



Council to build three blocks of flats at Penhill

'Stupid,' says Akers.

Further protests against the "stupid and wild policy" of building flats were made by Coun. F. E. Akers at Swindon Town Council meeting last night.

Despite his argument that Swindon people had said they did not want flats, the Council decided to build three six-storey blocks at Penhill.

Coun. Akers reminded the Council that before building flats, they had sought the opinions of people on the waiting list for houses. Not one applicant with a family wanted a flat and 75 per cent of the childless couples also wanted small houses.

A quarter of those whose opinions were sought replied that they would prefer to wait than be allocated a flat. In the country generally there was a preponderance of opinion that small houses were the ideal homes. "yet despite the opinion of people on our own waiting list we go on with this stupid and wild policy of building flats," He said. "At the last meeting we decided to build eight-storey flats. Flats are conducive to a breakdown in health. If I had my way, we would get the doctor and the planner together." The Council had mistakes in its planning years ago – buses now running up narrow Limes Avenue was a case in point – and posterity would criticise the Council for what it was doing."

"Disastrous"

Only two excuses were advanced for the policy of building flats: dwellings must be provided quickly in a particular form, in fact these flats were costing more than small houses. "It is a disastrous policy," he concluded.

Ald. A. E. Long said that young people were delighted with the flats, "Perhaps as we get older we do not accept new ideas very readily and in Swindon this is an innovation," he said.

Coun. D. Jones said that he lived in a council flat and liked it.

Coun. H. V. Bond (chairman of the housing committee) replied that there was no suggestion that the Council should build a preponderance of flats. Probably the majority of people preferred houses, but a section wanted flats.

"At present 82.2 per cent of council dwellings in Swindon were houses and the remainder flats.

The survey asking people their preferences was taken among Swindon people who had never been accustomed to flats.

Now the Corporation was proceeding on the same lines as the new towns and was housing people from all over the country. These people might not be so "house minded" as Swindon people and among those working in the new industries would be a number who preferred flats.

The type of flats the Corporation was building would certainly not be detrimental to health. So far only three people have been moved from flats on health grounds because of the stairs.

None of the couple with babies who were living in flats had asked to move into houses. There would not be any difficulty in finding tenants.

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