

HAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Planning Meeting of Ham Parish Council held on Thursday 25th October 2018 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall.

Present: Mr C Dean (Chairman), Lady Walker (Vice Chairman), Mr R Buchanan-Dunlop, Mr D Bicknell, Mr J Marriage, Mrs C Garrod (Parish Clerk), Mr & Mrs B Smith (the Applicants), Mr M Fowler (Architect), Mr B Edwards (Listed Building Consultant to the applicants) and twenty members of the public.

1. **Apologies** - none
2. **Declarations of Interest** - none
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting.** The minutes of the planning meeting held on 18 September 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.
4. **Matters Arising** - none
5. **Planning Application Number: 18/09272/LBC**
Site Location: Tudor Cottage Ham SN8 3RB
Applicant: Mr & Mrs B Smith
Proposal: Demolition of remains of existing dwelling (following substantial fire damage); erection of new dwelling with associated parking and turning space, and landscaping.

The Chairman opened the discussions by saying how very sorry he and the Parish Council were for the Smiths' tragic loss of their home. The Chairman then said that in the first application, 18/09272/LBC, the Parish Council would deal solely with the proposed demolition of the remains of Tudor Cottage, and would then consider the proposal for a new building on the site, on the basis that Wiltshire Council had granted approval for demolition, under the second application, 18/09145/FUL

Mr Edwards, author of the Heritage Statement in the application, was invited to speak and reported that he had been asked to look at Tudor Cottage and consider the significance of what is left. He explained that all buildings built before 1700 and surviving in original condition were registered as listed. He circulated drawings showing that Tudor Cottage has lost the majority of the original timber framing with only 20-25% remaining and, in his opinion, this cottage no longer has special historic interest. As a result he supported the demolition of the building.

Mr Fowler reported that all this information has been sent to the Conservation Officer. He pointed out that the south side of the building is unstable and to reconstruct the original building would be a sham. He said that 19 letters supporting demolition had been received and that the Parish Council should reflect the views of the people.

Mr Smith told the meeting that the Conservation Officer had not been into the building and that they had not heard anything from her. Both she and the Heritage Engineer would have a say regarding the proposed demolition. He stated that the only way they could rebuild their home was to demolish the building.

The Chairman invited Mr Buchanan-Dunlop to speak. He said that the Parish Council was entering uncharted territory as it had not dealt with an application to demolish a listed building in a conservation area before. None of the Councillors was an expert in heritage buildings and they would have to rely heavily on the expert opinions of others. He read out the description of Tudor Cottage from the Ham Conservation Area Statement and noted that, with the exception of the timbers on the west gable end, little of the exterior of the cottage appeared to have survived from the 16th or early 17th century. Nevertheless, the

cottage was listed and was described as an asset to the village, and was in the heart of the Conservation Area.

He went on to say the Structural Survey revealed that renovation would be extensive. That was not surprising, but the survey did not say that reconstruction was not feasible. He then turned to the Heritage Statement and pointed out the section which stated that: "The aesthetic value of the building was once high as an example of thatch and timber-framing in a village setting. As it now stands the aesthetic value has been severely damaged, but the most visible elevation, the west gable wall, survives to tie beam level and so with relatively minor replacement of timbers could be reinstated to its former appearance." He had spoken to Mr Edwards, the author of the Heritage Statement, who had confirmed that the gable wall was worth saving. He also drew attention to the Statement's conclusion which said that "the heritage value of the building is now so low that the expense in retaining and repairing the surviving fabric is not justified on heritage grounds", and commented that expense could not be considered by the Parish Council as it was an insurance matter.

Mr Buchanan-Dunlop noted that a letter from the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society had considered that there was justification to retain and re-use the salvaged structural items and rebuild to the previous layout. He had also spoken to the Conservation Officer who had informed him that she had visited Tudor Cottage shortly after the fire in April 2018. She had formed the impression then that the cottage could be successfully reinstated. There were other examples in Wiltshire where fire-damaged thatched cottages had been successfully reinstated, and she was currently involved with the restoration of a cottage which had suffered much the same extent of damage as Tudor Cottage.

He also reported that the owners of Candlemas Cottage, immediately adjacent to Tudor Cottage, had asked him to say that they objected to the application in view of the opinions of the Conservation Officer and Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society, and that the buildings insurance should be used to seek reinstatement of one of Ham's two oldest 16th century cottages surviving in Ham, whose iconic frontage helped to define Ham.

Mr Fowler interjected to say that he had not met nor spoken to the Conservation Officer despite attempts to do so.

The Chairman asked Mr Edwards how the cottage could be rebuilt, and he replied that if the cottage was reinstated it would, in his view, no longer be eligible for listing. A member of the public questioned how the cottage could possibly be replicated to its original appearance and another member of the public pointed out that most of the front section was not original. A further member of the public commented that the external appearance of the cottage was important to the village and in particular referred to the sweep of the thatched roof.

On being asked for his views by the Chairman, Mr Buchanan-Dunlop replied that it was a very difficult decision and he had taken notice of the views of the village. However, it hinged on whether Tudor Cottage, one of only two dwellings in the village dating from the 16th century and with a long social history, could be successfully reinstated. He had found no compelling argument that this could not be done and therefore objected to the application. Lady Walker considered that the Conservation Officer should have made contact with the applicants and did not object to the application. Mr Bicknell and Mr Marriage felt that they were unable to comment. The Chairman also felt that it was not possible for him to form an opinion and then announced that the decision of the Parish Council was **No Comment**.

Mr Fowler argued that the Parish Council could not make that decision and that it had failed to take note of the views of a significant number of residents in the village. This

was echoed by various members of the public. The Chairman said that he had taken advice on whether the Parish Council could make a decision of No Comment and that it was entitled to do so. However, at the request of members of public he asked for a show of hands, which revealed that 19 members of the public present supported the application.

Planning Application Number: 18/09145/FUL

Site Location: Tudor Cottage Ham SN8 3RB

Applicant: Mr & Mrs B Smith

Proposal: Demolition of remains of existing dwelling (following substantial fire damage); erection of new dwelling with associated parking and turning space, and landscaping.

The applicants declined to make an opening statement about the proposed design of the building to replace Tudor Cottage in the event that demolition of the latter was approved.

Mr Buchanan-Dunlop remarked that although there was a strong case for any replacement building to be thatched, building regulations would require a new build to be at least 6m from Rose Cottage. It is a narrow site and if the new build was removed to the other side of the site the windows might conflict with Candlemas Cottage. He therefore accepted that thatch was not a reasonable option. The revised design proposed was a significant improvement on the earlier design, but he thought that the brick and flint treatment of the main west-east wing should be repeated on the western front of the return wing. He also said that, from the computer-generated image, the mass of the proposed new building appeared to crowd Rose Cottage, and there was a case for moving the new build 2m away from Rose Cottage to give the remaining listed building some room. Mr Fowler responded that the western front of the return wing had been deliberately left in plain brick to make it look as if it were a new extension, and that the new build had already been moved 1m south from the existing site of Tudor Cottage. Lady Walker remarked that the extension might be a little big for the site. At the request of the Chairman Mike Fowler confirmed that the floor space of Tudor Cottage was approximately 1500 sq. feet and the new building would increase this to 2000 sq. feet.

Mr Buchanan-Dunlop then reported the objections to the new build by the owners of Candlemas Cottage. They were concerned that block and site plans submitted with the application were defective as they showed the distance between the new build and Candlemas Cottage as being 21m when in fact it was only 8m. The new build was too big for the width of the plot; it was too close to the common boundary and would affect the roots of trees and shrubs in Candlemas Cottage; the angle of the pitch of the roof was unnecessarily steep; the east elevation had no period features; and the gable end facing Candlemas Cottage dominated their cottage and was inappropriate for a cottage build. The owner of The School House, which is directly opposite Tudor Cottage, responded that the complaints were groundless as Candlemas Cottage would be screened by trees and the lie of the land from the new build.

There were no further comments of substance and the Parish Council agreed to **Support the Application**.

6. Any Other Business – none

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm