



# THE OIL SHEIKHS OF LIVERPOOL

COUNCILLOR Eddie Roderick is deputy leader of the Labour Party in Liverpool. And he hopes to be leader before long.

Roderick now represents Gillmoss ward. But he first joined the council 18 years ago. And he was a central figure in Liverpool's "Oil Sheikhs" bonanza on the 1960s when a

quick fortune could be made by anyone lucky enough to get planning permission for a petrol station.

Councillor Roderick was chairman of the committee which handed out the permission. This is the story of the price one man paid to get his petrol station...

## By special permission . . .



The councillor



The house

IN JANUARY 1965 Jack Mansley was refused permission to build a petrol station in West Derby village. It was one of the most comprehensive refusals ever given by Liverpool City Council.

- The City Engineer said "the sudden narrowing of the road is dangerous".
- The Chief Constable said it would be "a danger to traffic and pedestrians alike".
- The City Planning Officer listed five major reasons why he was opposed to the petrol station.
- West Derby residents had campaigned vigorously against it and pointed out how unspoiled the area had been so far.

But Jack Mansley felt, despite the odds, that he still stood a chance of getting permission. He was so confident that within eight weeks he re-applied - for the same petrol station on the same site.

When his fresh application arrived in the planning department in March 1965, someone marked the application papers "SPECIAL". And special it was.

This time the planning sub-committee somehow completely changed its mind and gave approval - in defiance of the city planning officer's repeated objections.

The chairman of that sub-committee was Councillor Eddie Roderick.

Less than eight weeks after the planning sub-committee had changed its mind, Councillor Roderick's brother, Billy, moved into 1 Castlegate Grove, West Derby.

This had been the home, earlier in the year, of Mr Mansley. The house was a bargain for the Roderick family. The price they paid was several hundred pounds cheaper than the price already offered to Mr Mansley by someone else.

Earlier in 1965 Mr Leonard Sorrell, a friend of Mansley, offered £4,000 for 1 Castlegate Grove and was trying to get a mortgage. He had even arranged the sale of his own house, ready to move into Castlegate Grove.

Mr Sorrell explained what happened: "Mansley told me that a councillor was after it. But he told me: 'I don't want him to have it'. Then he told me he'd sold it to a councillor.

"He told me at a meeting at his garage. He banged his head against the plasterboard wall and said he'd sold the house for £700 cheaper.

"A councillor had approached him and said the plans would be passed if he [Mansley] made it worth his while. Mansley named Roderick to me as the councillor."

Whoever actually paid for the house, it was occupied after November 1965 by William D. Roderick,

the brother of Eddie Roderick, chairman of the planning sub-committee.

(The exact price paid by the Rodericks is not known. Mr Sorrell is saying it was £3,300. But Mrs Mansley now claims it was £3,600 - still £400 less than Sorrell's offer.)

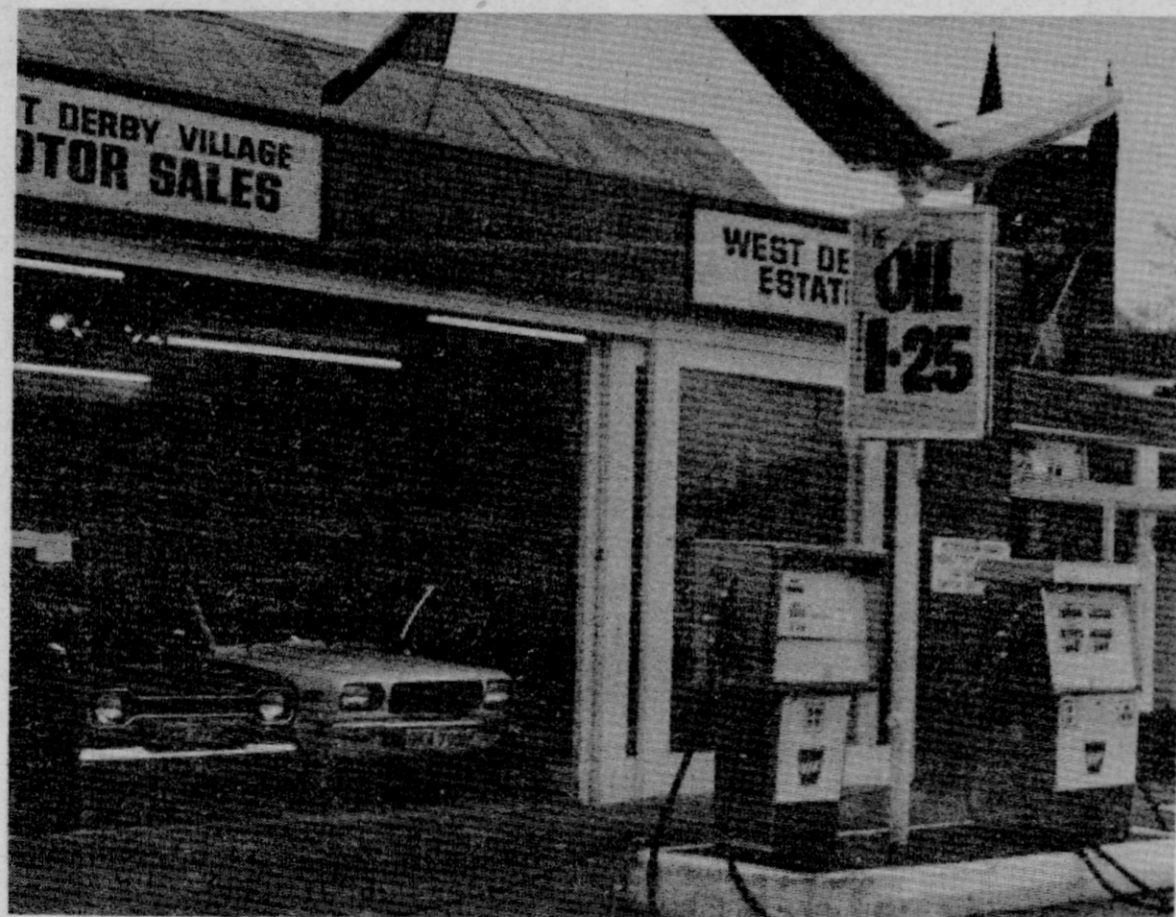
There is no doubt that Councillor Roderick took a special interest in the planning application. In red ink on the planning department file an official has written: "Councillor Jacobs to be notified of this application. Also Councillor Roderick."

At no time during Mansley's second application, or his subsequent applications for detailed planning permission and a car showroom, did Councillor Roderick make public his family's interest.

As well as giving Mansley his planning permission the sub-committee obliged further by agreeing that the Corporation would pay for altering the pavement where the garage access roads were needed. They also kindly agreed to make surrounding roads into no-waiting zones.

An investigation was carried out by Staffordshire police. But no action was ever taken.

However in a completely separate case in 1966, Councillor Roderick was found not guilty of corruptly soliciting £2,000 from John Aspinwall over an application for planning permission to build a filling station in East Prescott Road, Liverpool.



The garage

## Mr. Baldwin gets in on the action

THE WEST DERBY village petrol station is another man's claim to an honorary oil sheikhdom. None other than Mr Harry Baldwin, senior building surveyor with Liverpool Corporation.

Mr Baldwin is at present "on leave" from work following the discovery of his extensive private enterprise. Under his wife's name, Baldwin has been submitting building plans on the side for approval by his own department.

In January 1966 Jack Mansley applied for detailed planning permission for his petrol station site in West Derby. The plans were submitted by an M.V. Davis, of 6 Wellington Avenue, Liverpool 15.

Who is this "M.V. Davis"? The address gives a clue. 6 Wellington Avenue is one of three houses Mr Baldwin is at present selling to his employers - Liverpool Corporation - for £18,000.

And, as it happens, "M.V." are the initials of Baldwin's wife. (It's not known if Davis was her maiden

● Another "Oil Sheikh" story in next month's Free Press.

name, and Baldwin refuses to discuss the matter with the Free Press. However he is known to have made a habit of using his wife's name as a front for his own activities).

Baldwin's claim to be an oil sheikh is backed up by other applications made during Liverpool's great oil rush.

In 1966 Jack Mansley applied to extend the petrol station by adding a car showroom. Again, the certificate was issued to M.V. Davis, 6 Wellington Avenue.

In June 1965 the Milford Motor Company of 121 Great Howard Street applied for permission to build a garage at the back of their petrol station. The certificate was issued to M.V. Davis, this time living at 8 Wellington Avenue.

8 Wellington Avenue is Mr Baldwin's present address.

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