

Hempstead Village Society,
Secretary: Alban Graham,
Anvil Rise,
Hempstead,
Saffron Walden, Essex.

29th November, 1977

The Director of Planning,
Uttesford District Council,
Council Offices,
DUNMOW, Essex.

Dear Sir,

It has been with very real concern that we in Hempstead Village Society, have learned that, following a fire at "Long Corner", application has been made for permission to demolish this cottage and replace it with a modern dwelling house.

It is our opinion that "Long Corner" cottage, more than any other dwelling in the village, has over the years, helped to give Hempstead its unique character. Situated on a key site at the entrance to the village it has set the scene and influenced the appearance of Hempstead to an extent that is out of all proportion to its own size and individual importance.

Over recent years Hempstead has suffered a lot visually from demolitions, extensive alterations and infill; but we feel that the loss of "Long Corner" would be the most devastating blow that the village could now suffer. We would like to see the cottage restored basically to its original appearance - with the ground plan, the proportions of window space to walls and the roof line - as nearly as possible unchanged.

Long Corner cottage with its clay walls is on its own merit a unique building within the village. Parts of it appear to be virtually undamaged - and while we fully sympathise with the inconvenience the owner has suffered, we cannot see that restoration (with peg tiles - or pan tiles - in place of thatch and with plumbing and heating brought completely up to date) would be inflicting any undue hardship upon him. He would have restored to him visually the same building, now less of a fire hazard and with all modern conveniences (something that will no doubt enhance its value if he still has in mind the sale of the property).

When the study on Saffron Walden prepared in 1971 by John Hunter and three associates was published, it had as its preface the following quotation from William Morris. This in our opinion sums up very well our feelings about this matter:-

"It has been most truly said that these old buildings do not belong to us only: that they belonged to our forefathers and they will belong to our descendants unless we play them false. They are not in any sense our property, to do as we like with them. We are only trustees for those who come after us."

Yours faithfully,

A. Graham,
Secretary.

H. S. Slee,
Chairman.

A. Weedon,
Vice-Chairman