
24/2304/DEM

Demolition of former dairy building

Site of Tillhouse, London Road, Broadclyst, Devon, EX5 7FJ

Introduction

The first point to highlight to the committee is that yet again repeated error in the description of the location as Tillhouse, London Road, Broadclyst. The site is Tillhouse Farm, is not located on London Road and has not been in "Broadclyst" since 2015. In making comment on this application, it is recommended that the Committee express in the strongest terms that these errors have been ongoing for too long and it is about time that the Local Planning Authority acknowledge that and update their systems and validation processes to correctly describe the location of planning applications in the parish of Cranbrook.

The current application is a prior notification application. **It is not a planning application.** The presumption is that demolition can proceed without requiring planning permission unless the LPA objects on grounds of the method of demolition or the proposed restoration of the site. The committee is able to submit comments on these issues alone.

Members will be aware that the Consortium has planning consent for the site by virtue of 22/2343/MRES. The site has since been sold to another developer, Barleywood Homes who have consulted the community on a revised scheme consisting of a smaller number of dwellings and the delivery of bungalows rather than houses. The public consultation included demolition and replacement of the dairy with a single dwelling (rather than two in the initial application) to which would respect the original building within the overall site development.

The original approval granted by 22/2343/MRES, whilst including demolition of the farmhouse and shippon, required retention of the dairy and its conversion to two dwellings.

Barleywood homes are yet to submit a formal planning application for development of the site, but they have applied to change the description of the original application to construction of "up to ten dwellings". The original approval was for a total of twelve dwellings. This application (to amend the description to up to ten dwellings) has been approved as a non-material amendment. (24/1992/NMA).

The developer then applied for a certificate of lawfulness to demolish the former dairy building and return the area to garden curtilage. (24/2185/CPL). This application was not consulted on by the LPA. When asked about formal consultation, their view was the only question was whether or not demolition was lawful. The desirability of demolition was not a consideration. This matter remains under consideration by the LPA.

Planning Considerations

The developer has supported both the current application and the certificate of lawfulness application with a structural inspection report, and demolition survey. The reports confirm that the building is in a state of disrepair, is no longer safe and that the building contains asbestos, which could become a public health concern should the building collapse and expose the asbestos. The building is close to residential dwellings and within four metres of the closest.

The structural report indicates that the end gable is unsound and supported by a rotten purlin and members will be aware of the visual condition of the building that shows a clear separation

between roof and supporting wall on the elevation nearest the adjoining dwelling. The report concludes that conversion of the existing building is unrealistic and demolition is sought.

Members will be acutely aware of the instances of incursion by younger members of the community and the risks that are apparent should the building collapse when children and young people are inside. These concerns have been apparent for a long time and prior to any application for demolition and the Council has been consistent in its desire to see the site developed. Despite signage, security and regular warnings about safety, the Council remains concerned about incursions that continue.

Details of proposed demolition and the credentials of the company engaged are set out in the application and are taken at face value.

The application indicates that the land would be cleared and returned to garden. Whilst this may be acceptable as part of an overall scheme for the site, the committee may wish to reiterate its previous comments that the eventual development should respect and reflect the heritage of the farm layout.

Members will be aware of policy CB28 of the Cranbrook Plan which sets out planning considerations for development of the site. Policy CB28 precedes the delisting of the grade two farmhouse and its weight needs to be considered in that context.

The text of CB28 is as follows:

Proposals for the Tillhouse Farm complex of buildings will be supported where they recognise the significance of the farm complex and its individual components as a heritage asset within the town and make provision for its restoration and conservation such that the:

- 1. Layout of the buildings and associated yard is retained;*
- 2. Buildings are returned to their former appearance;*
- 3. All remaining historic features are retained and restored; and*
- 4. Features that have been lost as a result of fire damage are reinstated to replicate their previous form wherever possible.*

Where proposals seek to deviate from the asset's historic form and appearance, they will need to demonstrate that the changes proposed are the minimum reasonably necessary to facilitate the restoration of the building and to bring it back into a viable use.

Proposals that bring the buildings into public ownership and facilitate community activity and uses will be particularly encouraged.

As the farm building is no longer a listed building the policy requirements for restoration and conservation would appear to be less onerous. Equally bringing the buildings into public ownership has been considered and rejected in light of costs with Heritage Lottery bids rejected in favour of more deserving causes.

However, the redevelopment of the site that is sympathetic and reflective of the original farm courtyard setting remains relevant and the previously approved application attempted to satisfy that whilst still delivering modern homes.

The scheme publicly consulted on by Barleywood Homes did provide a development that respected all three elements of the original site (farmhouse, shippon and dairy) and therefore members may take the view that this applicant should replace the dairy after demolition rather than convert the space to garden.

Recommendation

The Town Council **supports** the application to demolish the dairy building. The Council supports the view that the building is in such a state of disrepair that it is unsafe and unrealistic to attempt conversion into a dwelling.

The Council has for a long time been particularly concerned about the safety of children and young people from the community who are attracted to enter the building despite security measures, site warnings and warnings on social media for their personal safety.

The revelation that asbestos is present only adds to these concerns and adds to the grounds that support demolition.

In terms of restoration of the site, the Council would prefer to see a building constructed following demolition as part of the redevelopment of Tillhouse Farm. Whilst the weight of policy CB28 has been reduced by the delisting of the former farmhouse, there is a desire to see the site developed in a way that is reflective and respectful of the three original buildings that were situated around the former farm courtyard.

The Town Council also seeks to point out the inaccurate description of the location of this application. The site is not as described, not on London Road and not in Broadclyst. This is not an isolated incident where the location of a planning application in Cranbrook is incorrectly described with regular defaults to a previous parish or the use of more generic descriptions of the location (such as London Road) that were used for the very first stages of development some fifteen years ago when little or no named infrastructure existed. If applications like Open Street Map can already be updated to reflect the buildout of the town centre, the LPA should be able to ensure that the validation process includes an accurate location within the town. Surely an accurate location is a key element in providing public accountability and transparency of the planning process.