

blackthorn, hazel, dog rose, elder and maybe some deciduous trees planted with in the hedge line. 3. What do the potential neighbours think? Very important that their views, as always, are considered fully. It will be very visual, overlooking nearby properties and dominant! If the majority are minded to support, and the neighbours are supportive, I would be happy to go along with approval but only if the above are resolved.”

MH then summarised an email from Sue Giles of Westwood House sent to BCKLWN in May 2015 following the water tower residents Open Day and before the plans were altered. She cited in particular her concerns about who would reside there; that her privacy would be compromised; reflection from the sun and that by adding a resident structure, it would no longer be regarded as a water tower.

MH then asked each Cllr for their initial comments.

HB asked whether the galvanised sheeting on the exterior would be shiny or matt (Mr Pederson confirmed it would be acid washed matt finish with a choice of grey tones.) HB observed that the existing water tower is a dominant structure just outside of the village boundary and the planning design is a very good modern design which we should applaud as we are rarely presented with good modern design solutions. BCKLWN’s initial assessment seems to be at odds with their own policy statements.

LF described the design as a “marmite moment”: either you love it or hate it. He wished to defer his views until he heard from neighbours.

SA said that he disliked the design and felt it too modern. In his view the water tower would be the first thing you see when entering the village from the north or west and that the council had refused Ran Revir on these grounds. HB explained that this application was not like Ran Revir which was a very large property on too small a plot, whereas this was a small plot with lots of space around it.

NP supported the application on the premise of protecting and using an historic agricultural structure rather than seeing it go to scrap. He would like to see more modern designs within the village and found the design to be a good focal point.

MH said that the application would not be suitable for a tourist holiday cottage which was implied by the Borough Council. He was concerned about the terrace/roof space and any noise that would come from there to disturb neighbours.

The meeting was then opened to the floor. Those residents attending questioned Mr Pederson about the proposed building being open to visitors, being a holiday cottage and about access to the roof terrace overlooking neighbours. Whether the building would be any larger than at present? Their concern is that the water tower would be the first thing that people would see at this end of the village and they felt it was not a structure that would give the right impression of this conservation village. The site is near historic buildings and out of step with them. There was also an issue about the building being enclosed and solid which would interrupt the view through the existing structure from their houses. In general, those residents attending were concerned that this empty water tower could become adwelling and they felt it infringed upon the privacy of their gardens and homes. They also did not like the design – it looks too industrial and ‘silo’ like - and that it would no longer look anything like a water tower. They felt that the current water tower was not worthy of preservation and would prefer it to be dismantled.

Mr Pederson confirmed that the application was purely for residential, not business or tourism, and that his family would be in permanent residence, despite the Borough Council’s suggestion

that the application had more chance of being successful if it was a holiday let. He explained that the tower would be open only one day a year as part of an already existing scheme for visitors wanting to see architectural buildings of interest. The roof deck could only be accessed by a ladder and a hatch (the lift shaft will not go right to the top), primarily to service the solar panels. Because of the weather and the high winds at the top, the north facing part of the deck would be rarely used for admiring the view.

Mr Pederson clarified that the adjustments his architect had made to the building were to alleviate concerns that nearby neighbours had flagged up earlier: i.e. the building was now enclosed in metal - replacing the former glass - so that there would be no overlooking the neighbours. The lift shaft had been repositioned to the south of the building, formerly to the north, which meant that the tank windows in the living area did not look out south towards the neighbours but rather to the west, north and east. The tank size would be increased on the outside by a layer of insulation making it approximately 4ft wider than at present. Mr Pederson explained that he felt positive about recycling and re-using the abandoned structure which, if left, would eventually fall into disrepair and be demolished.

It was noted that there was a used footpath by the entrance drive to the tower that Mr Pederson confirmed was not a public right of way. However, he would be prepared to put a slap gate into the fence to allow continued access. Holkham Estate has stipulated that a stock control fence is installed along the drive and around the site. The plot would be surrounded by trees and natural mixed hedging, not fruit trees.

MH brought the meeting back to Councilors and asked them to make their final comments.

HB said that she supported the application. The structure of the former water tower could still be seen in the design. Support.

LF said that the new design would not look like a water tower and was reminiscent of a bunker. It would dominate the view and affect the first view of Castle Acre. He realised that the owner had put a lot of work into the design and that he thought it was very good but that he sided with those attending residents who opposed the application. Object.

SA said that he agreed with the comments of LF. Object.

NP stated that there seemed to be a divide between either people who liked historic properties or modern design. He liked the design and appreciated the passion of the owner to change an already existing structure into a dwelling. He thought it was good use of the structure and that it was positive to see something done with it. Support

MH noted Cllrs were equally divided for and against. He felt his concerns about residency and the use of the roof deck had been met. He considered the water tower to be far enough away from the edge of the village not to impinge on properties or to detract from the approach into the Conservation Area. He commented that unfortunately planning law does not give a right to a view. He welcomed the quality design. On balance he supported the application. Support.

MH proposed the PC support the application. Agreed three votes to two. The Clerk to request a planning condition that the property can not become a holiday let. The concerns of the six residents attending will also be flagged. The attending residents were encouraged to express these directly to the Borough in writing.

The meeting closed at 9.0pm. The next full Parish Council meeting is at 7.30pm on Thursday 11th February in the village hall.