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# L. C. C. IS FLAYED AT INQUIRY

IN a last ditch battle to invalidate a London County Council ruling forbidding the world's largest fine-gauge electrical wire producers from enlarging their storage premises in Starcross-street, Coburg-street and Drummond-street, N.W.1, Sir Sydney Littlewood, representing the firm, bitterly attacked them for their "complacent and dilatory treatment" of the case.

The appeal, by Connollys (Blackley) Ltd., an independently operated subsidiary of British Insulated Cables Ltd., was heard before Mr. W. H. Pennell, an Inspector of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, at a public inquiry held at St. Pancras Town Hall.

Sir Sydney spoke of the "appalling history" of the case and accused the L.C.C. of "fiddling while Rome burns." He told the Inspector: "It took seven months for them to refuse the planning application. There followed several meetings between the company and L.C.C. officials and suddenly, at one of these meetings, they announced that the L.C.C. were considering changing the area into a residential zone and argued that consequently the company's plan might not conform. Yet even today we do not know if this is so. There is sometimes an excuse for delay but when, as in this case, it is a matter of such great importance, there is no justification."

Sir Sydney then turned to the future. "The company," he said, "is contributing an important part to our export drive and will doubtless do likewise in the Common Market."

Mr. George Francis Travis, Deputy Chairman and General Manager of the Company, said that winding wire, their main product, was virtually unknown to the public although it provided the heart of almost all electrical and electro-mechanical devices. "In fact," he went on, "without it civilization as we know it would cease. The high cost however, coupled with the multitude of items many customers require, makes it almost impossible for them to carry adequate stocks. At our branch depots they can call on us for supplies as they need them."

He continued: "We propose to rebuild the St. Pancras depot with ancillary offices and have agreed to incorporate living accommodation to accord with local authority requirements, housing a similar number of tenants to those displaced by the scheme."

"I need scarcely say that we have no wish to do this, but our need for a depot in this area is so great that we have agreed on the stipulation that the rents charged must be economic."

He concluded: "If the Minister allows us to go ahead we will put up a building which will greatly improve the appearance of the

neighbourhood."

The L.C.C.'s argument was that the proposed development of "the irregularly-shaped portion of the island block bounded by Drummond, Gower, Starcross and Coburg streets would seriously prejudice the proper redevelopment of the area as a whole."

"Furthermore," they claimed, "the site falls within a larger area to which the council is giving detailed consideration for comprehensive redevelopment and the company's scheme would therefore be premature."

But Mr. Robert Rayner, formerly staff architect to Chamberlain and Willows, the company's estate agents, agreed with neither contention. He said:

"The proposed building has been designed readily to join up with future development of the remainder of the block. The frontage to all neighbouring streets has been maintained as three-storey and the small irregular portion of the site has been left as open space in order to keep the shape of the building uniform and simple."

He added: "The area is at present zoned for commercial development and is closely connected with Easton Station. Opposite is the British Railways Depot and there are a number of factories, warehouses and other business premises in the close vicinity, some of which have been erected in the last few years."

Mr. Ernest George Smith, a partner in Chamberlain and Willows, agreed. "The appearance of the property as a whole is unattractive and unimposing," he said, "the business premises being surrounded by old dwelling houses which do not conform to modern standards. The present

buildings are quite unworthy of such a prominent site in Central London or for occupation by a large company as its London depot and offices. The present arrangement is inconvenient and uneconomic."

But Mr. C. C. Paul, Deputy Group Planning Officer of the L.C.C., upheld the original grounds of refusal. "There is a pressing need to provide housing sites in London and we are looking at any piece of land that could, at whatever cost, be used in this way."

He continued with an attack on the company's proposals. "The mere fact that they are prepared to replace housing accommodation does not in any way help the situation," he said. "They propose nine small flats to replace 10 married couples, half of whom have children, and three single people."

He added: "If it was not for this acute problem of housing it is extremely likely that the L.C.C. would have given the company permission to build a long time ago."

Another difficulty that would result from the plan was the continuation of the present street pattern in the area. Under the L.C.C.'s proposed "new look" for the Easton-road/Hampstead-road junction, including an underpass, it would call for a re-assessment and almost certain change. Some roads extensively used would become secondary and virtually non-existent.

Mr. Paul put the L.C.C.'s position succinctly. "It's all or nothing. This area has got to be either zoned all for commercial use, or all for residential use. He concluded with a warning.

"If this appeal is upheld the possibility of getting satisfactory development in the area is remote."

The result of the inquiry is expected within the next few weeks.

## BRAZEN OR A BROLLY

### Fined For Game In The Street

Said to have been doing a three-card trick on an umbrella in Baker-street, Ap. Apostolou (26), machine of Colville-place, W.1, guilty at Marlborough-st. a charge of gaming. Fined £2.

Police Inspector Flinn the magistrate (Mr. S. Collins) that the accused crowd of about 15 men, him. Manipulating the cards and with a pile on the umbrella in front he was saying: "Come gentlemen. Find the lady, will cover whatever you down."

Apostolou said he was sorry and would not again.

"You had better not," a magistrate. "It's not a desirable game." And he accused asked for time to pay the fine, he told "You can have seven days don't go out getting it y umbrella and three card

## "WEAK-WILLED ABSCONDED GAOLED"

For stealing from the Kitchen Restaurant, place, S.W.1. £15 belong his employer (Dr. Ivan), a young chef who was have absconded to Ireland. James Edwards (23), a photographer, of Enville Brierly Hill, Staffs, was for one month at Marlborough-st.

Det. Bedford said Edwards was entrusted with keys of the restaurant and went there one Sunday and stole the cash. Fred he went to Liverpool and to Ireland.

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