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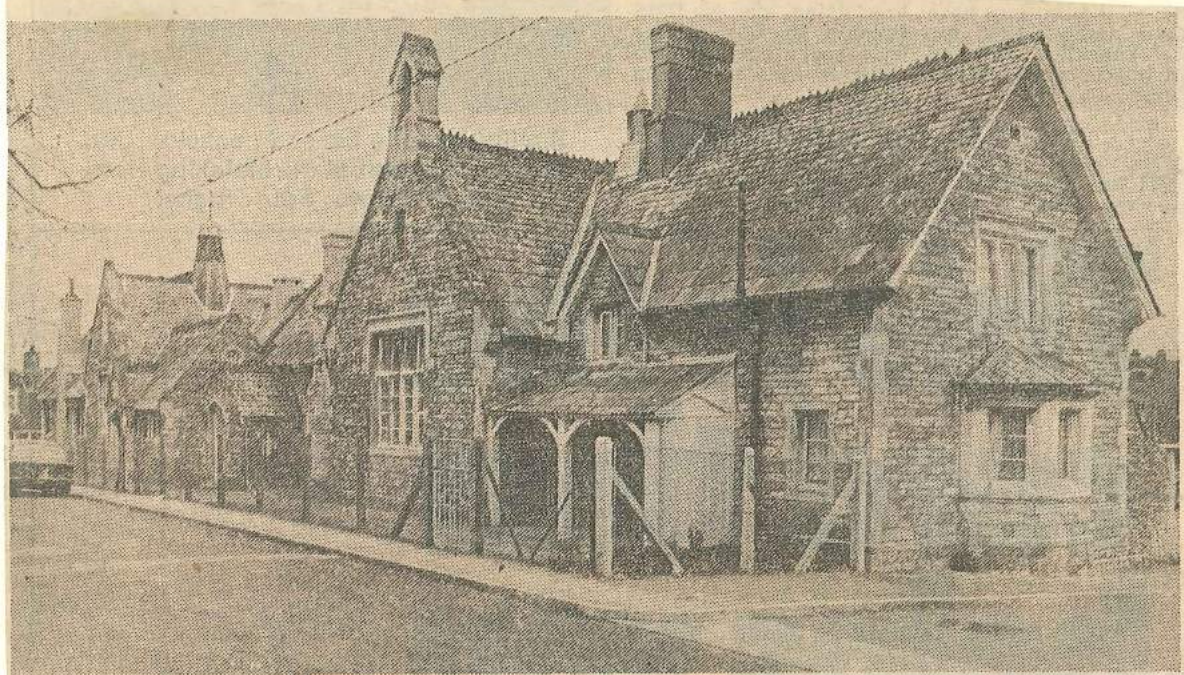
Schools

CLASSIFICATION

SUBJECT *Woolston Sec.*

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Woolston's
secondary school

FOLLOWING THE announcements that massive new schools are to be built at Lordshill and Eastleigh, the governors of Southampton's antiquated secondary school at Woolston are developing a militant mood.

For they are seeking an early answer to a very important question: When is our turn coming?

The school, operating on four scattered sites, and without any community premises, has buildings dating back to 1857 and some toilet facilities are stark and crude.

Yet the former Southampton City Council recognised the need to do something nearly 20 years ago, when houses were purchased for much-needed extensions. But this was abandoned when it became clear that top-quality dwellings would fall to the bulldozers.

Since then nothing has happened to improve the serious situation in a school which is unlikely to see a decline of its present roll of 742 pupils, some of whom are using the oldest educational

building in Southampton at the Pear-tree Green annexe.

A Government report of 1967 referred to the inadequate accommodation and cramped site.

Some of the auxiliary buildings are over a mile from the main school, and demand almost constant repair work. For games, the pupils must walk some distance to Mayfield Park, crossing busy roads.

Mr. Dennis Burns, the chairman of the Governors, points out that "the quality of life in the school is being affected more and more.

"Although morale is high both with pupils and staff, and good results are being achieved, the situation soon may begin to deteriorate unless some hope is held out for definite action in the near future."

Mr. Burns also claims that the present restrictions mean:

- The pupils cannot be given the equivalent opportunity as those attending other schools;
- There is a total absence of fifth-year social provision;
- The split site nature of the school makes it difficult to maintain morale "in surroundings which are dilapidated and sometimes neglected".

Mr. Burns emphasises that, unlike other areas in Southampton, the school is not faced with a falling population.

"In addition, the completion of the Itchen Bridge has firmly integrated Woolston into the city and there is now increasing pressure from local people for proper community resources, such

as they have in Lordshill.

"A new school building can be used for this, providing a much-needed focal point for various social and recreational activities."

And he added this pointed warning: "Hitherto the governors have desisted from making strong representations, preferring to rely on the good faith of the new authority.

"Those days are over. Now we shall be exerting strong pressure for something to be done."

● A county council spokesman told the "Echo" that a new secondary school at Woolston would be submitted for the 1981/82 programme to be discussed by the education committee next month. But its inclusion was no guarantee that it would be built then.