

Nuneaton News

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'ASSET' TO STAY

CAMPAIGNERS have won their battle to protect a relic of Nuneaton's past from a 'cynical' attempt to knock it down.

by **MORT BIRCH**

The historic former Fox and Crane pub at Weddington that is part of the town's rich heritage has been saved from the bulldozers following a public outcry.

Developers Cartwright Homes, who had previously been given the go-ahead to convert it into flats, wanted to demolish it and replace it with a modern building.

But that led to a storm of protest from people in the area and the borough council's planning applications committee unanimously voted to preserve what their officers described as an 'historical asset'.

Colin Burrows, one of the protest leaders, welcomed the decision: "Obviously we are pleased because it was once a focal point for Weddington," he said.

"We may have only saved the exterior of the building, but places of such historical and architectural interest are thin on the ground in Weddington."

The pub closed almost three years ago and has hardly been touched and Colin Burrows claimed that it had become the victim of 'cynical, opportunist vandalism.'

But he felt that the planning committee's decision had given a 'fillip' to the protest against a major redevelopment of Weddington Fields.

A Government Inspector is to hold a Public Inquiry in January into the plans to create

what would amount to a new housing estate in the area.

He said: "The councillors have listened to us over the Fox and Crane. Perhaps the inspector will do the same at the Public Inquiry and common sense will prevail."

The protesters were supported by all of the members of the planning applications committee who unanimously wanted to preserve a 'unique piece of architectural heritage.'

Cartwright Homes were granted planning permission last year to build 19 dwellings on the land surrounding the former pub and to convert the building into six luxury flats.

Known previously as The Grove, and the Weddington Hotel, and then the Fox and Crane, it was once a substantial private home that was built in the first quarter of the 19th century.

Henry Nigel Pole Shawe, who inherited Weddington Castle and the estate from his father Henry C Shawe, whose name lives on in Shawe Avenue, Weddington, went to live in The Grove before the First World War and stayed there until it was granted a licence in 1934 and became the Weddington Hotel.

That was the beginning of a 74 year spell during which the building became a focus and focal point of the Weddington Community.

The Fox and Crane pulled its last pints on Tuesday, January 15 2008 and the oldest significant surviving building in Weddington after St James Church was sold to builders A R Cartwright.



SAVED... the former Fox and Crane pub, once a focal point for the people of Weddington and a building of 'architectural and historical interest.' NNJA



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