

# PUBLIC INQUIRY MADE HISTORY

## *Scientology development appeal heard*

**THE PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE PLANNING APPEAL BY SCIENTOLOGISTS CONCLUDED AT EAST GRINSTEAD ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON AFTER LASTING THREE-AND-A-HALF DAYS — THE LONGEST INQUIRY EVER TO BE HELD IN THE TOWN.**

The appeal by the Church of Scientology, California, was into the refusal by East Grinstead Urban Council to allow development extending to 23,500 square feet at the Scientology headquarters at Saint Hill Manor on the outskirts of the town.

The Urban Council had booked East Grinstead Parish Hall for the inquiry which was expected to last only two days.

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government Inspector conducting the inquiry was Mr. H. V. Loney who will now make his recommendations to the Minister whose decision will be made known at a later date.

On Wednesday last week the College of Scientology was accused of being a 'bogus institution' by Mr. James Wilkie, representing the Sussex Rural Community Council.

Mr. Wilkie, 72, and a former senior administrative official in the Ministry of Education, made the accusation when

cross-examining Mrs. Jane Kember, Deputy Guardian and Public Relations Officer at Saint Hill.

He had produced a document which he described as a 'prospectus' for Saint Hill and asked Mrs. Kember the meaning of the word 'dianetic' which appeared in it.

She gave the meaning of the word and said it appeared in the Oxford and Webster's dictionaries.

Mr. Wilkie disagreed and said the word did not exist. It was similar to another word (dianoetic) which meant something completely different.

At this point the Inspector,

SEE PAGE 5

# THE BIG SCIENTOLOGY PLANNING INQUIRY

## FROM PAGE ONE

intervened and said they would assume there was some other use of the word and urged the inquiry to keep to relevant issues.

Mr. Wilkie said his motive in asking the question was 'that this college is a bogus institution and the kind of activity that goes on there is not educational. He thought this was important because educational grounds had been produced.'

'It is not education at all but the process of initiation into a clique,' he added.

## 'IRRELEVANT'

After he had said this, Mr. Howard Sharp, leading for the Scientologists, said: 'The Press are there and this is being reported.' The planning authority had never used its powers to take action against Saint Hill. What Mr. Wilkie had said was highly irrelevant.

The Inspector said that if it could be shown that the extension would increase any nuisance there it would be relevant. If Mr. Wilkie was going to query the bona fides of the Scientologists as such he had tested it in cross-examination as far as he could go.

He had earlier asked Mrs. Kember if any form of educational test or selection was applied for admittance to the college. She said: 'No, not particularly.'

The criteria for admission was that people were not insane, not there for any kind of medical purposes, and not there for purposes other than to 'improve themselves personally.'

Mrs. Kember also told him the age range at the college was 17 to 60, possibly younger. She did not know if any certificates issued by the college to students were recognised by outside bodies.

Mr. E. W. H. Christie, a London barrister who owns land near Saint Hill — Ridge Hill Woodland — said that last year he had telephoned the Scientologist's legal department and threatened them with an injunction.

Mrs. Kember — in cross-examination — said she was not aware of this.

She was also not aware that

the reason he telephoned was that 'a mentally deranged member of your establishment was at large and roaming over my property and frightening my children.'

The man was an American or spoke with an American accent. Since his telephone call the man had not appeared on his property Mr. Christie said.

Mrs. Kember said she was not aware of the incident.

Later during cross-examination Mrs. Kember said that shouting was a part of training. Mr. Christie asked if that would explain why, last summer, someone shouted 'Harold' every three minutes for a week.

She said it was not part of any training she knew of.

She disagreed with his suggestion that many of the people at the college had found difficulty in facing up to the problems of the world and that they were 'frightened of the effects of radiation.'

She also denied a suggestion that people who attended the college were neurotic. It was not in any way providing medical or psychological treatment.

Mr. Christie: 'When the premises were raided in 1967 by the police, were you present?'

Mrs. Kember: 'We have never been raided.'

## PASSPORT CHECK

Mr. Christie: 'Visited?'

Mrs. Kember said she was present but the only police activity was when they stopped people at the gates and asked foreigners to show their passports. Only one person stopped did not have a passport.

Mr. Christie: 'You were not one of the ones who made an escape across my land?'

Mrs. Kember: 'I am a British subject.'

Mr. Christie said on that day a large number of people trampled across his land.

Mr. Tom Morton, a chartered engineer, gave evidence on behalf of the Scientologists. Saint Hill Manor was typical of many large houses and grounds throughout the country which at one time were in private hands, he said.

Where such properties were in rural areas they

tended to become the homes of education and institutional organisations.

He said that the Council's main hope, apparently, that the manor might revert to private residential occupation, was, to say the least, substantially qualified by the planning permission confirmed in 1964 for the permanent use of the property by the College of Scientology.

Assuming this to be predominantly for a residential college, for example, he thought there would be nothing to prevent it being used as a residential or boarding school — or a different kind of residential college, without the formality of a planning permission according to class 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1963.

## 'BROAD HINT'

Mr. Morton said that the 'broad hint' by the Minister after the previous inquiry was followed up by applications in November and December 1964.

It is understandable, I think, that the Council virtually abandoned all their pre-conceived arguments in the light of the Minister's decision and permission successively for single-storey building in much the same position as the previous appeal site,' he added.

To say that this positive planning history formed no precedent for considering further applications, as the Council had was 'the height of absurdity.' To his mind this previous history was obviously relevant.

His attention had been drawn to one of the Council's reasons for refusal — that there was evidence that the manner in which the appellants conducted their activities was causing nuisance and annoyance to other local residents, and which had aroused considerable local opposition to the proposed development.

Whatever this evidence might be, he said, it did not seem to afford a justification for deciding against the extensions.

Commenting on one of the Council's reasons for refusal — that the need for a teaching block was not apparent — Mr. Morton said they were failing

to take a realistic view of the situation.

In principle the appellants had already established a need for a further extension in the form of a teaching block, to the satisfaction of the Council.

The planning permission confirmed in April 1965 was based on the submission of an application which indicated the full scope of the proposals by the college.

By this he meant the erection of a building in four stages. While it was true the permission contemplated the erection of blocks one and two of the building (now in use) so far as the approval of details was concerned, the application indicated that approval was sought on accompanying building and block plans.

Mr. Morton told the Inspector the Scientologists had permission in principle to build educational buildings.

The Inspector: 'The only difference in this application is that these buildings are set out in a different manner and increased floor area?'

Mr. Morton said this was so. 'And what,' said the Inspector, 'The Council had really refused was the layout of the superficial area of the buildings involved.' Mr. Morton agreed.

## 700 AT COLLEGE?

He understood the Council to have granted planning permission for a sewage works with a capacity for 700 people. This would indicate that the Council expected 700 people to use the college.

Cross-examining him Mr. Anthony McCowan, for the Council, read a letter from the Council to the College which stated that the permission for the sewage works must not be in any way taken 'as an intimation that the Council will grant further planning permission' to the extent of 700 people.

Turning to the 'previous permissions' Mr. McCowan pointed out that the present application was headed 'outline application.'

On the first day of the inquiry, Mrs. Jane Kember, had given evidence.

She said the College was an educational organisation which stemmed from the Church of Scientology of California, in the U.S.A.

In 1950 the founder, Mr. Ron Hubbard, acquired Saint Hill first of all for residential purposes but ultimately if possible for its use for the purposes of the College.

In time it was found that the work of the College needed to be put on a more permanent basis and Mr. Hubbard gave it over in 1966 to the parent body, the Church of Scientology.

Mrs. Kember, when cross-examined, said that Mr. Hubbard did not run the College, but communicated with them.

She explained that Scientology was based, fundamentally, on humanistic principles.

Students were drawn mainly from all parts of Great Britain. So far as she was aware neither the personal behaviour of students nor the behaviour of staff had given rise to any criticism or complaint by the Council.

## 'SURPRISED'

The College was surprised to learn from the Council's written submissions that activities were causing annoyance.

She said she had been asked to say that, had there been any justification for this statement, it was extremely surprising that no one on behalf of the Council had seen fit to make representations to the College on the subject before the appeal.

Mrs. Kember estimated that there were about 30 staff at Saint Hill and another 30 staff attached to the 'world wide organisation.' There were about 250 students. Both numbers fluctuated a great deal.

She stressed that she had not consulted any figures and later in the inquiry gave evidence quoting different figures from a payroll certified by accountants, which she had obtained.

When asked by Mr. McCowan what would happen if more and more people applied to come to Saint Hill, she replied that they would have to start limiting attendances. She also said there would be no further expansion at Saint Hill.

Mr. McCowan: 'That is an official pronouncement?'

Mrs. Kember: 'Yes.'

An examination of the payroll of the College organisation and the world wide organisation for the week ending July 12, by chartered accountants, showed 140 people to be working at the college. This was made up of 55 College staff, 26 staff of the world wide organisation, 29 executive trainees temporarily on the payroll, five night staff and 17 domestic staff, together with eight staff handling the Scientologists' sea organisations. There were 234 students.

## CALLED AT SCHOOLS

Cross-examined by Mr. Ivor Jones, a farmer with property near Saint Hill, she was asked if it was policy 'to accost people in a public place, in the street.'

Mrs. Kember said she would not use the word 'accost.'

Mr. Jones, giving an example, asked what she would call it if he was discussing Scientology with another person in the market and someone came up and started speaking about it.

Mrs. Kember said she would call it, 'attempting to communicate.'

She said she was aware that members of the College had gone to schools in East Grinstead and attempted to address the pupils. They had asked permission.

Mr. Jones said that the children of one particular school had been instructed in Scientology methods and it had caused 'uproar' in the town.

Mrs. Kember said she had only heard that incorrect methods were used.

Mr. Jones alleged that some of the children had been adversely affected.

At this point Mr. Sharp asked him if he could prove this. Could he produce any medical certificates? He could not make allegations without proof.

Mr. Jones said he could prove them if Mr. Sharp wanted to be at the inquiry for some time.

Mr. Jack Greaves, East Grinstead engineer and surveyor, said in evidence that on the Town Map for East Grinstead, Saint Hill Manor estate was outside the development areas. It was within an

SEE PAGE 6

# NUN GAVE EVIDENCE ON THE FINAL DAY

3

## FROM PAGE 5

area where it was intended the existing uses of the land should remain for the most part undisturbed.

Only buildings essential to agriculture or forestry should be permitted, he said.

Referring to the previous appeal by Mr. L. Ron Hubbard, he said that as a result of the appeal decision an application was submitted for the erection of buildings at Saint Hill. This was approved by the council on November 4, 1964.

He said a considerable number of applications had been submitted for development at the Manor. Some development, without planning permission, he alleged, had also taken place. He submitted a list giving information of enforcement measures the council had had to take.

The application now before the inquiry was submitted on October 20, 1967, and when placed before the council a month later it was decided to defer consideration. This was for consultation with the County Planning Officer and for observations from the Kent River Authority.

On December 14, the County Planning Officer informed the Clerk of the Council that the proposed development involved a substantial departure from the provisions on the development plan.

Bearing in mind the intentions in the Town Map and the application of good planning principles he felt the council fully justified in reaching their decision.

Cross-examined by Mr. McCowan, he said he understood Mr. Hubbard left Saint Hill about 18 months ago. He did not know if Mr. Hubbard would be returning, or that the top floor of the Manor was used from time to time by members of the Scientologists' sea organisation — by people coming from boats.

### IMPARTIAL

Mr. Sharp, cross-examining him, asked if he considered the planning application now before the inquiry had been dealt with by the council 'in the spirit of impartiality.'

Mr. Greaves said he did.

Mr. Greaves said he did not consider the need for a teaching block at Saint Hill apparent, bearing in mind the use of the principal building.

Mr. McCowan asked if there was any application to the council to change the use of the 42 acres of grounds of the Manor from residential to educational use. Mr. Greaves said there was, in 1964. But it was withdrawn and there had been no further application.

Mr. Sidney Frederic Vine, Senior Assistant County Planning Officer, said the Manor was in a site where it was intended the existing uses should remain largely undisturbed. It was the County Council's policy to prevent, as far as possible, the further

spread of undesirable scattered development.

Saint Hill Manor was an attractive three-storey stone-built mansion set in beautiful surroundings. In his view it would be entirely wrong to allow further large buildings to be put up in the grounds.

In a group of this kind the Manor House should be the principal building. Other large buildings would destroy the visual amenity.

The intensification of the activities within the site would also be damaging to the rural amenities of the area.

Mr. Christie, who had spoken earlier at the inquiry, said it was through no fault of the Press that there was a widespread impression in the town that the Inspector was sitting to decide whether or not Scientology should be condemned. He said this to avoid disappointment at the end of the inquiry that its result was not the removal of Scientology from the area.

At least half his objections and those of his neighbour, Mr. F. Lykiardopolous, whom he was representing, were based on what use was at present being made of the premises.

Planning applications could not be made in a theoretical vacuum. Planning was a matter of bricks and mortar, trees, roads, rivers, countryside and people, above all people.

He hoped the Inspector would take note of the effect of the application on the neighbours.

Mr. Christie said that in the past six months he had been very little troubled by noise, which, last year, was infuriating. Some sort of amplifiers were in operation for as much as eight hours a day.

### HOUSING SHORTAGE

Already it was very difficult for young people getting married to buy a house, said Mr. Christie. Apart from the countrywide housing shortage, in the East Grinstead area any suitable building was bought as accommodation by members of the Scientology organisation.

East Grinstead would not be a suitable choice, nor Saint Hill a suitable site for development as a conventional college, or as a university and expanding university town.

The planned expansion of East Grinstead as a dormitory town for London, as a local centre for, and as a community, had simply not allowed for this additional influx. He did not believe it could be absorbed even were the organisation at Saint Hill an ordinary educational establishment with extra mural students.

A Nun said on Friday that she had stamped on the foot of a young man who came to the door of her school and wanted to tell her about Scientology.

Sister Marina, of the Society of St. Margaret, headmistress of St. Agnes and St. Michael's School, East Grinstead, said he was one of two young men who arrived in the pouring rain.

'I told them the dinner bell had gone,' she said. 'He said it did not matter and put his foot inside the door. I stamped on his foot and closed the door,' Sister Marina said.

### 'UPROAR'

She was called as a witness by Mr. Ivor Jones, who asked her to tell of circumstances concerning a private school in the town, which caused widespread publicity seven or eight years ago.

There had been 'uproar' over methods used at the school, recommended in a book by Mr. Hubbard, Mr. Jones said.

Sister Marina said she took a number of children into her school from this school.

'One child was a clever little girl. When she arrived she was furtive, frightened, looking over her shoulder.' She was obviously much affected and nervous, Sister Marina said. Another child burst into tears at the slightest question. He looked at one 'like a zombie and talked in a dead, flat voice.'

She said the symptoms diminished appreciably by the second term and disappeared by the end of the children's first year at this school.

Mr. Sharp said this evidence was irrelevant. He asked Sister Marina to accept that the man involved had been 'very heavily disciplined as a result of it and he is no longer a Scientologist.'

Mr. John Warde, representing three local residents, Selected London Properties of the Standen Estate, East Grinstead, and the Peredur Home School, East Grinstead, reading a statement on behalf of the Peredur Home School and Training Centre, for malad-

justed and autistic young people, said that they could not be allowed out into the town or for country walks without the fear, often justified, that they would be approached by Scientologists.

Local applicants for posts at the school were 'suspect' until it was established they were not Scientologists, the statement said.

The school, which was recognised as unique by education authorities and psychiatrists, was already threatened in its work by the presence of the Scientologists in such close proximity.

The statement mentioned two cases of young staff who were persuaded to attend lectures at the college. They became so involved they were thrown completely off balance and had to leave the school as their work was seriously affected.

#### 'DON'T PESTER'

'Scientology openly proclaims its interests not only in adults and adolescents, but in quite young children, and it is now catering for them by special meetings,' he read from the statement.

Mr. Ivor Jones said in evidence that if the Scientologists wanted to be accepted by the people of East Grinstead they would have to change their ways and 'not pester the lives of the local residents—as they do to an unreasonable degree.'

He alleged he had been 'pestered' by Scientologists calling at his house, asking for rooms. 'One woman got her car up to the front door and tried to force her way in,' he said.

Frequently he had taxis calling at the wrong address and Scientologists, looking for others, called at his home. One got him out of bed at 6.30 a.m. recently.

Mr. Hubbard said it was his intention to make East Grinstead the first "clear" town, which means that he intends that the lives of a large number of people will be interfered with if his intention is achieved,' Mr. Jones said.

But the majority of local people wanted nothing to do with Scientology and wanted to see the back of Scientologists.

Mr. Frank Freeman, senior public health inspector for the council, said there were 20 houses in the town known to be let in multiple occupation. All were occupied by Scientologists.

There had been 10 complaints, seven anonymous, alleging overcrowding, car doors slamming and occasional noise at night.

Asked by Mr. Sharp how much attention he gave to anonymous calls Mr. Freeman said as much as he gave to other complaints.

Mrs. Helen Weightman, of The Nook, Dormans Land, told the Inspector her son had joined the Scientologists and the last time she had heard from him was a letter last July. At the time of writing he was 22.

The letter, which was read out, said: 'Dear Mrs. H. Weightman, I do not wish to have any further connections

with you for the following reasons:

1. Until you change your mind about the way you feel towards Scientology.

2. To stop speaking false rumours about my person and my fellow people in Scientology.

3. Try to suppress me into feeling wrong and stupid.

4. To spread false rumours about Scientology.

5. Stop trying to rule and control other people's lives.

'Under these conditions I am disconnecting from you until such time you fulfil these conditions, Yours — (signed), John Richard Weightman.'

Mr. Sharp said he was not going to put Mrs. Weightman under any strain about the letter. He was wondering about the usefulness of the letter in a planning appeal.

The Inspector said he did not wish to pursue the subject as far as Mrs. Weightman was concerned.

In his final submission Mr. McCowan spoke of the numbers at the college. In November 1967 it had been said there were 203 staff at East Grinstead. Now the inquiry had found there were 122, not counting domestics. Mrs. Kumber had said there were about 20.

'You really cannot place a lot of reliance on what you are told,' he said.

Mr. McCowan said he did not know how the Scientologists would say at East Grinstead. The result would be a cluster of buildings.

Referring to a copy of 'The Auditor,' a Scientology publication, Mr. McCowan quoted an advertisement in it saying: 'Enrol on the clearing course now.'

#### FINAL SUBMISSION

That did not sound like an organisation trying to keep its numbers down, he said.

Mr. Sharp, in his final submission, confessed he had approached the case with a good deal of anxiety and a great deal of responsibility, bearing in mind what had happened in the town in the past, as far as the appellants were concerned.

As he saw it, one had to keep one's foot firmly on the ground. What was the inquiry into? It was an application by the college for planning permission to extend existing educational buildings.

It was extremely difficult to divorce what was material in the context of such an appeal from what was immaterial. However interesting it might be, however important it might be, so far as the local objectors were concerned.

The council's decision, he said, was hardly achieved in an atmosphere conducive to impartiality. The council's case had failed to demonstrate that the extensions were unnecessary.

Referring to Mr. Christie's evidence, Mr. Sharp said his remarks, when analysed, fell to the ground.

There had been statements made by a number of people in good faith. He was not going to challenge them. They might be perfectly accurate. Even if they were, how far was the Minister justified in taking them into account?