

APPENDIX 2

FISHPOND COTTAGE, 51 ILKESTON ROAD, BRAMCOTE AND THE USE OF SURROUNDING LAND FOR REDEVELOPMENT**1) Background**

Fishpond Cottage, 51 Ilkeston Road, Bramcote (also known as Farm Cottage) is a 19th century detached cottage owned by the Council. It is believed that it was built between 1835 and 1845 and previously owned by the Bramcote Hills estate and probably used as tenanted farm accommodation. The building is not listed but has recently been registered as a non designated heritage asset by the County Council.

In 2017 the Policy and Resources Committee approved the sale of Fishpond Cottage and the redevelopment of the garden land and adjacent grassed area with dementia friendly bungalows. This approval has not been progressed and Housing committee has the opportunity to consider an alternative option to maximise the development potential of the site.

The 2017 Policy and Resources Committee report highlighted that the cottage is not suitable for accommodation for social housing due to its layout, level changes and the increased costs to maintain compared to regular social housing. To give the property a 25-year life is likely to require substantial investment. A survey is currently being undertaken to assess the structural condition of the building.

The cottage is surrounded by a mature garden and is adjacent to a large grassed area, with trees, owned by the Council.

2) Development options for the site

The options for developing the site are;

Option 1 - as per the 2017 Policy and Resources Committee approval i.e. sell the cottage and redevelop the garden land and adjacent grassed area. It is proposed that the boundary of the cottage for disposal be reduced, compared to the plan in the original report (as per Appendix 1), to allow more new build housing to be accommodated around the site. It is also proposed to develop **up to** 3x3 bed houses and 2x1 bed flats on the site instead of dementia friendly bungalows. The reason for this being that the housing shortage in the area is for general needs single person accommodation and for larger family homes including adapted dwellings. Under this option it would be sensible to delay the sale of the cottage until after the new build development has been completed.

Advantages of this option

- The cottage is retained and can be sold to generate a capital receipt,
- It is likely this will result in a less contentious planning application (as the cottage is maintained) which is more likely to attract community support,

Disadvantages of this option

- Less affordable housing is provided (up to a maximum of 5),

- The development costs are proportionally higher for developing a smaller site which is going to be more difficult to develop if the cottage is maintained,
- It would be difficult to impose and enforce a non demolition covenant on the sale of the cottage meaning it could be demolished by a private owner at a future stage,

Option 2 – This option involves seeking planning approval to demolish the cottage and redevelop the wider site and the adjacent grassed area with at least 6x3 bed houses (1 of which will be adapted to wheelchair standards) and 2x1 bed flats.

To justify the potential demolition of the cottage under this option the Council has recently undertaken a heritage survey. The surveys conclusion is that the Cottage's heritage significance is limited by several considerations;

- Its Victorian date is unremarkable, and former farmsteads of this date are not a rare category of buildings,
- It is architecturally plain with the only elaboration being a dentil eaves course, which is a common feature of Victorian buildings,
- The farmstead is incomplete with the agricultural range having been demolished in the mid-twentieth century, meaning that its original use is no longer legible to visitors,
- Internal historical features are lacking,
- It is legitimate to take into account the poor state of repair of the house, which further detracts from its level of significance,

Initial informal planning advice is that if a case for demolition can be made (given the building is a non designated heritage asset) then the new development must demonstrate that the loss is valid and that the replacement scheme is of equal value architecturally and in quality of materials and layout.

Advantages of this option

- The development potential of the site is maximised whilst meeting the priority housing needs of the Council,
- The cost of delivering this larger scheme is going to be more cost effective for the Council,

Disadvantages of this option

- The planning application is going to be more contentious as the cottage has recently been allocated as a non designated heritage asset by the County Council,
- This proposal is likely to attract less community support,

Local Conservation Groups consultation

Officers have been in discussion with the two Bramcote Conservation Groups (the Bramcote Conservation Society and the Bramcote History Group) about the two options outlined above.

Summary of the Bramcote History Group comments;

- There was some concern amongst members about the proposed demolition option given the age/character of the house and its historic connections,
- The possible re-siting of the cottage into Bramcote Hills Park should be considered (although it was recognised that the cost and practicalities of this option probably prevented this from being feasible),
- If the demolition option was pursued then any significant fixtures, pertaining to the history of Bramcote, should be retained and re-sited in the locality and the group should be kept informed about this

Summary of the Bramcote Conservation Society comments;

- Whilst this is not a listed building, its age alone suggests it is an important “Heritage Asset”. In seeking a plan to develop a site that involves the loss of such assets, a developer would be expected to demonstrate why it was necessary to lose that,
- Cottages of this type are not expected to be examples of complex architectural merit. By their very nature, they are “artisan” dwellings of simplicity. This is a free standing example in a reasonably sized plot,
- The society would like the Council to delay its consideration of this particular proposal as we are in the middle of a serious public health crisis where it is difficult to hold public meetings on line,
- The Council should properly explore all options before making a decision to demolish. A heritage Asset such as this should really be subject to market testing for at least 6 months to see if there are likely to be any interested purchasers who would restore and use the building. If that proves negative, then the society would accept that demolition might be the only sensible option. In the meantime, BBC could pursue a smaller scale development that keeps the cottage with the option to extend that if it subsequently proves difficult to sell,
- On the point of redevelopment, at whatever scale, the society would welcome the opportunity to comment on layout and design.

Salvaging materials and their reuse locally

If the building is demolished the Council will seek to preserve some of the buildings fixtures and fittings with a view to these being represented or reused elsewhere. Discussions are at an early stage with the Bramcote and Stapleford Community Hub about whether salvageable items from the cottage would be of benefit to the hubs proposed community café at Bramcote Park. This would be a sensible use of salvageable items should the demolition option be approved.

View of the site from Ilkeston Road

