

Card 25 April 58

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LUDDENDEN BUILDING IS OFFERED AS GIFT TO HALIFAX CORPORATION

Owner's decision likely to stimulate
interest in village development plans

THE ancient building in High Street, Luddenden, which earlier this month was approved for demolition by Halifax Town Council, has now been offered with its site as a gift to Halifax Corporation, the owners told the "Courier & Guardian" to-day.

Situated just inside the borough boundary, close to the road bridge over the Luddenden Brook, the building was used as a clothing factory until last September by Astin Bros., Ltd., the Hebden Bridge manufacturers.

A member of the firm said: "A good deal of interest in the fate of the building has been shown by antiquarians and archaeological societies. A day or two ago we got a phone call from Halifax Town Hall, asking us to delay the start of demolition until certain measurements had been made and photographs taken."

In writing

"We made our offer then, orally, informing the official that the Corporation could have the building and the land as a gift. We were asked to make the offer in writing."

"This we have done and we have had an acknowledgment of the offer, but with no decision on it. I understand that it is intended to place the offer before one of the Corporation committees this week."

Halifax Corporation's Development Committee is meeting to-night.

Alderman R. Ambler, chairman of the committee, told a reporter: "I have not heard of this offer, but the committee has not met during the last few days. In the circumstances, I can make no comment on this matter."

Dated 1653

News of the offer of the ancient building—an inscription over the door carries the date 1653—will stimulate interest in development plans for Luddenden village which have, recently, been the subject of considerable comment and some controversy.

More than a year ago there was criticism of the erection, near the ancient building owned by Astin's, of a row of garages by Warnegate Products, Ltd., of Gibbet Street, Halifax.

Recently, there has been conjecture about the plans for open land bounded by Halifax Lane and Chapel Street, and one or two other points in the village, including land which is not owned by Halifax Corporation.

Proposals for development schemes, affecting the Chapel Street and Brook Street areas, in particular, have been discussed from time to time by the Corporation's Development Committee, the Markets and Parks Committee and the Housing Committee.

"Garden" treatment

But a "proposed redevelopment scheme" for Chapel Street and Brook Street has not yet been submitted to the Town Council, nor even approved by the Development Committee.

It is understood that the latest suggestions embodied in the form of a "diagrammatic plan" in the Borough Engineer's Department—but not yet studied by the Town Council—includes:

"Garden treatment" for part of the land between Halifax Lane and Chapel Street;

Similar treatment for land on the other side of Halifax Lane, towards its junction with the High Street;

Some realignment of the roadway of Halifax Lane near the junction to improve the existing facilities for traffic moving in and out of High Street;

The existing open space, part of an old mill dam, long since drained, between High Street and the pathway alongside the Luddenden Brook, to be retained.

How about the people of Luddenden? What do they think about the future of their village?

The garages

Just after the erection of the garages, near the ancient building, at the bottom of High Street, a meeting was called at the Luddenden Community Centre and a resolution approved calling on the Town Council to remove the garages and pave the site with flags, with some trees.

But the garages are still up and occupied. Mr. James Warnegate, managing director of Warnegate Products, Ltd., said: "There is a large unsatisfied demand in the village for garages of the kind. I do not agree that they are unsightly. Some of the people round about have told me they prefer to see the garages rather than vacant land."

A number of people who were interviewed in the streets (a surprising number in view of some of the more outspoken criticisms of the garages) supported Mr. Warnegate's view. These people said they felt the garages (painted a very sober green) were less unsightly than some nearby land, empty and scarred after demolition.

Most favoured "a pretty garden feature" or, at least, like Mrs. Frank Moore, at the butcher's shop in the village centre, thought there could be a "tidy little plot, with some seats about, perhaps—something neat and tidy and in keeping with the place." Nobody said they favoured establishment of a car park on or about this site.

Car parks

There are many rumours about car parks, but Ald. Ambler commented:

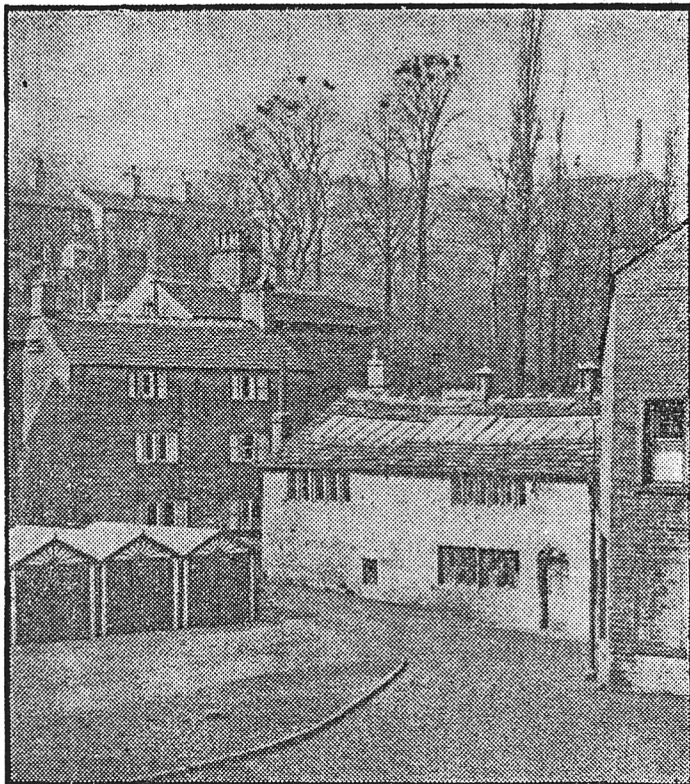
"No approach on these lines has been made to the Development Committee. I don't know how this rumour about a car park has got about."

How about the people living nearest the old clothing factory, actually at the back of it, the people living in the last

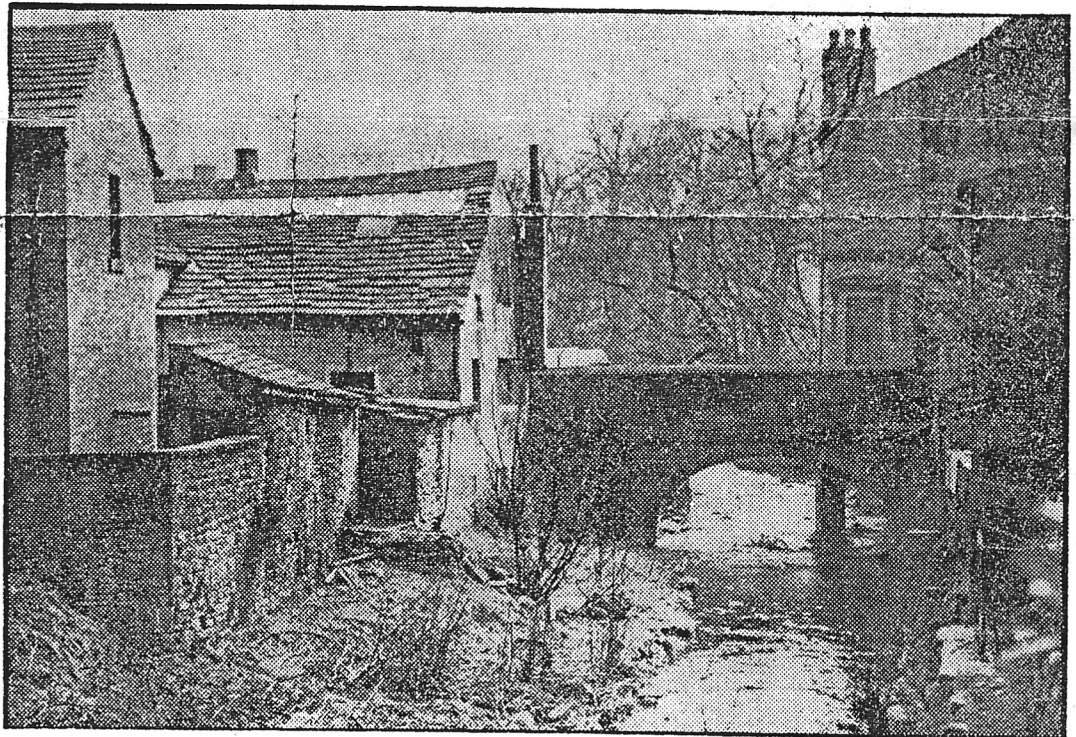
houses in Halifax on this side of the town—the Sowerby Bridge Urban District Council boundary is on the road bridge across the stream?

Mrs. Doris Milner, who lives at 57, High Street Fold, behind the factory, said: "No car park here, please. We'd like a garden, or something like that."

Mr. and Mrs. Dixon Heap, living in the same street, said the village centre ought to be kept "quiet and pretty—anything like a car park would spoil the place."



Left: The low structure is the ancient building, once an inn, then a club, later a clothing factory, which has been offered to Halifax Corporation. The building is just inside Halifax borough.



Below: The rushing Luddenden Brook just beyond the fall or weir as it passes beneath the bridge that links Halifax borough with the Sowerby Bridge urban district. The ancient building is on the left, with the houses of the High Street Fold behind.



Mrs. Moore



Some of the people who are most concerned about development plans in the area, people who live in the High Street Fold, just behind the old building. Left to right: Mrs. Heap, Mrs. Doris Milner, Mr. Dixon Heap.

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