

100 High Street  
Leicester

16 September 1975

The Right Honourable Anthony Crossland, MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment

Sir

I have the pleasure to inform you that your appeal at  
the District Council level, in relation to the proposed  
Mrs M J Farmer's Settlement under the provisions of the  
Act 1974 against the refusal of the Council to grant the  
provision of 25 separate houses and a house, and to  
also grant planning permission for the erection of  
new houses and the demolition of existing houses.

The Reasons for Refusal are:-

1. The proposal conflicts with the policy for the provision of  
the Housing for the TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

APPEAL

by

THE TRUSTEES OF MRS M J FARMER'S SETTLEMENT

Inspector: J S Cheer FRTP, DipTP, DMA

Date of Inquiry: 16 September 1975

File No: APP/5392/A/74/11977

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1

3 October 1975

To the Right Honourable Anthony Crosland, MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment

Sir

I have the honour to report that on 16 September 1975 I held an inquiry at the District Council Offices, Caterham, into an appeal by the Trustees of Mrs M J Farmer's Settlement under section 36 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 against the refusal of the Tandridge District Council to permit the erection of 29 terraced houses and 16 linked houses, 8 detached houses and 9 bungalows with garages and estate roads on about 15 acres of land adjoining New Place and off Station Road, Lingfield, Surrey.

1. The Reasons for Refusal are:-

1. The proposal conflicts with the policy for the preservation of the Metropolitan Green Belt as defined in the Surrey Development Plan Written Statement Part VI, paragraph 2.
  2. Under this policy the Local Planning Authority propose to restrict further development in such villages, unless it can be shown that there is an overriding need to meet strictly local requirements.
  3. The proposed development would result in the undesirable urbanisation of this pleasant open area to the detriment of its character and contrary to the policy outlined in (1) above.
  4. The proposed development would be entirely out of character with and conflict with the policy for the Designated Conservation Area of Lingfield (The Church) within which the application site lies.
  5. The property lies within an area seriously affected by aircraft noise from London Airport-Gatwick and under the Local Planning Authority's current policy relating thereto the site lies within Noise Zone 2 where the noise is expected to be so severe that no major residential development should be permitted.
  6. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority there has been no material change in circumstances to warrant a different decision to that given on appeal in 1966, refusing residential development (GO/R 5712A).
2. This report includes a description of the appeal site and surroundings, the gist of the representations made at the inquiry, and my findings of fact, conclusions and recommendation. Lists of appearances, documents, plans and photographs are attached.

## THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

3. Lingfield is an old Wealden village with a population of about 4,500 and has grown up along a quadrilateral of roads which were substantially developed with Victorian and Edwardian buildings following the coming of the railway. The village lies some 7 miles to the east of Gatwick Airport and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the north of East Grinstead.
4. The appeal site comprises some 15 acres of pasture land in the block of properties between one of the original village streets, Church Road, and Station Road (a parallel road to the east) which are connected by a public footpath running from the old centre of the village to the railway station further to the east. This path is gated at both ends, is metalled and lit, and divides the appeal site into a northern and a southern part of roughly comparable areas.
5. The northern part of the appeal site includes 4 fields and a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre tongue of land which contains some dilapidated farm buildings, is generally overgrown and has a frontage of about 160 ft to Church Road (Photo 1). It adjoins a graveyard and the backs of post-war houses which front on to Baker's Lane (to the north-west) (Photo 14), and other council houses (Photo 13) a small copse and the grounds of The Old Cottage, all of which front on to Station Road (to the east) (Photo 7). The southern part comprises 3 fields and part of the orchard of The Oast House and is bounded by the walled garden of New Place and the orchard (to the east) (Photo 8), pasture land and open countryside (to the south-east), the back gardens of Edwardian and post-war detached houses fronting upon Town Hill (to the south) (Photo 12), and other back gardens, the grounds and car park of a modern public house which front on to Church Road (to the west).
6. The main built up part of the village lies to the north-west and south-west and the Station Road council houses, the tall poplars and copse next to The Old Cottage and the walled garden of New Place give one a marked sense of enclosure to the east.
7. The footpath at its eastern end passes through a gate and runs between The Old Cottage, a building listed as being of special architectural or historic interest (Grade II) and New Place, another listed building (Grade II\*) (Photo 10). The Old Oast House (further to the south) is on the supplementary list. The footpath gives varying views of these buildings, the church and neighbouring development (to the west) and views across the adjoining fields which comprise the major part of the appeal site and are generally bounded by substantial hedges and trees (Photos 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10).
8. The highest ground lies close to the south-western boundary and the land generally falls down to the path and then rises in a very slight slope towards the north. There are views of the church and its neighbouring buildings from the southern end of Station Road, near its junction with Town Hill and through the copse to the north of The Old Cottage.

## THE CASE FOR THE APPELLANTS

The material points made were:-

9. The Godstone Rural District Council made an application to develop the site in 1949 (which was subsequently withdrawn) and an inquiry was held in 1966 into a proposal to develop the appeal site and the adjoining land to the south-east (coloured blue on Plan C) for residential purposes. This appeal was dismissed, but it was established as a fact that the planning authority considered that the appeal land was suitable and ripe for development and that a number of previous appeal decisions had officially supported the view that this land was "next" for development in Lingfield. One of the report's conclusions (accepted by the Minister) did not object to the view that, at that time, Lingfield was not a settlement which should be allowed to expand to meet general commuter demands over "the near future" (Document 4(iv) Paras 30, 31, 63(10) and 64).

10. Since that appeal decision there had been a growth of pressure to release more housing land in the Outer Metropolitan Area (OMA). There was now adequate accommodation for children in the First and Middle Schools in the village (Document 4(v)); there was plenty of spare passenger capacity on rail services from Lingfield (Document 4(vi)) and adequate surface and main drainage facilities were available (Document 4(vii)). It was now some 9 years since the previous appeal decision and the time had now come to release part of the 1966 appeal site for housing purposes. An outline application for planning permission (in which all Article 5 matters were reserved) had therefore been made for the development of about 15 acres of land (not 21.5 acres as originally).

11. This application was accompanied by an illustrative layout (Plan A(iii)) which embodied the landscape suggestions of the 1966 inspector and made provision for 62 units with relatively low-cost housing (about £10,000-£11,000 at present prices) in the northern part of the site and lower density development in the southern half. The two housing groups would be separated by an open space bisected by the existing footpath and result in a density of 4.1 units per acre (as against the previous appeal proposal of 8 units per acre). The views along the footpath of the church and the western facade of New Place would be retained, opportunities taken to enhance the appearance of the area by further planting. A system of footpaths could be created to the north and south, connecting the proposed houses to the existing pedestrian network. The 5 acres of open space within the appeal site connected to other open land to the south-east and the views to the south and south-east would be kept. This was a "once and for all" scheme and if permission were granted the proposed open space and adjoining open land coloured light and dark green on Plan D would be conveyed to the District Council as public open space, free of charge.

12. This application was refused on 20 May 1974 and was now the subject of this appeal.

13. The proposal to extend the Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) was submitted in 1959 and was a 'blanket' proposal which did not have regard for any village envelope. The green belt implications were discussed at the previous inquiry (as well as conservation issues and the growth of the airport) yet it was still thought at that time that this land was the next to be developed.

14. The appeal site was almost completely surrounded by development and was already within the village envelope. Its development would not involve an outward extension of the built up area of Lingfield or be contrary to any of the basic aims of the MGB. This was not an area deficient in open space. Visitors would still enjoy the convenience of and views from the footpath and the public recreational enjoyment of this land would be enhanced if it were to be in public ownership.
15. Although the maintenance of the green belt was a primary planning objective, the government had said on many recent occasions that in view of the urgent need to release more land for housing there were likely to be instances where it would be appropriate to release land from the green belt without serious risk of damage to its basic principles (Command 5280) and some 2000 acres of green belt land were thought to be capable of release.
16. In May 1968, the Minister asked planning authorities to find sufficient land within the OMA for 35,000 private houses a year (for 7 years). Surrey was to provide land for 6,000 but only provided an average of 3,178 completions between 1969 and 1974 and the average for the whole OMA was 75% below the required figure. Only 2,259 private houses were completed in Surrey in 1974. There had also been a decline in public sector housing in Surrey between 1969 and 1974 (Document 4(ii)).
17. Housing was a regional problem in which Surrey and Lingfield had a part to play. The most recent comprehensive study was the Strategic Plan for the South East (SPSE) which was approved in October 1971. The appeal site was within Planning Area 5 (East Surrey) where it was recommended that there could be a growth of about 2,500 persons per year (up to 1981).
18. Since the approval of the plan, 2 monitoring reports had been published and the latest report "Population Pressure and Population Change" (January 1975) found that by 1973 (the first 7 years of the 15 year SPSE plan period) the recorded population growth had been only 2,000 as against 35,000 scheduled for the whole 15 year period.
19. The county council's return of land available for housing in October 1972 was misleading. 70% of the forecasted housing capacity came from sites of less than 3 acres, the total figures for all sites did not allow any reduction in respect of dwellings to be demolished and included land likely to be available for housing in the next 5 years, not just land already enjoying or likely to enjoy planning permission in not more than 2 years time following the provision of services (as required by the circular).
20. The five year average "target" set by Circular 102/72 was 5,490 houses.
21. In 1972 27% of land allocated for housing in Surrey became the subject of outstanding permissions and 67% of the outstanding permissions became building commencements or completions. In that year, the stock of housing land was not therefore being replenished and as only 40.2% of the dwellings permitted between October 1972 and October 1973 were on land included in the 102/72 returns, the county council had clearly found it necessary to increase the supply of housing land outside their 1972 allocations. The final report of the Consultants Study for the Department "Housing Land Availability in the South East" estimated that in their year of study about 5,000 dwellings were completed in Surrey. The Local Housing Statistics showed that the completions for both public

and private housing were 4,089 in 1973 and 3,474 in 1974. Therefore, apart from the current shortfall in housing land availability there was also a decline in the number of completions and the cumulative deficit in Surrey for the 1972-1977 period covered by the 102/72 returns was about 3,400 dwellings which, in effect, raised the target in the 3 remaining years from 5,490 to about 6,600.

22. The council's comparisons between the number of permissions granted and the falling number of yearly completions was of little value for no information about these consents was available. Some might have expired or related to land now unsuitable for development because of infrastructure, land assembly or other problems.

23. The present state of the housing market was not depressed. Money was now more freely available and in a recent appeal case in Houghton Regis, it was found that whilst the planning authority had satisfactorily demonstrated their compliance with the general requirements of Circular 102/72, there were no longer any physical/service constraints which would preclude development. The appeal was allowed (Document 4iii). Therefore, even if the Surrey County Council had complied with the circular, this would not in itself justify a refusal.

24. Details of Surrey's contributions to the Government's 2000 acre target were published on 2 September. This land totalled 152 acres, a further 64 acres had been allowed on appeal but there was still a shortfall of 310 acres (Document 4(i)).

25. Circular 122/73 stated that need would only have to be considered if the development of the land were subject to significant planning objections and Circular 24/75 stated that the position of private house-building in 1974 fell far short of an acceptable level at a time when greater provision had become even more necessary.

26. The county council's own document "Population and Housing" recognised the fact that in Surrey, demand exceeded potential supply and that the annual rate of completions was in a rapid decline (Document 8).

27. The proposed development could take place immediately. There was no need for any public expenditure at this time of public money shortage. All services were available, there was no objection from the highway authority and provision could immediately be made for the housing most needed - for first time buyers. This development was therefore in accordance with the latest circular (24/75) and the overall regional housing need, the history and particular location of this site within the village, outweighed the green belt objection.

28. The publication of the Joint Parish Council's Conservation Area Committee "Lingfield Explored" (Document 7) said that if ever any development took place in Star Field (the appeal site) it was very important to ensure that the footpath should be kept open as a greenway possibly tree lined, and that the fields to the north were semi-derelict and any future use of this land should have its best side towards the park. The appellants had succeeded in designing a layout which met the requirements of the Conservation Area Committee and ensured that the houses were subordinate to the proposed central open spaces. Substantial improvements to the land would be undertaken as part of the design and landscaping proposals and building materials and the detailed design of dwellings could ensure a harmonious development of the site.

29. 2 acres of land in the northernmost corner of the appeal site lay outside the Conservation Area and the development could hardly be regarded as being out of character with the area when final detailed proposals had yet to be formulated. The Civic Trust European Architectural Heritage Year Awards for 1975 included at least 3 new housing areas in Conservation Areas (Document 4(viii)). This development enabled two somewhat remote groups of listed buildings to be linked, the footpath and public open space system to be extended and a "village green" created. All in all, it was a development which would enhance the Conservation Area.

30. When current horizontal flight paths (Document 9(iii)) were plotted on the NNI map (Plan E), it was clear that the council's NNI contours did not follow these paths. The official mean flight path to Dover lay about  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometre to the south of the centre of the NNI contour lobe at this part and as it was not possible to see the report on which the contours were based, it was decided to carry out a noise survey on the site and determine the actual NNI value.

31. Continuous monitoring of aircraft flying over the site between 07.00 and 19.00 BST on 26, 27 and 28 August 1975 established respective NNI values for these days of 33, 28 and 32 (Document 9(iv)). On 26 August (the day after Bank Holiday) more flights than usual were recorded but the British Airport Authority confirmed that the number of aircraft movements during the survey period represented a typical situation during the peak month of August.

32. The basis of the county council's aircraft noise policy was therefore either inaccurate or out of date. The appeal site was well outside the 40 NNI contour and there was no present-day justification for the planning authority's objection on noise grounds. If, as was anticipated by the Airports Authority, the number of movements were to increase by 13% between 1974/75 and the worst years of 1978/79, the value of the highest index reading for the appeal site would still only be 34 NNI. There would have to be a 200% increase in traffic to bring the appeal site within the 40 NNI contour.

33. It was basically the responsibility of the council to justify their embargo and to demonstrate the accuracy of their noise zones. Their plan was not due to be revised until 1976 and this issue should be determined on the basis of the best evidence. It was difficult to precisely measure NNI standards at low values but if the views of local residents concerning the weight of weekend traffic were to be preferred to the British Airport Authority's information, the weekend noise measurements would have to be very high to bring the value up to 40 NNI.

34. The McKennell and Wilson Reports on noise had shown that annoyance was a matter of concern to individuals within the home rather than outside it and even if the appeal site was within the 40-55 NNI bracket, it would be possible to employ effective sound insulation measures. Such measures incorporated into the dwellings at the building stage would result in minimal additional cost and with the current introduction of quieter aircraft, conditions would improve after 1978/79.

35. It was appreciated that local residents might have the views from their houses affected but although 323 notification letters had been sent, only 30 replies from 28 people had been received and one of them did not object. This was not therefore a case where there was a very strong local objection. There was evidence of a more enlightened approach by some local people in the pamphlet "Lingfield Explored" and the local amenity society recognised that some development was possible.

36. The submission by the council during the inquiry of a plan showing 7 other sites which were said to be similar was unreasonable. This argument had not been canvassed in the Rule 6 statement and could not therefore be important. The sites in question, however, appeared to involve outward extensions of the village, had few of the characteristics of the appeal site and were not therefore comparable with the appeal site.

37. Whilst the submitted plan was 'illustrative' it was a document which if the appeal were allowed, could form the basis for the imposition of planning conditions and any future developer would be irresponsible to ignore its importance in influencing the appeal decision. Planning permission could be granted, subject to a condition requiring a Section 52 agreement concerning the status and ownership of the open space areas. Such a condition would be valid because the owners wanted it, permission might not be granted without it and the appellants owned all of the land involved.

#### THE CASE FOR THE DISTRICT PLANNING AUTHORITY

The material points made were:-

38. The appeal site was within an unallocated area in the County Development Plan (approved 1971) and within the extension of the MGB (approved 1974). The proposed development did not fall within the categories of development acceptable in a green belt and it was the council's intention to preserve the charm and character of settlements within the MGB and to have special regard to the impact of new development upon the visual amenities of the MGB.

39. The appeal site was on the edge of Lingfield and was not continuously flanked on all sides by development. Except for the council houses in Station Road, the development to the east was scattered and could not reasonably be regarded as being built up. There was open countryside to the south-east and the site formed part of an attractive area of open land which contributed to the Green Belt setting of Lingfield and to the rural character of its peripheral land. This openness provided a wedge of undeveloped land which effectively prevented the coalescence of the development in Station Road with that around the church so enabling these two areas to maintain their rural setting.

40. The density of existing neighbouring development was low and in keeping with its location on the edge of the village. The appeal proposals, however, would intensify the scatter of low density development on the periphery of Lingfield where the Green Belt was subject to the greatest pressure. An approval in this case could lead to proposals to intensify existing development to the east of Station Road and develop 7 other comparable sites on the periphery of the village (Plan F) so changing the whole character of the village and its surrounding rural area.

41. In approving, in principle, the SPSE, the Government had said that Green Belts were an instrument for shaping the long term pattern of regional growth and the MGB was of strategic importance. The SPSE policy for Area No 5 was to minimise post 1981 growth and allow a growth of about 2,500 persons per year. This figure was not, however, a mandatory figure and the county council now thought that this figure was too high.



42. The recent circulars concerning the release of further land for housing drew attention to the importance of preserving the MGB and in February 1973, the Minister accepted that Surrey was playing its part in providing further housing land and acknowledged that Surrey could not continue to do so indefinitely as it was a Green Belt county.

43. In April 1974 sites for almost 52,000 dwellings were available for development in Surrey, of which, over 23,000 were the subject of planning permissions granted but not implemented (Document 5(xxi)) and in the 4 year period 1970-73, some 34,000 permissions were granted and only 19,000 dwellings erected. Permissions were granted in Tandridge for some 2,651 houses in 1969-74 and 1,928 were completed. Assuming an average county building rate of 5,000 dwellings per year, there was a supply of more than 10 years building land in Surrey and in view of the depressed state of the housing market, there was an ample supply of building land in both Surrey and Tandridge.

44. There had been no analysis of the planning permissions for 23,000 dwellings and why more houses were not being built, but the new Community Land Bill might now ensure that land which was available would be developed.

45. As Surrey was primarily an urban county, it was to be expected that most new houses would be built on sites of less than 3 acres and the county had already identified more than its share of the 2,000 acres of green belt land for housing.

46. On 3 April 1974, the Minister of Housing and Construction said that there was no evidence that land for housing was in short supply.

47. There was, therefore, no special case of housing need to justify any exception from the strict Green Belt policy of a strong presumption against development on this site. Furthermore, there was little employment available in Lingfield and if further land were required for housing it should be properly located within a planned development, as in a non-statutory Town Map review, rather than an ad hoc release of land as a result of an appeal.

48. The appeal site formed part of the Lingfield (The Church) Conservation Area which included 7 buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest, 3 properties on the supplementary list and other buildings worthy of listing or desirable to keep (Plan G). These buildings were grouped around the church (in the west) or Station Road (to the east) with the appeal site in between. Both sets of buildings were therefore close to the appeal site and it was as important to safeguard the environment of these buildings as to physically protect them.

49. Conservation Areas were, in themselves, of special architectural or historic interest and this development would result in the loss of the quiet rural character and setting of many of the listed buildings and the area as a whole. The openness of the appeal site made a considerable contribution to the beauty of the Conservation Area and there was considerable public opposition to the development.

50. The erection of 62 houses would inevitably present an incongruous urban appearance and introduce major areas of buildings of similar date and style and be out of accord with the traditional development of the village which has taken place over many years and in differing styles. Even on the illustrated

layout one would see the back walls of houses which would be uncomfortably close to the public footpath and completely change the character of this part of the Conservation Area and the centre of the village.

51. The previous inspector had concluded "that much of the appeal site, its footpath and the termination of the footpath at groups of distinguished buildings embodied the very spirit of the English village and countryside....". The council agreed and wish to keep it unspoilt.

52. The county council carried out a social survey to establish NNI contours around Gatwick in 1971. The appeal site fell within a 40-55 NNI zone where all housing schemes in excess of 10 dwellings should be refused and only insulated infilling dwellings allowed. The Department considered the Gatwick policies when framing their own recommendations concerning planning and noise (Circular 10/73). This circular stated that only infilling should be permitted at a site exposed to 40 NNI and this should not be interpreted as implying that aircraft noise presented no problem at levels below 40 NNI. The circular also stated that "In certain rural areas, planning authorities might find it practicable and desirable to base their policies on rather more stringent criteria and the Secretaries of State would welcome this".

53. The consultants for the 1971 survey observed that large scale development should not be permitted within the 35-40 NNI contours. The NNI contours were based on indoor activities and present noise levels in the environment outside buildings were also important.

54. The county council's policy with regard to aircraft noise and nuisance had been reviewed annually and the current map had last been revised on 18 December 1973. Errors in drawing NNI contours reduced as the noise increased and there could be inaccuracies in the council's 40 NNI contour of plus or minus 4.

55. Between 10.00 and 12.00 hours on Friday 5 September, the site was over-flown by 2 aircraft giving peak noise measurements of more than 80 dBA and between 12.30 and 14.30 on Saturday 13 September there were 6 aircraft giving similar noise readings. As these readings were taken at a weekend they may have involved bigger aircraft than those included in the appellants' survey. The appellants were wrong to take only one week in one NNI 90 day period.

56. The council's 40 NNI planning restriction had recently been supported on appeal when an inspector dismissed a proposal for residential development at Smallfield (5 miles to the west of the appeal site) (APP/2108/A/73/4910).

57. The appellants were not developers and once permission was granted on the basis of the illustrative layout there was no certainty that it would actually be carried out. It was also doubted whether any planning condition requiring a Section 52 agreement on the provision and ownership of the proposed open spaces would be valid.

58. The previous appeal decision did not pave the way to accepting this appeal proposal. The previous inspector had made his landscape conclusions with the proviso that "if building ever became essential". The proposed buildings were not essential. Since 1966, the MGB extension had been confirmed, there was more public concern about conservation and the greater part of the appeal site confirmed as a Conservation Area, there had been a considerable increase in air traffic and noise and further housing development had taken place in the village and elsewhere.

## CASES FOR INTERESTED PERSONS

59. The Lingfield and District Amenity Society additionally submitted that the proposed development would be contrary to the principles of good planning and injurious to the needs of the village where there was no overriding local housing need and many properties were for sale. If, however, it was decided to dismiss the appeal without prejudice to a further application on a reduced scale, only the area to the north of the footpath should be considered, road access should be from Baker's Lane and the development should be of village type houses of traditional design with a central green opening towards the public footpath.

60. Mr R M Ritchie, owner/occupier of The Old Cottage, additionally submitted that in 1957 local people had been told that Gatwick would never be more than an ancillary airport and many people had bought houses in Lingfield on the understanding that the village was in the Green Belt. Having been let down on the Gatwick assurance it was hoped that they would not be let down again. The appellants' aircraft noise survey did not include any days during weekends (when traffic was heaviest) and during the observations, the wind directions varied from north-east to south-east, ie towards Gatwick and not from the usual and more noisy westerly direction (from Gatwick). Whilst there might be room for more passengers when trains stopped at Lingfield, the train was nearing the end of this railway line. It was generally crowded for much of its journey to and from London.

61. Mr Thring, owner/occupier of New Place Stables (part of the original New Place building complex) additionally submitted that whereas local residents had instructed a solicitor and counsel to represent their interests at the 1966 inquiry, the resulting decision was so in keeping with their own views and so apparently absolute that it was not thought necessary to repeat this expensive process again.

## FINDINGS OF FACT

62. I find the following facts:

1. The appeal site comprises some 15 acres of pasture land between the parallel roads of Church Road and Station Road which are connected by a public footpath which runs from the centre of the village to the railway station and bisects the appeal site.
2. The northern part of the appeal site comprises 4 fields and a derelict area of about  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre with a frontage of about 160 ft to Church Road, adjoins a graveyard and the backs of post-war council houses to the north-west and other council houses, a small copse and the grounds of The Old Cottage (a grade II listed building) to the east.
3. The southern part of the appeal site comprises 3 fields and part of the orchard of The Oast House (a supplementary listed building) is bounded by the walled garden of New Place (a grade II\* listed building) and the orchard to the east, pasture land and open countryside to the south-east, Edwardian and post-war detached houses fronting Town Hill to the south and other back gardens and the grounds of a modern public house and car park which front on to Church Road, in the west.

4. The main built up part of the village lies to the north-west and south-west and the council houses, copse and poplars next to The Old Cottage and the walled garden of New Place give a sense of enclosure to the east.
5. The public footpath across the site is gated at both ends and gives varying views of New Place, The Old Cottage, the church and neighbouring development across the adjoining fields which are bounded by substantial hedges and trees.
6. The site is within the extension of the Metropolitan Green Belt which was approved in 1974.
7. The Strategic Plan for the South East (SPSE) (approved in 1971) considered that East Surrey could sustain a population growth of up to 2,500 persons per year until 1981.
8. The recorded population growth for East Surrey for the first 7 years of the SPSE was 2,000.
9. The 5 year average housing availability target set by the county council's circular 102/72 returns was 5,490 dwellings per year.
10. There was a theoretical availability of sites for about 52,000 dwellings in Surrey in April 1974, of which 23,000 were the subject of planning permissions granted but not yet implemented.
11. 4,089 houses were completed in Surrey in 1973 and 3,474 in 1974.
12. Except for about 2 acres of land in the northernmost corner, the appeal site is within a Conservation Area which links buildings of special architectural and historic interest around the church with other listed buildings in Station Road.
13. The previous inquiry concerning residential development on this and adjoining land established, as a fact, that the planning authority considered that the appeal land was suitable and ripe for development and that a number of previous appeal decisions officially supported the view that this land was "next" for development in Lingfield.
14. The appeal site is some 7 miles to the east of Gatwick Airport and falls within the 40 NNI contour of the county council's current NNI map which was last revised on 18 December 1973.
15. The official mean flight path from Gatwick to Dover lies about  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometre south of the centre of the 40 NNI contour lobe at this part.
16. On the basis of noise measurements taken between 07.00 and 19.00 BST on 26, 27 and 28 August 1975, the NNI values for the 3 days were 33, 28 and 32 (respectively).
17. On these 3 days the wind was from the north-east to south-east.
18. The appellants consider that it is difficult to measure NNI standards at low values precisely and the council consider that there could be inaccuracies to their 40 NNI contour of plus or minus 4.

CONCLUSIONS

63. Bearing in mind the above facts, I am of the opinion that:-

1. It is possible that the appellants' noise measurements could have been reduced by the wind, larger and noisier aircraft might have been used at weekends and as readings were only taken on 3 consecutive week days, the current NNI value for the site may be higher than 35 NNI. On the other hand, the council's assessment is now based on out of date information and it looks as if their 40 NNI contour is wrongly placed. Both parties agree that low NNI values are difficult to assess accurately and I am not convinced on the basis of the evidence before me, that a dismissal of this appeal is justified solely on the grounds of noise and nuisance from aircraft.

2. There could be some positive "conservation" advantages from the development of this site but the development of any part of the southern and central fields, would diminish the traditional open rural setting of the neighbouring listed buildings and detract from the feeling that the countryside still penetrates into the heart of the original village. Furthermore the introduction of an estate road with parallel footpaths, street lighting and traffic could not help but be detrimental to the quiet rural character of the area next to the church, and the overall weight of conservation considerations is therefore against the development of the whole site.

3. No particular local need for more housing has been established but I accept that there is a substantial national and regional need to release more land which could be immediately made available for housing development.

4. The openness of this land gives this part of Lingfield a special character which should be preserved and the appeal site has been rightly included in the recent Green Belt extension. There is therefore a comparatively fresh basic presumption against new residential development on this land and it is my view that the history of the site and the housing need are not sufficient to outweigh the compelling green belt objection, which in this case is reinforced by substantial conservation and noise climate objections to the development of the whole site.

RECOMMENDATION

64. I therefore recommend that this appeal be dismissed.

I have the honour to be  
Sir  
Your obedient Servant

Walter Lawrence

J S CHEIER

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANTS

Mr Michael Fitzgerald

of Counsel, instructed by Messrs Norton, Rose, Botterell and Roche.

He called:

Ian Malcolm Collinson FRICS

Surveyor and planning consultant.

Gerald Michael Langlay-Smith  
ARIBA AILA

Chartered Architect and Landscape Architect.

Alan Leonard Beaman BSc MSc  
MInstP

Environmental Engineer.

FOR THE PLANNING AUTHORITY

Mr R F Herring

Assistant Clerk, Tandridge District Council.

He called:

John Gibbs

Principal Assistant Planning Officer, Tandridge District Council.

Geoffrey Michael Pink  
ARIBA DipTP MRTPI

Assistant County Planning Officer (Conservation and Historic Buildings Section), Surrey County Council.

Dr Christopher Anthony Hill PhD  
MInstP

Head of Environmental Noise Section of the Surrey County Council Engineers Department

FOR THE LINGFIELD AND DISTRICT AMENITY SOCIETY

Walter Alan Devereux FRIBA

gave evidence on behalf of the Society, of which he is Vice Chairman.

INTERESTED PERSONS

Richard Michael Ritchie

examined and gave evidence on behalf of himself and a neighbouring resident.

Walter Leonard Howard Thring

have evidence on behalf of himself as a local resident.

DOCUMENTS

- Document 1 List of persons present at the inquiry.
- " 2 Notification letter and public notice of inquiry.
- " 3 (i-xxvii) Replies from local people.
- " 4 (i-x) Documents in support of the Appellant's case.
- " 5 (i-xxviii) Documents in support of the District Council's case.
- " 6 (i-ii) Letters from Lingfield Parish Council and the Joint Parish Council's Conservation Area Committee.
- " 7 Lingfield explored.
- " 8 Surrey Structure Plan Population and Housing.
- " 9 (i-iv) Mr Beaman's Proof of Evidence and supporting documents.

PLANS

- PLAN A The appeal plans.
- " B The appeal site in relation to the village. (Appellant's Plan IMC 1)
- " C Site appraisal (revised) (Appellant's Plan MLS 1).
- " D An illustrative layout (Appellant's Plan MLS 2).
- " E Gatwick Airport, Control of Development in Noisy Areas.
- " F Precedent sites for development.
- " G Lingfield (The Church) Conservation Area.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs taken a fortnight before the inquiry. Locations illustrated on Plan C.

- Photo 1 Church Road frontage and footpath.
- " 2 Church Road proposed access point.
- " 3 Footpath, western end looking east.
- " 4 View of church from footpath.
- " 5 Footpath, easterly view towards pond.
- " 6 Footpath, westerly view towards Church Road.
- " 7 Footpath, north easterly view from mid point.
- " 8 Footpath, south easterly view from mid point.

PHOTOGRAPHS (continued)

- Photo 9           Footpath, north westerly view from New Place.  
" 10            New Place at eastern end of footpath.  
" 11            General view westwards.  
" 12            Western boundary at rear of Town Hill.  
" 13            Eastern boundary at rear of Station Road.  
" 14            Northern boundary at rear of Baker's Lane