests at the side of the factory. (G1416).

RESIDENTS in a leafy Spalding lane are formulating battle plans to resist a development which they fear could blight countless town homes.

Horrified neighbours in Horseshoe Road have banded together in a last-ditch attempt to resist moves by H Hargrave to build a multi-million pound abattoir on their doorstep.

The factory would be sandwiched between homes and Contano Aluminium - which has threatened to pull out of South Holland if the abattoir goes ahead.

Last week anxious residents called a meeting at Contano to discuss the plan. An action committee was formed to lead the march into battle.

Today (Tuesday) South Holland District Council's plans sub-committee is due to debate the scheme ready for full committee next Tuesday, when it is expected the abattoir will be discussed.

The angry residents - from businessmen to young mums and retired folk - have drawn up a protest letter to be sent to district councillors for today's meeting.

Contano backed the meeting, at which Mr Peter Rawding of South Drove was appointed committee spokesman. He summed up feelings of residents, saying: "There is no common sense for the people of Spalding to have an abattoir in a residential area."

Mr Tom Maxey of Horseshoe Bridge outlined their main worries - traffic, noise and pollution.

He said from Deeping St Nicholas to Holland Park the abattoir would be visible. "It will be huge. There will be lorries making noises at night however much they try to shield this. We think this is an imposition on the community. This is not the natural place to have this factory."

Mr Bob Lee of Horseshoe Road said he was concerned about residents on Holland Park. "People don't realise that the whole of that estate is down wind from that application site."

He said prevailing winds would blow smells from the factory over Holland Park and Spalding "nine months of the year".

Coun Robert West, district council ward member for the area, was concerned by site management. "The smell and noise can be addressed if there is a will, but we are not convinced there is a will."

Horseshoe Road side of Spalding had been designated a residential area in the Spalding and Pinchbeck plan - now the council was considering major industrial development near a housing estate.

"Those two can't possibly live together," he said.

Mr Tony Ball of Bridge Farm Nurseries said: "I didn't realise how close Spalding's residents (especially those on Bourne Road, Hawthorn Bank, Horseshoe Road and Spalding Common) are to letting happen one of the biggest mistakes Spalding planners will make in a long time."

Retired couple Malcolm and Peggy Howard live next door to the site.

Mr Howard said at present his property was an "island in a car park", referring to the present development on Hargrave's site.

Coun West said of their plight: "Here we have a business development and we are asking people who have lived there for 40 years to move out."

He said the committee was not just concerned for itself, but for everybody else affected. He drew attention to problems with Gosberton Farm Produce and Machins, adding: "They are looking ahead and they don't want that to happen on their doorstep.

"The people here can see there is a problem and they want to address that. They are thinking of people other than themselves."

Coun West said a report would be made to council of a visit to Denmark to view a similar abattoir over there, but made it clear that that was run on a co-operative basis with the community involved.

Trevor and Anne Enderby also live next to the development site. They belive their home could be worth "a box of matches" if the abattoir went ahead.

They said: "At the present time it is just unbearable. We get a lot of noise in the early hours of the morning to the point where we can't sleep with windows open.

"That will continue, but it will just be 10 times worse. There are children up and down on bikes every day of the week. Children and lorries don't mix, not with the narrowness of the road."

Mrs Enderby warned residents on Holland Park: "When they hang their washing out there is a possibility they will get the smell in their washing. Are they going to be able to open their windows?"

Andrew and Pip Lowther are due to move into a newly-built home near the site in two weeks. They said: "We bought a plot down here because of its location and because it was nice and tranquil."

We're not happy!

A SURVEY has revealed an "undeniable indication of local dissatisfaction" over the way planning matters are dealt with in Bourne.

The survey, by Bourne Civic Society, found 75 per cent of people questioned judged the district council's performance "poor" and considered that opportunities had been lost to make Bourne a better place in which to live.

Of the local councillors, would-be councillors and members of the public questioned, most (80 per cent) said they believed administration of planning matters was the most important duty of the district council.

Chairman of the society Alan Jones said: "With such wide agreement revealed by the society's survey between councillors and public there is an undeniable indication of local dissatisfaction regarding administration of planning matters.

"It is hoped due notice will be taken of the survey and that criticism voiced will be borne in mind in future."

Nearly all those who took part in the survey - all but seven of the local councillors and would-be councillors took part with members of the public - considered not sufficient consideration was given to the effect proposed development might have on communities, and thought the district council should consult more with local residents and organisations.

Nearly all thought new developments were given the go ahead without enough thought about additional demands on services such as health, schools, recreation, roads, car parks.

Asked if councillors had the knowledge and experience to deal with planning matters, 60 per cent said 'no'.

The district council had been wrong to give permission for the broiler houses in the north of the town, for the radio mast off Churchill Avenue and for the industrial area near Bourne Hospital, according to over 80 per cent of those surveyed.

Nearly half viewed with sadness the end of Bourne's street markets, while 25 per cent thought the move long overdue.

Nearly half thought Bourne should not be allowed to grow in population above 10,000.

More than three quarters said an A15 bypass should not be dependent on a new, large, housing area in the north east of the town.

A relief road around the south west (between the A15 and Stamford Road) was thought necessary by three quarters - 36 per cent thought such a road more important than an A15 bypass.

The A15 between Bourne and Market Deeping was considered by 58 per cent as not up to the job.

The society believed the district council could "usefully strengthen its planning team" and 70 per cent of those surveyed said planning should be chiefly left to properly qualified planners.

Motorcyclist's mum thanks son's rescuer

GRATEFUL Bourne mum Sandra Wilson has had a chance to thank the man she believes saved her son's life.

Her son Steven, of Leofric Avenue, spent about an hour lying in the bottom of a dyke with smashed bones after a motorbike accident.

He was discovered by chance by an unknown passer-by who heard "whimpering" coming from the dyke after he stopped on the A151 between West Pinchbeck and Bourne to answer a call of nature.

Now that passer-by has been identified following the story about Steven which appeared in last week's Lincolnshire Free Press.

A Pinchbeck nursery owner recognised the "samaritan" as the man from Staffordshire who had delivered bedding plants to him, so sent him a copy of the newspaper.

Sandra said: "He saw the paper and was rather shocked. He didn't realise how badly hurt Steven was.

"He read that we were trying to get in touch and he rang us and I told him: 'I would like to meet you because without you I wouldn't have a son.'

"We met on Friday and we are going to keep in touch.

"We keep thinking about what if, but he was found and he's alive. He's in a lot of pain and he's got a lot of broken bones but he's slowly on the mend."

The man - Terry Howells - wants to be kept informed of Steven's progress. Sandra hopes the pair will be able to meet eventually so Steven can thank him personally.

Steven (19) broke his left shoulder, left elbow, right arm and right leg in the accident. His condition was "comfortable" in the Pilgrim Hospital at Boston yesterday (Monday).

Sandra said he would be transferred yesterday to Peterborough District Hospital and would eventually go into the RAF hospital at Ely.

Pump stolen

BETWEEN last Monday and Wednesday, a portable Alcon water pump worth £150 was stolen from Crowland.

Slightly injured in crash

TRACTOR driver Brian Charles Kemp of Coles Lane, Swineshead, and car driver Anne North, of Great Dunham, were slightly injured in a collision on the A52 at Kirton End, on Sunday.

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