

## **BERESFORD HOTEL SITE - Cliff top site to be 'garden estate' homes** East Kent Times Exclusive by Peter Kinlan 26-7-1967

As the dust is still rising from the final stages of the demolition of the famous Beresford Hotel the future of the six acre cliff top site overlooking the sea between Grenham and Epple Bays, at Birchington has been settled.

Contracts for the sale of the plum site by the owners of the former five-star luxury hotel for about £75,000 to the Kelk company group – a Canterbury organisation – have been exchanged.

The deal starts a new era in the village history with blueprints for 53 detached and semi-detached houses, which will be built to provide a unique cliff-top garden estate community within the original walls of the hotel estate.

Work, which ends two years of conjecture about the future of the site, will be started as soon as possible. "It will be a delightful development with all the estate trees preserved and the unusual scheme calls for only one entrance to the exclusive estate" said Mr. Robert Crittenden, whose Cliftonville firm were associated with the contract.

"Planning permission was obtained for 50 houses and a public house but the public house has been eliminated from the scheme, which has been amended to provide three extra houses." The development sanction followed the submission of several unsuccessful schemes to 'Margate town planners during protracted negotiations. In the background the Margate authority was reluctant to approve a development which would mean the loss of one of the best hotels in the county.

Attractive Birchington became fashionable in the world of art over a century ago when many famous people followed the lead of poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti and established a residence in the village.

Before the turn of the century Admiral Lord Charles William de la Poer Beresford, 4<sup>th</sup> Marquis of Waterford, created a delightful seaside home on the cliff top site.

Decorated many times for his part in historic sea actions, the distinguished sailor-statesman – he was many years Naval ADC to Queen Victoria, an Admiralty Lord Commissioner and Commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean and Channel Fleets, and in three spells as an MP represented Waterford, Woolwich and Portsmouth in the House of Commons – entertained the famous lavishly at Birchington.

Lord Beresford died without an heir and from the time of its conversion into a plush hotel the Beresford was popular with political and entertainment celebrities.

Britain's first star of silent films, Betty Balfour, held regular weekend parties at the hotel between the wars and before the hotel closed last year recent guests included Mr. Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister, Petula Clark and the Beatles.

Robert Crittenden and Partners, Cliftonville estate agents, Herring Son and Daw, of London, and Frank Wood and Co., of Canterbury were firms associated with the deal.

Beresford Hotel site - 2007

