

# Staffing a Site Valuation for Rating

(FROM MR. WILKS' REPORT)

ONE is inevitably tempted to draw the comparison with the situation that would have arisen had the work been a continuous process from 1963 through the ten years to 1973. In other words, to consider the situation, had site-value rating been an official taxation system requiring a permanent staff. An attempt therefore, has been made to visualise how this would operate and the results follow.

The following discourse is based on four main assumptions:-

1. All transactions in land are notified in detail to the valuing authority.
2. Copies of all planning permissions involving  
(a) a change of use: or  
(b) a change of land unit boundaries are passed to the valuing authority.
3. Staff are permanent i.e. do not change week by week, but are kept on as normal full time employees working a normal five day week.
4. All records, valuations, maps etc. are retained within the office.

As planning permissions were granted steadily through the year, these would be sifted and where necessary a pair of referencers would go out and measure.

It must be remembered that Whitstable has today a population of around 25,000 and includes nearly 13,000 rateable hereditaments. Yet in 1973 we re-measured virtually the entire town in 210 man days, having kept no records of the changes between 1963 and 1973. This means we referenced ten years of change in 210 man days or, on average, 21 man days per year. Assuming that same rate of working and a 235 day working year, two men, working as a team centrally based and mobile, could adequately cope with 22 towns the size of Whitstable i.e. a town of a population of over half a million. Similarly, a team of two calculators could keep pace with this amount of field work.

In 1973 we had one draughtsman. If he had been employed steadily throughout the year, again he could have kept pace with the land value maps and controlled the field work from the same number of field workers. The trouble in 1973 was that each land unit had to be allocated a new reference number and marked and indexed accordingly. Had this merely been a matter of updating existing scale maps, no re-indexing would have been necessary, and the heavy surge of work at the end of the exercise could have been avoided.

One office administrator is essential but had there been a full time valuer, the post of administrator could well have been filled by a "chief clerk".

One typist in the office would not be enough. Even if the work load was spread continuously over the year, there would need to be:-

1. An efficient typist secretary
2. A second typist/telephonist
3. An office junior and filing clerk

4. Another typist for work in connection with the services of notices of re-assessment etc.  
all the above to keep pace with the output of work from an area of 500,000 population.

There would need to be a senior valuer and a junior valuer. Two persons would be needed as the valuer would not only have to do the valuations and be responsible therefore but also a valuer would have to be available to answer queries, to attend appeals and hearings against his values, etc.

It does seem, however, perfectly reasonable to suppose that an office consisting of:-

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| 1. A senior valuer                       | } all qualified in their respective roles. |
| 2. A junior valuer                       |  |
| 3. Two calculators                       |  |
| 4. Two field workers                     |  |
| 5. Chief clerk                           |  |
| 6. Four typist/telephonist/filing clerks |  |

giving a total strength of eleven persons to cope with an area equivalent, very roughly, to the whole of East Kent including Canterbury, Whitstable, Herne Bay, Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Deal, Dover, Folkstone, Sandwich, Faversham, Ashford and all the rural areas in between — a population of around the half million.

Perhaps this explains the tiny staff at the office at Helsingør in Denmark which adequately copes with the work for that area.

## LAND HOARDING PLAN DROPPED

THE Government has published its Bill which gives it power to let empty office blocks such as Centre Point. But it has decided to drop its plan for a land hoarding charge.

Mr. Rippon, Minister of the Environment, announced in a Commons written answer that the recently proposed land hoarding charge was being abandoned, mainly because of the special tax on land profits put forward by Mr. Barber, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

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C. E. CLARKE

It is with much sadness that we report the death on January 20 at the age of 93 of Mr. C. E. Clarke of Bewdley, Worcestershire.

Mr. Clarke was a supporter of the philosophy of Henry George for well over seventy years. He believed firmly in free trade and land-value taxation and continued to wear his badge to the last — "Free trade, Free land, Free men."

A regular attender at conferences, it was a source of great regret to him that he was unable to travel to the last conference on the Isle of Man.

To his family and friends we extend our sincere sympathy.