

Rye Green Farm Buildings
Bateman's, 5th November 2019 4pm

Present: [National Trust (NT)] Karen Stafford (KS), Jo Barnes (JoB),
[Guests] Mike Sherwood (MS), Eleanor Kirby-Green (EKB), John Barnes (JB), Robert Banks (RB)
and Julian Kenny (JK)

1. Thanks

- The guests thanked KS and JoB for the opportunity to put forward their views. JoB said the file that had been sent in was very useful. Extra pages for the file were handed over and a new up-to-date file. The guests stressed the importance of consultation as it provides information. JoB and KS agreed.

2. Objectives for Rye Green Farm Buildings

- The National Trust gave a current overview of the plans for the two buildings, a brick barn and a Dutch barn. The only plans that they currently have are short-term based on safety. There are no long-term plans for the buildings, (KS)

Brick Barn

- The plan is to demolish the brick barn to knee/waist height as it is unsalvageable
- The tiles will be salvaged where possible (KS)
- Scaffolding has been up for several weeks as it was thought that the buildings were listed and repairable, and scaffolding formed the first stage of a project to secure and repair the barn (KS). However upon inspection, once the scaffold was up, it was evident that the barn was in such a poor condition that repair was not feasible and demolition needed to be considered.

Dutch Barn

- The short-term plan is to ensure the Dutch barn poses not immediate risk to health and safety by repairing the roof. (KS) The guests advocated demolition. No long-term plans have been developed as it may be considered a heritage asset from the 1950s. (KS)
- As part of the initial inspection a structural engineer stated that the Dutch barn was structurally sound at present, as some initial work had been done to the support structures a couple of years ago. (KS)

MS pointed out the rust on the pillars.

There are currently no plans for any future development of the buildings due to the location with a stream running right next to the buildings and undermining the barns foundations. However, future staff may take a different way forward. (KS)

KS stated that there were no plans for turning the buildings into holiday let cottages and she did not know where these rumours had started. Also, the National Trust considers a holiday let project as unviable in the current economic environment. KS

said she could not rule it because in years to come new staff could make a different decision.

3. The background

- It was believed the brick barn collapsed in 2017. (JoB)
- The National Trust has been treating the buildings as an emergency issue because of the safety issues. (JoB)
- There have been some delays with the decisions as it was initially thought that the buildings were in the curtilage of a Grade II listed building. (JoB)
- All agreed that it was not so.
- RB pointed out that it was regrettable that the National Trust had not responded to the request for consultation by the neighbours.
- Communication with the Parish Council had been undertaken on an ad hoc basis, EKB explained that more formal channels would ensure that the PC was better informed. KS apologised for not adopting this approach and agreed to communicate more formally through the PC clerk in future
- NT had not communicated more formally, earlier on in the process, as this was an emergency situation that required legal and technical liaison to arrive at the appropriate solution prior to plans being shared.

4. History

- The buildings are considered to be post-Kipling and are likely to be post-war. (JB and RB)
- In the 1990's there was a plan to cut the Dutch barn down to 8ft high and to use it for cattle storage (MS)

5. Safety Issues

- The Dutch barn is a safety hazard as there are unsecured sheets of corrugated iron hanging from the roof. The roof is unsafe and unsecure. (All) JoB said that is why the National Trust are repairing and securing it as part of their proposed works.
- The plans to bring the brick barn down to knee height could be a hazard for walkers. (JK and RB), JoB said there have been no recorded instances of this happening with the remains of the piggery and the trust have obligations under the Inalienability legislation that require some retention of the structures in the landscape.
- The asbestos that was taken off the piggery is still in the undergrowth. (MS and RB) It will be cleared as part of the NT project. (KS)
- The walls of the piggery are collapsing (JB)

- Concerns were raised regarding the protection of the site from further fly tipping. An earlier successful method was a sleeping policeman that was installed by MS which was removed by NT. NT agreed to consider this issue further.
- Concerns were raised regarding the size of the lorries that have entered the lane in the past and the damage they were doing to the track. NT were aware of this issue and had responded in correspondence with a neighbour.

6. Ways forward

- The brick barn will be brought down to waist height – the level will be reviewed according to safety issues. (JoB)
- The concrete hardstanding should be removed. (All the guests) JoB said they would like to do that and will consider that.
- NT will consider the management of fly-tipping in their plans for the site. RB suggested that the sleeping policeman should be reinstated.
- RB raised the rubbish in the wood. All agreed it was unsightly and dangerous. NT agreed to assess the extent of the rubbish and remove it
- The long-term future of the site will be considered as part of an estate management planning approach and the reinstatement of trees and shrubs across the area will be considered as a possible outcome. RB raised the problem of the contractor's lorries breaking up the lane that was an issue for Andrew Renshaw. JoB said they were aware of the issue and had replied to his letter.

7. Consultation and consent

- JB mentioned that there were skilled resources at ESCC in the shape of the footpaths officer and Christopher Whitaker, the landscape officer that the NT could consult and liaise with. JoB said that was a good idea, KS confirmed she was working with Andrew Le Gresley at Bodiam.
- Informal approaches had been made to the Parish Council, but further to advice, NT accepted that more formal channels should be used in future to ensure issues were appropriately communicated.
- RB raised the issue of consent. He referred to a 2014 amendment to the 1990 town and country planning act.. JoB said the National Trust felt they had covered all of the consent that were required but would double check that this was the case.

8. Conclusions

- All agreed the meeting was useful.