

Villagers slam rectory move

Ruin to be auctioned

This was the headline in the Lincolnshire Echo dated 26th February 1976, when it was announced that Burton Rectory was to be auctioned by the Church Commissioners. The building had been left empty for 4 years following the death of the last Rector, Canon John Caulton* The Lincoln Echo reported:

THE bitter struggle to save Burton rectory is over. The rectory, in ruins after 4 years of neglect, goes up for auction in June – and villagers are still bewildered and angry that their plea to keep the listed building have failed.

“Time has just been wasted” said Mr Paul Blackburn “there has not been enough positive action. The building should have been repaired immediately it became vacant, but what was an absolutely beautiful property has just been left to go to rack and ruin at the hands of time and vandals”.

But church authorities say that they too have been up against bureaucracy in their fight to preserve the house. With rejected planning applications and appeals behind them, they say that the decision to sell the rectory was made only after all their efforts had been thwarted.

Mr Cecil Robinson, secretary of the Diocesan parsonages committee explained that the diocese had originally wanted to modernise the house and had drawn up a £12,000 modernisation plan.

The Church Commissioners turned down the plan. They felt that the cost was too high, and the diocese would have a large uneconomic house to run from the point of view of a clergyman’s low stipend. They suggested that the diocese consider building a new house in the grounds of the Rectory.

A planning application was submitted in 1973 but turned down by the Rural District Council. The diocese appealed but a final decision rejecting the appeal was not given until March 1975 by the newly formed West Lindsey District Council.

By this time vandals had attacked the rectory, built in early Georgian times, and listed as an historic building. Every downstairs window was smashed and the leaden frames stolen. The interior was damp and some parts completely derelict. During the 3 year delay the cost of repairs had escalated from £12000 to £23,000 – a cost far beyond the church’s financial capability.

The decision was made to sell and on 30th June 1976 at 7.00pm, the property was offered for auction at the Cardinals Hat in Lincoln.

The Echo of July 6th 1976 reported:

There was much interest in the sale of a Burton house at the Cardinal’s Hat, by messrs Brogden and Co. It was the 18th century Georgian House “The Old Rectory” which is set in one-and-a-quarter acres of land, overlooking Burton Park. It was sold for £26,750 to Mr Gethin Caulton of Vancouver, Canada, who is the son of the late Canon John Caulton the last Rector of Burton.

The conveyance required the new owner to provide freedom of access for vehicles and to maintain the drive to the “satisfaction of the bishop”. A further clause prevented the property from being use as a hotel, tavern or public house, nor to “sell any spirituous or fermented liquors”

After carrying out extensive repairs, the property was later purchased by the current owners, David and Ann Hansord, who have sympathetically restored the house and gardens to their former glory.

** Canon John Caulton 1882-1973 was Rector of Burton from 1950-1971. Historically, a Rector was entitled to the “great tithes” of a parish so it could provide a comfortable living. The living was usually in the gift of a patron, such as Lord Monson. A Vicar was only entitled to the “small tithes,” possibly a share of the harvest, or the “tithe pig” from his parishioners. The Tithe Act of 1836 abolished tithes but the distinction remains. The tradition of the harvest festival and decorating the church with produce in autumn, may have its origin in the collection of the “small tithes”*



THE OLD RECTORY
Pen and ink drawing by Ruth Race