

## THE FUTURE OF BRAMSHILL

by

Martin Stallion



The first Police College offering courses in higher leadership within the police service, was opened at Ryton-on-Dunsmore, near to Coventry, in 1948. However, this was always envisaged to be a temporary measure, and so it proved. The beautiful Jacobean manor of Bramshill was acquired by the Home Office, and the Police College was moved there in the middle months of 1960.

However, Bramshill must also bid farewell, as the Police College left Bramshill at the end of March 2015, after some fifty-five years in residence. Some 250 items owned by the College but no longer required, or not of police significance, were put up for sale by auction in May. They ranged from candlesticks and napkin rings to paintings and furniture, including a Victorian pollard oak table, which sold for £49,000 against an estimate of £7,000-£9,000.

The new owners of the site, City and Country Properties, have held a series of consultations with local residents and others with an interest in it. I have attended these events on behalf of the Society

The site will almost certainly become a residential development, although this, and the details, are not final. The Jacobean mansion could be divided into about twenty apartments, with some communal areas in those parts that cannot be divided, such as the Hall. The truncheon collection, which is still owned by the

College, will probably be displayed in the Hall, as a reminder of the police service's occupation of the site. The modern developments (lecture rooms, accommodation blocks) will mostly be demolished and replaced with about 290 housing units, mainly flats. The water-cum-clock tower will be kept

The landscaping will be improved by restoring and re-planting the full length of Reading Avenue (the roadway which runs from the west entrance alongside the lake), replacing the gravel at the front of the Mansion with grass and creating a public footpath through the park

Various other options were considered - hotel, care home, single occupancy - but are not felt to be viable and would not meet the views of those local residents who were consulted

By the time you read this, a formal planning application will have been submitted to the local authority and City and Country expect a decision by November, after the statutory consultations have been made, with the highways and education authorities, Historic England and so on.

The following statement has been issued by City and Country, who are agents for the sale and development of Bramshill

## **SECURING THE FUTURE OF THE FORMER POLICE TRAINING COLLEGE**

**F**ollowing the purchase of Bramshill from the Home Office in March 2015, City and Country is working towards a new vision for the redevelopment of the historic Bramshill House and Gardens, securing its future for generations to come.

The present form of Bramshill House and Gardens dates from the early 17th Century and although it incorporates at its heart, a 14th Century house, most of what we see today was built between 1605 and 1625 by Edward, 11th Baron Zouche of Harringworth. Perched on top of a South West facing escarpment, it overlooks the heathland of the valley of the River Hart.

Now listed Grade I, Bramshill House and Gardens stands in 106 hectares of grounds which are located in the centre of a Grade II\* listed park which extends to 240 hectares over several ownerships. The park also retains many historic landscape features dating back to medieval times.

Through extensive consultation with Key Stakeholders and the local community, City and Country has been considering various different uses for the mansion house and identifying areas suitable for potential development on the wider site.

### **Care Home Option**

Following the second public consultation the care home option for the mansion has been disregarded as it is considered too insensitive to the historic fabric of the building and that it is not a realistic or viable option.

### **Single Residential Option**

Following consultation with Historic England this option has been included as, in their opinion, it is the favoured option. This option does protect the historic building as it is deemed to be less intrusive; however purchasers looking at this type of property tend to want extensive alterations and appliances fitted. Other outcomes to consider with this option are as follows:

- Single residential use has a lower value; therefore more development in the surrounding landscape will be required
- No public access to the house as it is entirely privately owned
- For the same reason no permissive footpath would be instated and the Cricket Club would have to stop using the pitch

### **Hotel Option**

Whilst the setting of the mansion may appear appropriate for a hotel, there are some constraints involved:

- Low to mid value, therefore more development in the surrounding landscape will be required
- Higher public access, but principally to paying guests
- Due to each bedroom requiring a bathroom there will be significantly more intervention to the listed building
- Following initial traffic surveys it is the highest generator of traffic

### **Multiple Residential Option**

This option was favoured most by respondents although concern was raised over the potential increase in the number of vehicular trips and the potential knock on effects on the existing road network.

- This option requires the least amount of surrounding development as its value is much higher than any other option
- The maintenance charge from the Management Company is split between more people, securing the ongoing maintenance of the building
- Allows for public access to principal rooms on Heritage Open Days
- Retention of the Cricket Club and the creation of a permissive footpath

We remain engaged in consultation with amongst others, Hart District Council, Historic England and Natural England, and hope to submit a planning application in late 2015 to secure this heritage assets future for years to come.

There are full plans of all the proposed developments, and these, together with more information, can be available through the website of City and Country :

[www.cityandcountry.co.uk](http://www.cityandcountry.co.uk)