

MINUTES

METAL HILL WORKING GROUP

16.03.15

Present: Vic Skuce (VS), Julian Fenner (JF), Joe Kennedy (JK), Sheila Watson (SW), Margaret Lynch (ML), Simon Parkinson (SP), Philippa Hart (PH), Jane Findlay (JF), Andy Young (AY), Steve Hawkins (SH)

1. Land Valuation and Ground Clearance

JF has requested several estate agents to produce valuations of the site in various permutations, predicated on the site being eligible for some category of residential development. It should be stressed that we do not know whether the site could be eligible for residential use. Only one, Country Properties, has responded to date. With residential planning permission it is evident that the site could either be sold at a profit or realise an income if leased. Without residential planning permission, we are reliant on finding another, probably less lucrative use for the site.

ACTION: JF to pursue other valuations.

Ground clearance: JF reported that we still have only one quote for clearance of the traveller's area of the site at £27,000. He has contacted another contractor and hopes to arrange another site visit preparatory to getting another quote.

ACTION: JF and VS to liaise.

2. Live/Work and Self Build

Live/Work. SW has found the Greater Cambridge Small Business Federation to be a useful source of information. A planning permission was granted in 2012 for 4 live/work units at Connington called Braebank Barns. It would appear that site is now for sale with the planning permission.

ACTION: SW and PH to find out more about this scheme.

Live-work demand still needs to be tested. We discussed several different avenues for ascertaining this.

ACTION: PH to draft a letter for the Parish Council to send out to neighbouring villages to ask them to gauge interest in life/work units. This might also form the basis of an article for "Open for Business" the Small Business Federation magazine.

Self Build. PH reported that she has spoken to the planning officer in charge of the Self Build Register at SCDC. This is a new initiative, inviting both landowners to come forward to register their site and self-builders to register their interest, in the hope of providing a "match-making" service between the two and also of giving assistance with planning issues. We are the first landowner to come forward.

It was agreed that this needs to be explored further, and that were the site to be eligible for at least an element of self build, money raised from the lease/sale of building plots to the rear of the site could finance the clear up and redevelopment of the front part. It should be noted that in terms of planning use, the traveller use is only attached to the front "developed" section and the rear is still notionally agricultural. The site need not be given over entirely to self build, and if sympathetically designed, it is possible for, e.g., live/work and self build to form a mixed use scheme.

JK showed us a plan he has drawn up for a 20 unit site and community hub. He also showed us how shipping containers can be adapted for residential use:

Check out these links (copy to your browser):

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/kristinchirico/surprisingly-gorgeous-homes-made-from-shipping-containers#.ryMz46rkO>

<http://assets.inhabitat.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2012/12/Shigeru-Ban-1.jpeg>

Such types of unit are suitable either for self build or live work. The group was surprised how attractive and flexible this means of construction was.

ACTION: PH to discuss self build and live work further with the planning department.

ACTION: SW to follow up a group of self builders who have advertised on the Transitions website, albeit for a 15 acre site.

ACTION: JK to access more information about shipping containers and report to group on costs.

3. Chalet park

AY reported that little progress has been made with this as he had had no luck in persuading any chalet park developer to come out to look at the site. This seems to be because of the site needing to be cleared proper to development. We nevertheless feel it worthwhile pursuing this option as it is likely that permission is much more likely, being nearer to the existing traveller use. The group recognised that there is perhaps a perception problem with chalet parks, but believes this can be redressed with the correct information.

ACTION: ML and AY to pursue chalet park developers to organise for them to visit the site.

4. Timeline

The group agreed that in order to be able to progress our ideas, we need to present them to the village. SH suggested and it was agreed that the ideal opportunity to do this would be the Annual Village Meeting on Thursday May 21st.

ACTION: all MHWG members to start assembling presentational material on their areas of research and expertise.

5. Date of next meeting: Monday 13th April, 7pm at Vic Skuce's.