



Life and Death of the Crooked House Oak Farm, Himley



My name is Steve Pratt. I'm a long-standing member of the Black Country Society and Friend of the Black Country Living Museum. My career started out as a town planner, first working in Dudley and the West Midlands. I've always been interested in pub, beer and breweries and, when I retired, I turned to researching the history of pubs and breweries in the Black Country. Last year, I published my first book, "Pubs & Breweries of the Black Country", and now, as Steve James, write regular articles on pubs and breweries in the Black Country Bugle. I also write articles for other magazine and produce framed histories for pubs in the Black Country. In March 2024, I published my second book, "Tales from Black Country Taverns", which includes a chapter about the Crooked House, based on this presentation.

This statement is based on a presentation being prepared for the Black Country Society and Black Country Living Museum. It tells the full, factual history of the Crooked House, including its invaluable contribution to the history and life of the Black Country. It wholeheartedly supports the need to rebuild this iconic feature of the Black Country.

Many Black Country folk have fond memories of the **Crooked House** at Himley. This isolated pub was remotely situated at the end of a winding pot-holed lane, passing quarries and landfill sites and under two bridges, which once carried mineral railways carrying coal from nearby collieries. It was well known for its sloping floors, windows and doors, caused by mining subsidence in the early 19th century. It was also known locally as the "Siden House", a Black Country term for a crooked or tilted structure, and was reputedly haunted by a previous landlord and a serving wench named Polly!

In June 2023, the Crooked House closed for the last time and the premises were sold by the then owners, Marstons, the Wolverhampton-based brewery, with a guide price of £675,000. On 5 August, just two weeks after the new owner took control, the building was set on fire and was demolished two days later.

It's rare for the plight of a British pub to feature in the pages of the New York Times or newspapers in Australia and New Zealand. But the shocking destruction of the Crooked House made headlines throughout the world. But the wreckers of this pub have served a purpose by default, by turning the spotlight on not only one Black Country pub, but also brought to attention similar acts of violence against other licensed premises. Research by CAMRA has shown that more than 30 pubs have been converted or knocked down, with or without permission, in this year alone.

We not only lost a unique, iconic Black Country pub, but there's much more history to recall here.

I want you to cast your mind back almost 260 years, to 1765.

The American Revolution had just started in British America. HMS Victory was first launched at Chatham Dockyard. James Watt had just invented the steam engine. King George III was on the throne. George Grenville was Prime Minister, to be succeeded in July by Charles Watson-Wentworth, Marquess of Rockingham. Emma, later Lady Hamilton, mistress of Horatio Nelson, was born and Lloyds Bank was first established in Birmingham. The Industrial Revolution had hardly started and land was mainly in the hands of the landed gentry.

Himley was predominantly rural, covered with farmland and woodland, interspersed with the occasional quarry and brickworks. Apart from a few farmhouses and cottages, there were few buildings around, and St Michael's Church had been built only a year earlier.

The main highway from Kidderminster to Wolverhampton passed through the village – the old "Saltway", where traders used to carry and sell salt from Droitwich and drovers would drive their cattle and sheep. At the crossroads with the routes to Dudley and Wombourne, the Dudley Arms and Himley House Hotel provided sustenance and accommodation for travellers.

Himley Hall originally dated from 1361 and by the 17th century had become a moated manor house next to the medieval church. It was home to the Ward family, who had inherited the title of Earl of Dudley in 1628. One member of the family, Dud Dudley, lived here and was experimenting with smelting iron-ore locally. John Ward had inherited the estate from his cousin in 1740 and had created the title of Viscount Dudley in 1763. He then set about building a new house, but had not yet commissioned Lancelot "Capability" Brown to redesign the grounds. As part of the project, he demolished the old manor house to make way for a grand Palladian mansion. The original village of Himley was relocated and the church was rebuilt on its present site in 1764. Not far away was Holbeache House, originally constructed around 1600 and famous for its role in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

Against this background, in 1765, a local farmer and miller built a farmhouse and corn mill on the Oak Farm Estate, just off the road from Himley to Dudley. It first appears on Fowler's map of 1822. This farmhouse and surrounding land was later owned by Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, a local landowner whose sister, Catherine, was married to Liberal politician, William Gladstone. Another of his sisters, was married to the fourth Lord Lytton of Hagley. The land had come into his hands of the Glynne family after Reverend Stephen Glynne had married Mary Bennett in 1779, but he died of a ruptured blood vessel while hunting in 1780. His grandson, Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, took over the land in 1815 and, by 1835, had begun to turn the estate over to mining and industry, to exploit the large reserves of coal, ironstone and clay that had been found there. By this time, there were already Oak Farm furnaces south of Himley Brook, along with at least three coal pits and ironstone mines.

The farmhouse was sited on the very edge of the Glynne estate, extending to around 90 acres of farming land, amongst woodland and arable fields. It adjoined land owned by the Earl of Dudley, who would make a massive fortune from his mineral rights in and around Dudley, when coal and iron were in great demand from the start of the Industrial Revolution. During the early 19th century, coal mines began to be established in the Black Country. Part of the Earl of Dudley's extensive mineral rights covered the pits at the Himley Colliery, spread over many acres and centred in the south Himley Woods near this farmhouse. This partly explains why coal was mined by Sir Stephen Glynne from the honeycombed passages under only part of the premises, causing it to tilt 15 degrees and sink four feet. He also was keen to maximise the

revenue from the underlying coal seams. Later would come the Earl of Dudley's Shutt End and Pensnett railways, to transport the coal from his mines to the canals and local factories.

Swept away by the "get-rich quick" fever of industrialisation, Sir Stephen Glynne exploited the mineral wealth of his estate for all it was worth. Although his estate was put up for auction in 1833 for £50,000, it was not sold, since the highest offer (from the Earl of Dudley's trustees) was only £35,000. They wanted to prevent mineral exploitation and ironworks from interfering with their living conditions at Himley Hall.

In 1836, Sir Stephen founded the Oak Farm Iron Works Company, bringing furnaces and forges to this quiet countryside location. One of the shareholders was his brother-in-law, William Gladstone, who was works manager here when he was only 19 years old. But this enterprise was a total disaster and, despite the intervention of William Gladstone, the family lost everything it had. Their neighbour, the Earl of Dudley, fared much better. His complex of coal mines and industrial sites was linked by a private railway, the Pensnett Railway, with sidings near the Glynne Arms. Remains of the old railways are all around the site, including bridges and trackways.

Fowler's map of 1822 shows the building as Old Coppice Mill, with its own mill race and mill pond next to Himley Brook, but mining subsidence also caused flooding and may have stopped the mill wheel turning. Around 1840, the farmhouse, known then as "Cartwright House", was converted into a pub by John Cartwright, a miller, farmer and beer shop keeper born in 1779, who had married Sally Parkes at St Peter's Church in Harborne. She was often known as "Polly", and had a son, Joseph, born at Himley in 1825. John died in 1849, aged 70, and his wife, Sally, then ran the pub until she died in 1852. She was recorded as a farmer of 30 acres, and was helped in running the pub by her sister, widow Fanny Amis, and house servants, Sarah & Hannah Baylis, whilst her son, Joseph, continued as a miller.

By 1847, the pub was being frequented by the "Black Gold Brotherhood", local people who pooled resources to aid families in times of mine accidents. Their tales of unity and community spirit were legendary, becoming a beacon of hope during those challenging times. The pub not only welcomed weary miners, but also local merchants, tradesmen and farmers, to slake their thirst in this rural hostelry.

In 1849, the land was put up for sale, as one of several properties leased by the Oak Farm Iron & Brick Works Company from Sir Stephen Richard Glynne. The sales details include *"that conveniently situated and commodious dwellinghouse, now used as a public house, with the garden, stabling, outbuildings and appurtenances, and water corn mill, now in the occupation of Mr John Cartwright"*. The whole estate was eventually bought by future Prime Minister, William Gladstone, Stephen Glynne's brother, and Gladstone later helped to rescue Sir Stephen from bankruptcy. However, the company was sold off after his death outside Bishopsgate railway station in London in 1874.

Around this time, the pub was being affected by mining subsidence. This was first addressed by Sir John Harlington, a trailblazing civil engineer of the 1840s. His initial approach involved reinforcing the building with buttresses and providing internal adjustable joists, allowing alignments to be tweaked as the building moved. By 1851, it was referred to as Himley Oak Corn Mill, run by Sally Cartwright, then aged 66, who also farmed 30 acres of land. Her son, Joseph, then aged 26, was the miller, and Sally's sister, Fanny Amis, also lived with them.

By 1855, the building was referred to as the Glynne Arms, with George Wilkinson in charge, supplying foreign wines and spirits to the pub, along with cigars, from his shop in High Street, Dudley. In 1857, he put all the fixtures at the pub up for sale, including beer machines, beer and liquor casks, mash tub, boilers and vats, 900 gallons of prime old ale and even a mahogany four-poster bed.

In the 1860s, Eliza Thompson was not only one of the employees of the pub, but also a local celebrity who told mesmerising stories on Saturday evenings, including tales of the witches of Cannock Chase.

In 1861, Cheshire-born Joseph Woodcock took over the pub with his wife, Gwen. They had two daughters, Mary & Elizabeth, helped by house servant, Sedgley-born William Southall. In 1871, Joseph's wife, Gwynne, died and the Barrow family were also living at the pub, including Joseph's son-in-law, also Joseph, along his son, Joseph, and daughters, Martha & Mary. They were followed by Joseph Bate, who kept the pub from 1877-1881.

In 1872, the Crooked House led a campaign, known as the "Staffordshire Ale Affair", championing local beers when a new brewery tried to introduce a "foreign ale". The pub held a series of spirited ale tastings, documented in the *Potteries Examiner*, which turned it into a focal point of local pride and palate.

The 1881 Census records the property as uninhabited, but in January of that year, 4 brass taps and some lead piping were stolen from the Glynne Arms by 16-year old John Davies & Samuel Tomlinson, who were remanded in custody for a week. By this time, the pub seems to be surrounded by railway lines, the Great Western Railway's Kingswinford branch and the Earl of Dudley's Pensnett Railway, along with the associated extensive sidings serving the collieries.

Later in 1881, the pub was in the hands of William Evans until Thomas Webb took over in 1884, followed by Charles Webb in 1895. By 1886, the pub was owned by James Walker from Kingswinford, with Thomas White at the helm with his wife, Mary Ann, until 1895. In 1888, he was charged with having committed an indecent assault on 15-year old Mary Brownhills, but the case was dismissed because she had given false information about her age. Two years later, Thomas was fined 11s.6d for selling intoxicated liquors during prohibited hours. Six men were found in the kitchen with a quart jug of ale and were each dismissed on payment of costs of 2s.5d. In 1894, Thomas Southall was fined 40s. for stealing a bottle of sherry from the pub and was fined 40s. or one month's imprisonment.

In 1899, the pub started one of its most memorable periods in the hands of the Glaze family, who kept it until 1940. The pub was first kept by Netherton-born **Sarah Glaze**, followed by her sons, George and Henry Glaze. Sarah boasted of "*fine home brewed ales*", brewed by George, and assisted by Mary Guest, a laundry woman from Dudley.

In 1904, a group of visitors to the pub were interrupted by a brawl, which ended with the death of 27-year old Sarah Bradley, wife of Thomas Bradley, a bricklayer from Bradley. They had been driving in a brake, drinking beer, when she was struck in the face and also suffered a fracture of the skull. After conflicting evidence, the jury returned an open verdict. In 1905, John Perry was charged with stealing a duck, valued 3s.9d from George Henry Glaze and was committed for three months.

By 1911, Sarah was a 57-year old widow, living at the pub with her son, George Harry, daughter-in-law, Florence and her young children Dorothy & William. Later that year, George Veitch of Holbeache House, Kingswinford bought the pub while it was still being run by the Glaze family. In that year, Richard & James Edwards and Alfred Russell & Joseph Curtis were fined 20s. and 10s. respectively for disorderly behaviour, after visiting the pub in a drunken condition and challenging both the landlord and the police to a fight.

During this period, the pub hosted meetings and reunions of local miners, including photographic exhibitions and oral history readings, ensuring the tales of the mines, the men and their machines lived on. Records speak of "Miner's Mondays", where special evenings were held for weary miners, rewarding their hard work with ale at a bargain price. With their thirst slaked, they would belt out tunes, transforming the pub into a veritable concert hall.

Around the turn into the 20th century, the pub had not only become a favourite place for a drive on Sundays, but was also a "must-see" tourist attraction, highlighted in Thomas Cook's Handbook to Staffordshire. By August 1906, W. Page's popular Char-a-Banc, "The Favourite" was running tours to the pub on Sundays for 2s.

Many postcards of the pub were published, including those by John Price & Sons and George Lee in 1904, which described a visit to the pub as *"walking through the slanting rooms and passages, you have all the sensations peculiar to a visit to the famous Tower of Pisa in Italy, or pacing the deck of a ship in heavy sea"*. It also explained that *"the clocks on the walls, although absolutely perpendicular, appear to be hanging sideways at a pronounced angle, whilst marbles, if placed on the short glass shelf, appear to roll uphill"*.

In 1907, the Sketch magazine referred to the pub in an article entitled *"They All Lived Together in a Little Crooked House"* as the *"Home of Optical Illusions"* where curtains hang away from the window frames, marbles roll uphill along the wall beading and drinks slide slowly "up table". Many locals believed that there probably wasn't any other pub where you felt drunk even before you'd entered the door! By 1908, both cyclists clubs and charabancs were organising trips to see the pub.

A poem of 1905 called the "Siden House" said:

*"If your footsteps should stray
Down old Himley Way,
When you're strolling from Dudley town;
There's a Pub you will find as a curious kind,
Which lately has won great renown.
No doubt some will have seen this House that I mean
If so, I'm sure you'll agree
Although it stands slanting
It's really enchanting
And an ideal place for a spree
So when you're that way
Just hear what I say
Go and have some home-brewed ale
And stop as long as you're able,
At a pub called the "Siden House"*

*Where the marble runs up the table
You can't walk straight
When you get inside,
Believe me when I say it
It's a kind of motion
You feel on the ocean
Well that's alright now, ay it*

In December 1910, the land surrounding the pub was flooded to a depth of 30 feet by the collapse of an adjacent railway embankment, and was only accessible from the northern side. Inside the building, the refreshment room was almost completely submerged, with furniture swimming in the water and the cellars were also flooded, destroying £200-worth of ales and spirits and damaging £200-worth of furniture. George Glaze and his family had to move to the adjoining house, since the building was not considered safe.

In October 1911, Richard & James Edwards of Wednesbury were each fined 20s. for visiting the pub in a drunken condition, refusing to leave the pub and starting a fight. A year later, the Tipton Harriers were running to the pub, playing football on the way. In October of that year, Florence Grove Glaze, wife of George, died with the funeral held at Himley Church.

The Glaze family kept the pub during the First World War, which was a defining period, particularly because of its impact on every town, every family and every pub in the country. Young men who used to visit the Crooked House answered the call to arms and not all returned. Many would choose the pub as the venue for their last meetings with friends and families, taking coins embossed with the Crooked House to the frontlines as lucky mementos. In October 1914, a group of Belgian refugees were taken to see the pub, but one old lady didn't want to venture inside since she thought the building was about to topple over.

By the 1920s, the structural stability of the pub was again under question and became a case study of the Royal Institute of British Architects. They established an intricate system of counterweights hidden within the walls, providing much-needed stability to the building, whilst ensuring that its visual character remained untouched.

In 1921, railway labourer, Joseph Foster, was charged with stealing three spoons from the pub and was fined 40s. In September 1924, George Glaze had a collision with a motorbike at Prestwood while driving his horse and trap, injuring all parties. A year later, George Glaze was declared bankrupt.

In 1925, the pub was visited by 150 ladies of the Tamworth Co-operative Guild and later by novelist, Agatha Christie. Even Charlie Chaplin and Katherine Hepburn are rumoured to have visited the pub. In the 1920s, the pub would also be visited by factory workers, lads and lasses, who would dance with wild abandon to the melodies played on the gramophone. But the pub also witnessed sadder events, including frequent discourses on the plight of local workers, harrowing conditions in the mines and the spectre of industrial mishaps.

In May 1927, the Crooked House was put up for sale by auction by mining engineer, George Veitch, and was bought by the Glaze family for £2,000, including its brewhouse and pigsties, and an old armchair which the auctioneer, Dunan Shedden, suggested may have been used by William Gladstone. George Veitch was an uncle of the Lady Mayoress of London and a noted

collector of valuable china and other art treasures, but died in 1927. The sale also included other properties, including a brickyard, sold separately for £8,400. By 1932, the pub was being run by Sarah's son, George Glaze, who was also a butcher and an ARP warden.

In 1933, a party of Gypsy Lane WMC members from Leicester visited the pub, finding themselves *"completely at sea"*, where *"even the sober imagine themselves intoxicated when they find difficulty in crossing from one side of the room to the other"*. In 1935, George Glaze was discharged from bankruptcy after paying off his debts. In July 1936, the Rugeley Red Triangle Cycling Club held its first time-trial by visiting the pub and, a year later, the pub was visited by the Walsall Ramblers.

In December 1937, the pub was mentioned in the House of Commons, after Sarah Glaze died, aged 84, after spending almost 40 years in the licensed trade here, claiming to be one of the oldest landladies in the Midlands. She left £1,688 12s.5d, and was referred to as *"a landlady of the old English innkeeper style and hostess to thousands of people from distant parts and abroad attracted by tales of phenomena that seemed contradictions of nature which earned the Glynne Arms its picturesque nickname"*.

In 1937, author George Long identified the Crooked House as the "strangest inn" in his book, "English Inns & Road-houses". He said, *"A century ago, it was just a plain, square, brick and slate box, of the ugliest and least interesting sort. But those long dead builders deserve high praise. They were honest and thorough, and built this pub of good solid materials, honestly welded together, and this is the reason for its present fame. About ten years after it was finished, some forgotten mine-workings far below collapsed, and one end of the pub suddenly sank 5 or 6 feet. The tenant and his family escaped in a hurry, and anxiously waited to see their home fall to pieces. But strangely enough, nothing further happened and, when they ventured inside, everything was intact. Not a ceiling had crackled, not a wall had bulged, no floor had given way. But every floor sloped so steeply that furniture would not stand upright, the shelves shot the crockery to the floor, and every clock had stopped because its pendulum could not swing. All the doors and windows were crooked, the shelves and floors likewise, and even hanging lamps look as if they were suspended at an angle. About 20 years later, the house tilted two feet back towards normal, but this did not ruin its reputation as a "freak" structure."*

By 1939, cycling clubs were visiting the pub and "Silent Knight" were advertising evening trips by a luxury streamlined coach. Later, during the Second World War, soldiers like Captain Richard Sanders would carve their initials into one of the pub's wooden tables, and the pub would also be frequented by American soldiers stationed at nearby bases.

In July 1939, George Harry Glaze died, leaving an estate of £1,937 11s.11d, and the pub was taken over by William Glaze. In 1940, a family record of more than 100 years was broken when the Glaze family sold the pub to Johnson & Phipps, brewers of Wolverhampton, and Herbert Williams took over as landlord. At the time, *"thousands of holidaymakers have visited the pub"*, which was considered to be the *"most photographed licensed house in the country"*.

In September 1946, 36 men had a narrow escape when their Midland Red single-decker bus overturned after striking a four-foot embankment in the narrow lane leading to the pub. Six of the men suffered cuts and bruises, treated at Dudley Guest Hospital, and then continued their journey to the pub. Every Sunday, "Happy Days" coaches ran an evening tour to the Crooked House from Gnosall and Newport for 3s.6d.

After the Second World War, the pub was being kept by Samuel Green from 1952, when it was condemned as being structurally unsafe. However, plans were swiftly drawn up by Wolverhampton architect, Albert Hartwell to provide an “umbrella” roof, which would be supported on concealed stanchions to take the weight off the walls without altering the appearance of the building. Samuel Green also had to contend with rumour-mongers, who said they were coming to see “the ruins” of the pub. In 1953, he was still drinking water from an outside well and using it for washing glasses, but Seisdon Rural District Council were taking steps to prevent this from happening even though they had no powers to close the pub.

In 1954, the Crooked House was bought from Johnson & Phipps by Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries for £3,250 (equivalent to almost £74,000 today). In March of that year, the Evening Despatch reported that the brewery had *“only 14 days in which to save this old inn, where bottles and glasses roll uphill and customers walk out with a permanent lean – all due to mining subsidence”*. They rescued the pub and made the structure safe by strengthening the buttresses and installing steel tie-rods and girders to retain its lopsided appearance, spending £10,000 (the equivalent of over £227,000 today) to make it safe and later installing water and electricity supplies.

In June 1956, Greatrex Motor Coaches were advertising circular coach trips to the Crooked House, costing 3s.6d from Stafford. The Kinver motor-cycling Auto Trail was also starting at the pub.

In the 1960s, structural engineer, Alan Worthington, undertook pioneering ground-penetration radar to identify voids under the structure and filled these potential danger zones with specialised concrete mixtures. Later, in 1997, 3D laser scanning was employed, resulting in a highly detailed digital replica of the building, allowing any slightest move to be recorded and addressed.

By 1966, the pub was in the hands of John & Florence Love, who kept it until 1983. They regularly got up from playing cribbage to demonstrate the wonders of the pub, including *“a golf ball running uphill along a ledge, a bottle rolling up a table and a grandfather clock apparently many degrees out of the vertical”*.

Apparently, the night of 13 October 1968 was particularly memorable when, at the height of the Vietnam war, the pub was subject to a power cut and lock-in. In the flickering candlelight, patrons talked of fleeting touches and visions of ghostly characters, including a middle-aged coal miner and a lady in Victorian attire ascending the staircase. Arthur and Florence looked after the pub during a time when it was a popular destination for drinkers and produced a fact sheet “with the compliments of Mine Hosts”. The pub was also visited by Edward, Duke of Windsor, who used to ride on horseback from Himley Hall with the Earl of Dudley for a drink or two.

In 1983, Florence Love was told by the brewery to leave the pub after running it for 18 years, following the death of her husband, Arthur, who left an estate of £55,000. Although she said that she could run the pub with the help of her sons, Ralph & Ian, and had lived in a Banks’s house for 54 years, brewery managers said they were not prepared to let her have the licence since she was past retirement age.

The pub was then briefly in the hands of Richard Horrell, before passing to Gary Ensor and his wife, Dawn, in 1984. Gary was previously a wine waiter at the Night Out in Birmingham and, in three years, raised £2,500 for charity from customers paying to roll a metal ball “uphill” along the shelf in the back room. In November 1984, two real ale weekends were organised by Dudley Council’s leisure and tourism officers, visiting Hanson’s, Simpkins and Holden’s breweries, the Black Country Museum and the Crooked House. In December, thieves made off with £250 of charity money from the pub intended for the blind.

In October 1985, flooding brought havoc to homes, business and hospitals across the west Midlands, when staff at the Crooked House were mopping up after rainwater severely flooded the cellar of the pub. Gary & Dawn Ensor were trapped inside the pub, which they said was “*like Niagara Falls*”. In April 1986, the pub was damaged by fire, thought to be caused by a spark from the coal fire, which affected the first floor bedrooms and roof. The pub was quickly reopened, being advertised as “*Unspoilt by Fire!*” The brewery then spent £300,000 on refurbishing the pub, including a new lounge and toilet block, which was reopened in August 1987 by local comedian, Tommy Mundon. Later that year, motorists leaving the pub had a nasty surprise when thieves had stolen their windscreens from their Ford Escorts!

In 1989, a three-part drama serial, “Nice Work”, featuring Warren Clarke & Haydn Gwynne, was partly filmed at the pub, using local residents as customers. Clara Benson also recalls preparing a Christmas feast for the entire town, free of charge. The pub was also frequented by those in the music industry, including traditional folk music from the local area and the Sedgley Morris Men. Actors like Timothy Spall (from *Auf Weidersehn Pet*) and Bernard Bresslaw also visited. Pop stars included the members of Bucks Fizz, Fine Young Cannibals and even Coldplay, who commented on how the uneven floors and off-kilter ambience seemed almost metaphorical. The pub became a tourist attraction, on the “bucket list” for visitors from America, France, Germany, Poland, Hong Kong, Japan, China, and even Russia.

In 1991, the “Metrocity” newspaper ran an article about the pub “*where noting is quite as it seems – even when you’re sober*”. In June of that year, Dudley councillors were considering plans to carry out opencast mining on land near to the pub, but were concerned that it did not endanger the pub. Later that year, the pub was evacuated after an automatic gas detector discovered a build-up of methane in the premises. In 1992, the pub was entered into the Sandwell Evening Mail’s “Midland Pub of the Year” competition and, in 1993, was officially renamed the Crooked House.

In August 1995, Midland drinkers were celebrating all-day opening of pubs at the Crooked House, whilst later in the year, an 11-week old baby was apparently barred from the pub because he had no teeth and couldn’t eat his Sunday lunch! In 1997, Johnsons Coach Travel were advertising trips to the pub at a cost of £8.50, whilst later that year, Alan Durrant’s guide to the best Sunday lunches reported that his roast turkey and bread and butter pudding was very good value at £11.90. In 1999, nurse Julia Williams was devastated after her two-year old boxer, Layla, was snatched by thieves from her van parked in the pub’s car park. The dog was well-known for helping people out of a coma, but was later reunited with its owner.

In 2002, the pub was advertised as the “*World famous gravity-defying pub, with great food, children’s play area and free parking*”. A year later, Gary and Dawn left the pub and Louise

Patten briefly took over. She was followed by Brett & Amanda Harrison, who not only leased the Crooked House, but also owned the Lock at Wolverley, but emigrated to Australia in 2008.

In the early 2000s, while touring the UK, Sir Ian McKellen, one of the country's most respected actors, described the pub as "*a place where every nook and cranny has a story*", as he engaged in animated discussions with locals. Travel writer, Bill Bryson, was also taken by the charm of the Crooked House, painting vivid portraits of the pub, detailing not just its architectural quirks, but also the warmth and camaraderie of its patrons.

In 2008, Wayne & Jason Penn leased the pub, and revived it once again with the slogan "*Bostin' beer an grub in a wonky pub*". In 2010, it was included in the "Famous Grouse 100" list of interesting pubs, and they even sold "crooked" glasses and a house beer called "Tilted Ale"! They also gave a home to "Eggy", a cockerel whose owners had to give him up because of noise he made upset their neighbours. In 2012, the pub was advertising a £4,500 wedding package to celebrate the first anniversary of holding its civil wedding ceremony licence.

However, in this period, there was further concern about the pub's stability, particularly the effects of the ground constantly freezing and thawing during the winter. This resulted in the "Winter Salvation Project", where heating coils were laid beneath the pub to mitigate the dangers of the ground freezing.

In June 2021, local MPs teamed up to take action against fly-tipping near the pub, to stamp out the illegal dumping of waste near this long-established and popular pub. In September 2022, Lee Goodchild and his partner, Nicole, took over the tenancy and were working on building up trade. The pub was given another makeover, including re-tiling the roof, by local roofer, Matt Clifft, of Vintage Leadwork & Roofing. However, the licensees suffered break-ins and burglaries, and had only recently reopened the kitchen and restaurant after further work had been undertaken to the roof. During Covid, they organised free local events and engaged with the local community.

With its historic warped timbers and uneven floors, the Crooked House has long been a magnet for those drawn to the supernatural. Long before modern paranormal enthusiasts set foot in the pub, local tales told of eerie happenings. In the late 1860s, Dudley teacher, Edith Crawley, records a visit to the pub with her fiancé. Seated in a dimly-lit corner, she describes the unexpected chill that enveloped her and the fleeting vision of a young woman in Victorian dress, sorrowfully gazing out of the window, holding a candle, before disappearing into the evening mist. Could this have been the ghost of Polly?

Another ghostly apparition was of a group of children in Victorian clothes who were seen playing in the snow in the field behind the pub. But when the landlord went out to see what they were doing, there were no footprints in the snow! A vision of a small girl has also been seen close to the ladies toilets.

Later, in the 1930s, retired naval officer, George Landon, reported a recurring encounter with a miner holding a dim lantern, seeming to nod at fellow patrons before vanishing into thin air. In 1954, an American tourist, Clara Montgomery, felt a hand brushing her shoulder while enjoying afternoon tea at the pub and later that evening was startled by a soft lullaby emanating from an empty room upstairs. This "Matron of Melodies" was believed to be a previous owner who sang to her children in this room.

Even as late as the 1970s, Sarah & Emily Bennett believed they had seen ghosts of their own doppelgangers seated at the opposite end of one of the rooms in the pub. These spectral twins mirrored their every move, before vanishing from view. Others recall the “Whispering Wall”, where if you leaned closely and pressed an ear against a particular section of the interior wall, faint murmurs and indistinct voices from bygone ages could be heard. There was also the legend of the “Time-Tilted Clock”, the old grandfather clock which, despite repeated adjustments, always ran 15 minutes fast. It was inscribed with “D H Mapp, Brierley Hill”. In November 1994, the pub hosted clairvoyant and psychic events.

There were even rumours of a hidden tunnel which snaked all the way from the cellar to Dudley Castle! In the late 1990s and early 2000s, modern paranormal investigations revealed whispers in the night, repeatedly saying *“This was my home”*, along with a playful spirit who misplaced items and tapped unsuspecting patrons on their backs.

The Crooked House has long been a focal point in the local community and was a popular stop for tourists and visitors from near and far who were keen to get an image of the quirky, slanted pub. Regular customers recall their happy memories of the pub. As Maggie Thompson, barmaid for 40 years, recalled, *“Every day there was a new tale, every night a new memory”*. Another barmaid for 30 years or more, Emily Parsons, recalls that *“Working here was like being part of a big, loving, slightly tilted family”*.

Local historian, Sam Ridgeway said, *“The Crooked House wasn’t just a pub, it was a piece of living history. Every pint served, every song sung, added to its legacy. You could feel the weight of history right here, juxtaposed against modern-day events”*. Simon Shaw from Bristol said, *“The most amazing pub I have ever been to. The ball bearing running uphill needs to be seen to be believed!!”* Caroline Kratz of Seattle said, *“If we had the money we would like to take it back to the States brick by brick, girder by girder, ghost by ghost!”* Mike Stephens of Moseley said, *“Superb food, superb beer and the kids want to come back tomorrow. So do !!”* Some even remember the geese outside the pub, would sometimes bite the customers!

Many songs and poems have been written about the Crooked House, including this one:

*“Cum in an av sum hum brewd ayl
Stop as lung as yom erbul
At a public called the Siden House
Weer the beer runs up the terbul.”*

And so we come to more recent events. In March 2023, the owners, Marstons, included the Crooked House, then known as “Britain’s wonkiest pub”, in a list of 61 pubs they wished to dispose of, at a guide price of £165,000. There are those who say that Marstons should have ensured that the pub was bought by a company or people who would maintain it as a pub rather than handing it to developers whose main business comes in the shape of burying rubbish, along with petrol cans and bulldozers.

On 25 June, the pub was the subject of a burglary, causing over £10,000 worth of damage to the bar, kitchen, bathrooms and toilets, including windows, doors and furniture. In July 2023, Historic England received a request to grant the building listed status, and the Georgian Group were examining its suitability for listing. It is most surprising that the building was not listed earlier, especially since all buildings built before 1850 are automatically eligible for statutory

listing. Whether or not the building was worthy of listing, the Crooked House was a unique, quirky, significant building that deserved to be protected.

The licensees handed back the keys to the pub to Marstons on 18 July 2023 and the sale of the pub was completed on 27 July, with neither purchase price nor buyer disclosed. However, it was reported that the premises were sold for “alternative use” and unlikely to reopen as a pub. Later, media investigations revealed that the building and adjoining land had been bought by ATE Farms, a property firm headed by 34-year old former hairdresser, Carly Taylor, and her husband, Adam, who also owned the adjoining landfill site and contracting and plant hire businesses.

On the night of Saturday 5 August 2023, a fire gutted the premises and destroyed part of the structure, including the roof. No people were injured in the fire and three men were later charged with arson and later released on bail. Six crews from the Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire Services attended the fire after receiving an emergency call at around 10pm. However, access to the premises was hindered by an 8-foot high mound of earth blocking the only lane leading to the building, so 35 firemen had to roll out about 3,300 ft of hose to pump water to the fire.

Both the Fire Service and Police launched an investigation to establish the cause of the fire and South Staffordshire Council visited the site and discussed a plan of works with the landowner. The agreed programme involved removing parts of the first floor of the pub to remove the risk of weakened parts of the structure falling, but council officers did not consider it necessary to demolish the whole structure. In an ironic quirk of fate, local band, Gasoline & Matches, had been booked to play at the pub on that very night!

On the morning of Monday 7 August, the police put a cordon in place while investigations were made, but officers were stood down due to concerns that the building was structurally unsafe. South Staffordshire Council carried out a site visit and recommended “the removal of three elements of the first floor front elevation only” to make the structure safe. The site was subsequently overseen by the landowner and later that day, the building was totally demolished by an excavator, hired a week before the fire. Later, three men were arrested on suspicion of arson and later released on bail.

Roger Lees, leader of South Staffordshire Council, described the demolition of the building as “completely unacceptable and contrary to instructions given by council officers”, and said that the case had been passed to the Council’s planning enforcement department to establish whether the demolition was lawful under the planning and building acts. Breaches of legislation during demolition were also referred to the Health & Safety Executive.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, called for the pub to be rebuilt “brick-by-brick” and urged South Staffordshire Council to block any attempted change of use. Marco Longhi, Dudley North MP, said he was “completely devastated and angry at what had taken place” and, on 16 November 2023, instigated a Parliamentary debate about the fate of pubs like the Crooked House and the need for them to be better protected by legislation. The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) demanded that pubs which have been converted or demolished illegally must be rebuilt “brick-by-brick” after finding that more than 30 sites have suffered such fates in the past six months. Later, they launched a scheme to protect such pubs in association with Andy Street and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

On 9 August, press reports confirmed that detectives were treating the fire as arson. The story of the fire and demolition of the pub was also reported in newspapers as far away as Sydney, Australia and New York, USA.

More recently, a contractor, Putman's, spent some time reclaiming bricks and other materials from the site and storing them in containers. A local campaign group "Save the Crooked House (Let's Get it Re-built)" has also been established with the aim of safeguarding the site and rebuilding the pub on its original site. Its Facebook page has over 33,000 followers with an associated petition of over 25,000 signatures. After monitoring work on the site after the demolition, they held a "Ceremony of the Padlocks" just a month later, on 2 September 2023, when padlocks were placed on the containers holding some 25,000 bricks to ensure their safety.

On 22 September 2023, Staffordshire Police said that they had detained a 44-year old man and a 34-year old woman from Leicestershire on suspicion of conspiracy to commit arson with intent or being reckless as to whether life was endangered. They were late released on bail while the investigation proceeded. Later, in October, police arrested a further man, aged 23, also from Leicestershire, for the same offence, who was later released on bail.

On 27 February 2024, South Staffordshire Council served an Enforcement Notice on the owners for the unlawful demolition of the Crooked House, requiring it to be built back to what it was before the fire within 3 years from the date of the notice (February 2027). An appeal against this Enforcement Notice was lodged with the Planning Inspectorate within 30 days. On 4 April 2024, South Staffordshire Council was notified by the Planning Inspectorate that they had appointed Inspector D Moore to decide the appeal, opening an inquiry on Tuesday 23 July 2024.

Some people are pointing to the case of the Carlton Tavern in London, where the developer was ordered to rebuild the structure "brick-by-brick" after its demolition was found to be illegal. But there are key differences with the Crooked House. The Carlton was properly measured and recorded before demolition, unlike the Crooked House where it would be difficult to put together a detailed record of what existed before.

Since it would be a recreation of a former building, essentially a new structure, it would have to meet current building, fire and access regulations. Throw enough money at the project and you could theoretically rebuild anything, even something that was wonky. But the original crookedness was organic, it took time and mitigation. Engineers would have to assess the current ground conditions and consider how to deal with the possibility of ongoing movement.

The Crooked House could be rebuilt, brick-by-brick, if enough of the original structure survived. There might even be an imaginative way of capturing the spirit of the building, but in a new way. That would need creativity, sensitivity and a deep understanding of what the local community wants from the building. And the final question is "should it be rebuilt or recreated on its former site?", bearing in mind its poor access and siting next to a landfill site, reclamation depot and plant hire company.

None of these options would be cheap, and could cost millions and take up to three years to recreate. But the destruction of the Crooked House is already a defining cultural moment. It has raised the profile of pub heritage, provoked questions about the planning system and made us wonder why some historic pubs and buildings are excluded from the legal protection that listed

status should afford them. The silver lining to this tragic event has been the high profile suddenly given to pub protection and the adequacy of both the relevant legislation and the ways in which local planning authorities implement it. Many campaign groups, including CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) have contributed to this debate.

The latest disaster has led to local poets writing lines about the pub, including Ian Henery from Walsall whose poem was praised by local MP, Marco Longi, as a “brilliant piece of literature”. Even popular poet, Pam Ayres, penned a few lines in August 2023:

The Crooked House, The Crooked House
Somehow caught alight
The Crooked House, mysteriously
Bulldozed in the night
Little wonky pub, where folk forgot about their trouble
Funny and familiar, and flat
Reduced to rubble

Another version might be:

There was a crooked man who had a crooked wife,
They owned a crooked quarry and lived a crooked life,
She bought the Crooked House in a crooked lane,
And the crooked quarry company set the pub aflame.

The wanton destruction of the pub in August 2023 robbed the Black Country of a unique and iconic pub. Perhaps it will be re-created in some form one day...

Stephen J Pratt (writing as Steve James) © April 2024

with acknowledgement to Tony Hitchmough, Andrew Homer, Roger Protz, Laura Hadland, Marco Longi MP, Chris Baker, Lee Brickley, Staffordshire Police, South Staffordshire District Council, Wikipedia, Historic England, Black Country Society, Black Country Living Museum, Express & Star, Birmingham Evening Mail, Morning Advertiser, BBC, lowergornal.com, Sedgleymanor.com, Boak & Bailey & CAMRA

LICENSEES

John Cartwright (1841-1849)
George Wilkinson (1855-1857)
Joseph Woodcock (1861-1877)
Joseph Bate (1877-1881)
William Henry Evans (1881-1884)
Thomas White (1884-1895)
Charles Wemm (1895-1899)
Sarah Ann Glaze (1899-1938)
George Henry Glaze (1938-1939)
William Henry Glaze (1939-1941)
Herbert Williams (1941-1943)
Samuel Green (- 1966)
John Arthur Love (1966-1982)
Florence May Love (1982-1983)
Richard Harnell (1984)
Gary Thomas Ensor (1984-2003)
Louise Patten (2003)
Brett Harrison (2003-2008)
Wayne Penn (2008-2012)
Jason Penn (2014-)
Lee Goodchild (2022-2023)

Community Representation to the Appeal Hearing APP/C3430/C/24/3341483. The Crooked House Public House, Himley, Staffordshire.

Contents

Introduction	Page 1
The Appeal	Page 2
The Business Case	Page 4
Conclusion	Page 4
Appendix – Community Survey Results	Page 6

Introduction

This document is being submitted on behalf of The Save The Crooked House Campaign which was set up as soon as it became known that The Crooked House had been sold. After the public house was burnt and subsequently demolished, the number of people following this campaign grew to 38,000 members in a Facebook Group. This was helped by the media who showed great interest in the story and television and radio stations and newspapers from all over the world have followed the events which have happened since August 2023.

The campaign management team have led the community and ensured that this interest has not waned by holding various events and acting as a source of news and information about the legal process and other associated issues.

The Crooked House was a Black Country Icon. It had stood since 1765 and continued to stand, despite subsiding in the 1830s, becoming a popular tourist attraction which was visited by people from all over the globe. It saw the formation of the United States of America, it was there while ten monarchs sat on the British throne and operated as a public house through two world wars. It stood through most of the Industrial Revolution as both a farmhouse and a public house.

It is believed that, at one point, a waterwheel was attached to the side of the building as part of a series of mills and author Chris Baker wrote a fascinating article about these which is available to read online.

It served as a public house and tourist attraction from 1840 and, in the 20th Century, buses full of visitors would turn up to have a look at this quirky building with its funny features and optical illusions that made ball bearings and bottles appear to roll uphill

And then it was suddenly gone. Deliberately set alight and then demolished two days later. Thousands of memories exist for thousands of people at The Crooked House and its demise led to an outpouring of grief as people tried to come to terms with this sudden and unexpected attack on our heritage.

To ensure that we include as many of the views of the campaign supporters, we carried out a survey prior to creating this document. In the interests of brevity, and as we know it would be a mammoth task for the Planning Inspector to read all of the results, the survey results are included as an appendix at the end of this document for the Planning Inspector to peruse as much as he has time for and we hope that he will because he will see how strong the feeling is, not only locally, but around the world.

The Appeal

We are very aware that we have no legal standing within this case, and we are submitting this document as an 'Interested Party.' It will be clear to the Planning Inspector that we support South Staffs District Council (SSDC) and the Enforcement Notice that was issued by them, ordering the rebuilding of The Crooked House in its original position. We hope that our united voice can add weight to SSDC's argument.

Whilst it is recognised that the campaign group has no legal role within the appeal process, it is felt that some issues should be pointed out which the community feels strongly about. In particular, some of the points made in the 'Grounds for Appeal' document submitted by the Appellant.

Following a fire on Saturday 5 August 2023, officers from South Staffs District Council met with representatives of ATE Farms (the Appellants) who had recently purchased The Crooked House and advised them that three parts of the front elevation of the building needed to be removed for the safety of the public. The appellants claim that they attempted to carry out this work but that it became clear that the rest of the building was unstable, and they felt that they needed to demolish the whole structure.

There is a video of the demolition on You Tube which was secretly filmed from nearby. This shows that the demolition started with the toilet block and that the demolition of the front wall started at the bottom of the wall, not at the areas that the Council had agreed needed to be removed.

The idea that there was any concern for public safety is questionable, as a person is visible in the video at the same time as the JCB is demolishing the building and that

person is running around, close to the collapsing building and talking to the JCB operator with no helmet or any other Personal Protective Equipment.

The other argument that members of the community find bizarre is the claim that the building had to be demolished immediately because there were unprecedented numbers of people on the site taking bricks and other items. That was clearly not the case as it was only possible to take bricks after the demolition had taken place and it was only at that time that there was a large influx of people.

The site has remained a serious hazard since the demolition. Fencing is flimsy and easy to breach and there is drone footage of children playing on the footprint of the building, at high risk of falling through into the cellar followed by tons of concrete. This risk has not been taken seriously by the site owners despite numerous requests to secure the area. As campaign leaders, we are constantly worried about the possibility of a fatality on the site.

A lot has been said about the condition of the area around The Crooked House. It is true that, for a few years, it has not been the most pleasant area. This has been due to several factors. The adjacent land, left of Crooked House Lane, is landfill and not only emits a foul stench frequently, but is now a large hill which is slipping and has pushed over iron pilings designed to contain the land. The brook has been forced to run beneath the road and that is unlikely to withstand the weight of a vehicle. This deterioration has been occurring for a long period of time but seems to have worsened recently.

Himley Environmental, who own and operated the now abandoned landfill site, used to have Adam Taylor, now director of ATE Farms (the Appellant) as a director so there are clearly links between the companies. The Environment Agency (EA) are aware that the landfill site has been abandoned without any of the work to monitor gases and leachate and have several breaches listed which they stated that they intend to sanction Himley Environmental for, in a letter they sent to Marco Longhi, former MP for Dudley North, prior to the recent general election.

The fact that Crooked House Lane is so unappealing has led to an increasing amount of fly tipping which has exacerbated the problem. It appears to the Community that this all plays into the hands of the landowners who are in the landfill business. Having The Crooked House in the position it has stood since 1765 is an inconvenience if that land is wanted for another purpose.

The Save The Crooked House Campaign believes that the pub should be rebuilt in the same position it stood since 1765. A lot of work needs to be done to tidy up the approach and make the lane more appealing. If the EA ensured that Himley Environmental honoured their landfill agreement, which we expect they will do at some point, the brook could become a home to a wide range of wildlife again and the walk to The Crooked House could be made pleasant, as it used to be.

Because of the media attention, The Crooked House is now, perhaps, the most famous pub in the world. Rebuilt in its original position it has the potential to be a massively successful tourist attraction.

A 'copy' of The Crooked House in a different position has far less appeal. It became crooked because of where it was located, that is an important part of its history. Many people remember The Crooked House coming into view as they approached down the lane. For those who were children, in particular, the excitement and wonder they experienced when seeing it for the first time will never leave them. Even on subsequent visits, people would find themselves amazed again, because it seemed even more crooked than they remembered. Having The Crooked House on the side of the main road, where people can drive past and see it, would eliminate a lot of the uniqueness and magic of the experience of a visit in the past.

The Business Case

There has been a great deal of talk about the fact that The Crooked House was unprofitable and that was why Marstons sold it. Marstons sold another 60 public houses to raise funds to pay debts around the time of this sale. They had also paid for a new roof which was fitted in January 2023 and a new kitchen, not actions you would expect from a business with an asset they considered unprofitable and a view that the situation could not be resolved.

Marstons continues to sell public houses and is reported to be expected to sell £50m of sites during the current financial year. This is a clear indication that nothing could be assumed about the potential profitability of The Crooked House when they decided to sell it.

At no time in its history, have more people known of the existence of The Crooked House than at the current time. Those people who have visited before, feel sad that they can no longer do so, those who never got to go there, regret that.

The already rich history of The Crooked House will be enhanced further if it is able to 'rise from the ashes' to become a pub again. There will be worldwide interest in visiting and drinks and food will not be the only source of income. There is also great potential for the sale of souvenirs both at the pub and in other locations, such as The Black Country Living Museum and Blists Hill Victorian Town. There is no doubt that the business could be a success. Campaigners have many other ideas as to how The Crooked House could become a popular and successful tourist attraction but are not prepared, at this point, to reveal those ideas for various reasons.

Conclusion

It appears that the owners of the site would be happy to let The Crooked House be

consigned to history. This, in the view of campaigners, would not only be a tragedy, but an indication that our heritage doesn't matter, that successful businesses can simply disregard the will of the people, to make large amounts of money. We believe that allowing this to happen is the wrong message for the authorities to send out.

We do not believe that the site owners will share our dreams, and we recognise that they are not in the business of running pubs. We therefore understand that, at some point, if their appeal is unsuccessful, they may be legally required to rebuild a building that they have no interest in running as a public house. As a community group, we may then need to hold dialogue with them to work out the best solution for all. It would certainly make no sense for a rebuilt Crooked House to be left standing empty and it would make no sense, businesswise, for the land to lie empty because no planning permission was granted for any other use.

We have not had a reason to raise funds as yet but we believe that we would have little difficulty raising considerable amounts of money from individuals and businesses to restore this wonderful piece of Black Country history, if it becomes necessary for us to do so.

Earlier this year, on a trip to Parliament as guests of Marco Longhi, campaigners, wearing our 'Save The Crooked House' hoodies were approached by numerous MPs who expressed their interest and support for the campaign.

Even on the streets of London, members of the public approached and asked how the campaign was going. This is a campaign which has captured the imagination of many. It is fair to say that no pub, in history, has ever been lost and had so much support to bring it back.

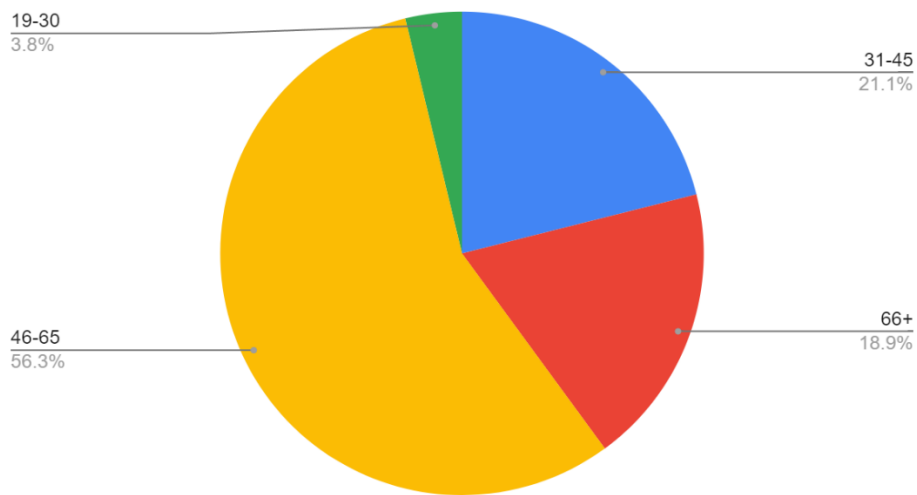
We need the Enforcement Notice issued by South Staffs District Council to be upheld if we are to have the opportunity to right this wrong.

Appendix

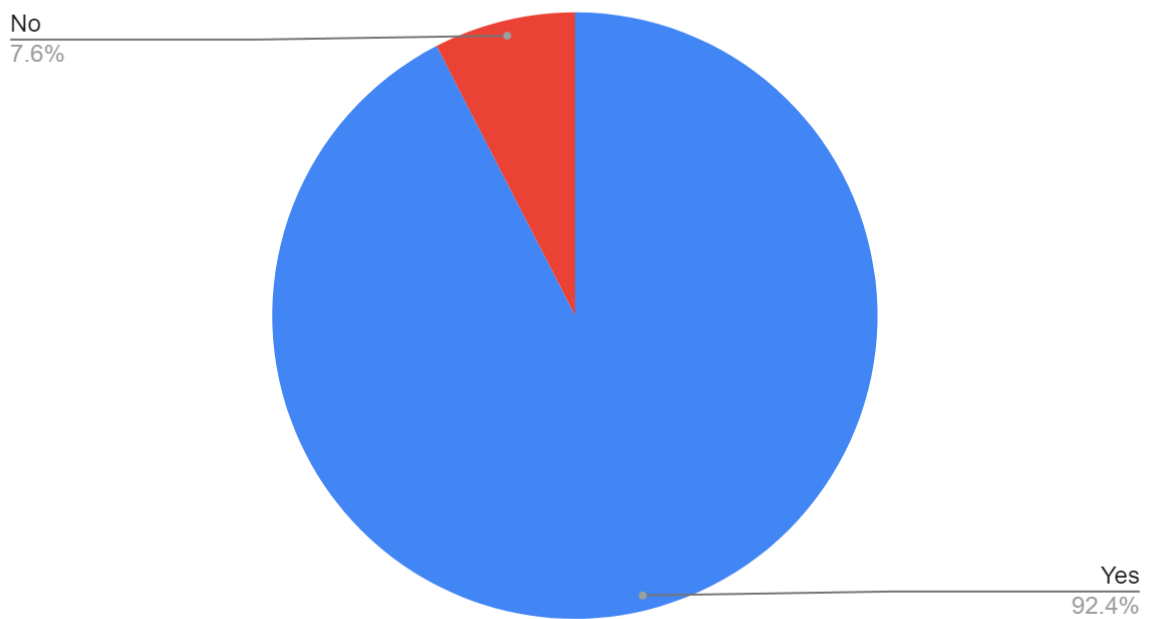
Survey Results

A survey has been carried out and 318 people responded. A summary of the results follows:

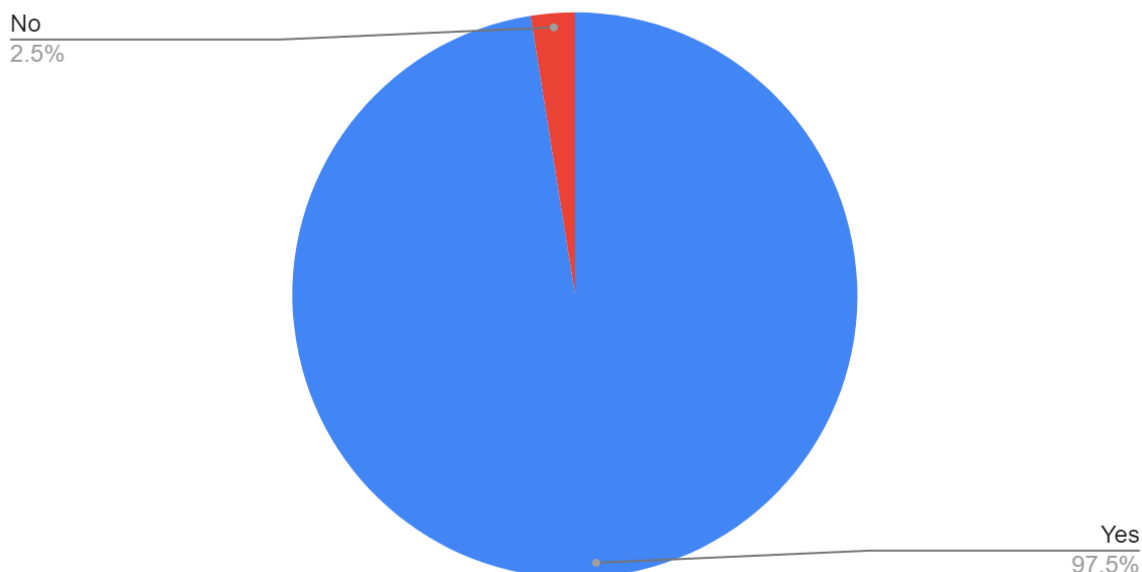
Count of How old are you?



Count of Did you visit the Crooked House whilst it was open?



Count of Do you agree that the Crooked House should be rebuilt back to what it was prior to the fire, in the same locati...



Why do you think that? (Free text responses.)

It is the only fair outcome

Because it's part of our history and heritage and what happened was so tragic

History needs to be reclaimed

The building was perfectly maintained. It was unique. We all know what happened purely for financial gain. When rules aren't followed, the problem needs to be fixed and restoration in the same location completed.

It's stood there for donkeys years, I use ride my pony to TCH in 70's to get a Vimto and bag of crisps, it's very sentimental to me and my whole family coming from Lower Gornal

It wouldn't be the same if it wasn't in the same location along with its unique features

The CH is an historical Black Country landmark which has illegally been razed to the ground. It should be rebuilt at the owners' cost and then transferred into a local trust for future preservation.

Anything other would not be true to the building that was loved and its location is tied into that history.

This building had stood for many many years and is part of UKs history!

It's a local landmark

It's part of the heritage

That is where it stood since 1765, survived subsidence and wars. It should be rebuilt where it originally stood.

The area tells the story as to why it became crooked. If rebuilt and given proper access it could become not only a community hub but will also attract people from afar who have followed the campaign

It's part of our local history.

It's history, anywhere else would just not be the same

Allowing it to be built anywhere else would be giving in!

People should not get away with demolishing historical buildings that are important to the community

Because it's a pillar for the community, it was a pub that my family and their friends have been going to for years, it was unique, people came from miles to come to visit it. It has so much history and character to it, and it should never have been knocked down. Our traditions and history are slowly being destroyed for greed.

To ensure that history is preserved and that the law is adhered to and in future respected.

"It was a unique place that should have been listed!

It wouldn't be the same if built different or in a diff location!"

It was where my company would entertain visitors from abroad and it was where my wife & I would spend time & make memories.

The rebuilding and subsequent management of a public house with staged events would increase public interest and create a basis for tourism in partnership with other local amenities, such as Dudley Zoo and Castle and BCLM. The fall of the building was followed by a world-wide audience and the rebuilding could capitalise on the media attention.

It needs to be rebuilt, but I don't consider the current location suitable for a viable business

I think that the pub's location is a vital part of its story. To relocate it would be to take away its authenticity.

I loved the place it was unique

It is our responsibility as a local community to preserve our heritage

It was a unique heritage building that illustrated everything about black country history both industrial and leisure

Yes but, I would also agree with it rebuilding as was in black country museum

Illegal demolition and that fact alone should be enough for full retribution and rebuild exactly where it was, using original and reclaimed materials not matter the cost

It was history that should have never been destroyed and by putting it anywhere else would allow for other people to do the same to other historical places for their own gain as if you allow it to be relocated then anyone else can do the same and it will affect this country's historical locations

Historically important part of Black Country industrial age story.

"Why should the criminals win? A precedent needs to be set to never let this happen again. Was a beautiful place and enjoyed going there. I worked there when 18, my aunt, uncle and nan also worked there over the years. A great part of Black Country History. "

It's history and could have and should service the generation's history to come happy place historic and also memory's our heritage

This building is a major part of history, it has stood for nearly 300 years before someone set it alight then tore it down. The people who own the building and land should not have let happen what happened.

The building was very special and had historic importance to the area that added unique charm and character other buildings could never hope to recapture. Future generations will be robbed of local history and heritage if it isn't rebuilt.

It belongs there, that's where it's always been

It had stood there for 250 years and 150 years or more the 'crooked' state due to mining subsidence. It needs to be back where it stood and in the pre-fire state to reclaim the unique history which would be otherwise lost

It sends a chilling message that you can demolish at will, flout rules and rebuild anywhere for personal gain.

"The history of the building begins with the foundations, the reason why the building became crooked was from subsidence due to mining that was beneath those very foundations that held the crooked house.

The history is the land beneath, the foundations, the building itself, the past, the present and the future communities."

As above. It holds so much history for us as a community and I would like to continue to take my future generations to visit in the future.

It is its home, where it was first built and where numerous people visited.

It's part of England industrial heritage, we can't let it be forgotten

The Crooked House was unique and to be built in the same location for future generations

Here in the Black Country we are extremely proud of our heritage and the Crooked House, Siden house as it was formerly known was a big part of that it was over a

century old my grandfather first visited as a child and was the person who first took me there as a child generations of memories unlawfully destroyed and the owners now need to rectify that

It was one of a very few building that was known about worldwide

That building has stood in that location since 1765 it needs building back to what it was prior to the fire and illegal demolition. building in a different location would not be appropriate. Its location was in a perfect tranquil place full of wildlife, it was so quiet and peaceful being away from the road like being in another world. The Pub should definitely remain on the site where it was originally built otherwise it will become a fake on different land. Another point is it was great to have the Pub just off the public footpath great for walks to and beyond past the The Crooked House.

The Crooked House should never have been sold let alone burnt to the ground then demolished illegally. So why should it be picked up and rebuilt somewhere else? Seems ludicrous!

Because of its history, if rebuilt anywhere else the new landowners have won

It wouldn't be the same anywhere else

It was an iconic pub in an iconic location.

The Crooked House dates back to at least the eighteenth century and may also have its origins as an even earlier water mill powering industry in the Coppice Mill location where the world- famous industrial entrepreneur Dud Dudley carried out experiments into the smelting of iron ore. The building withstood the ravages of time, the march of the Industrial Revolution which transformed much of the surrounding woodlands into pit banks and slag heaps cross-crossed by a labyrinth of railway infrastructure (including one of the earliest railway lines in the whole world, a few artefacts of which remain in and around the surrounding lane and landscape), mining subsidence, and a couple of fires, before it's sorry and illegal demolition under suspicious (and possibly criminal) circumstances. The building is a local landmark which operated as both a successful business and a tourist attraction of national significance in its original location for at least a couple of centuries. Recent downturn in commercial trade had nothing to do with its original location; there has been a global economic downturn following a global health pandemic which has affected commercial footfall worldwide; this downturn and recession will not last forever. The Crooked House is arguably even *more* famous now than ever before, and its future as both a viable commercial business and a tourist attraction in its *original* historic setting where its cellars and footings are still largely intact is pretty much assured. The current owners should additionally be made to reinstate and improve the shared access road from the Himley Road (B4176) which has - until recent attempts by the current owners to block/sabotage it as a commercial access point (and apparently to hinder the Fire Brigade and Council Planning Enforcement Officers in their attempts to safeguard the building) has previously been successfully used for centuries. There is no justifiable reason why this thoroughfare has been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair, and the current landowners should be made to reconstruct the access lane as well as The Crooked House in its original location. Finally, there are ancient

woodlands with preservation orders surrounding The Crooked House. Now that landfill and reclamation has ceased on the former colliery and clay quarrying sites, *all* of the land should revert back to woodland and become a green extension of Baggeridge and Himley Country Parks, joining the leisure amenity area north of the Himley Road with the existing residential conurbation of Kingswinford North at Oak/Ham Lane. The Crooked House - rebuilt exactly in its original position using as much reclaimed original material as possible - would be the perfect centrepiece, visitors attraction, industrial heritage museum and commercial food and drink venue for centuries to come.

Iconic local landmark and the people who organised its demise should be made to re-build it

It has stood, albeit wonky, for a long time, it was a perfect place to visit. If the roadway to it had been better looked after, more people would have visited as it was unique. We need to keep our Heritage. That's where it was and should remain in the same place, it's part of the history of the area.

It's the only option

It was a criminal act to destroy it. The building should have been saved for posterity.

Justice

It's of historic interest and stood the test of time

In that location it was not a profitable business. Either it should be moved closer to a road (perhaps on the same land) or access made easier if built in the same location.

It's an important part of the black country heritage and should be rebuilt regardless of the cost. I always wanted to take my sons to visit when we visit family from Cornwall. The landowner should not be allowed to get away with the destruction of such a historical building. In the right hands it could be a huge asset to the local community.

if not rebuilt in the original place it will just seem like a poor imitation

As above the footings are still in place and needs to be where it's always been

In heritage preservation the site and context are as important as the buildings themselves. There can be no rationale for the Crooked House's relocation other than to make the site more developable. As such, relocation would reward those involved in the buildings destruction and encourage unscrupulous developers to undertake a similar approach to heritage assets they consider to be inconvenient to their plans for personal gain at the expense of the common good.

It's important to not try to alter history you wouldn't move a castle

It should be put back to how it was at the owners' expense.

The crooked house has always been part of many people's lives my mom and dad used to take me there when I was younger the crooked house is a part of the many families it has served and the pub always is part everybody who had the chance to go in there in its full glory

"It is a historical landmark known throughout the world.

Those that allegedly destroyed it must ensure it is rebuilt as it previously stood"

It is an important, historical and cultural building that needs to be rebuilt to show the world that we care about these things in the Black Country and community is more important than individuals.

Preferably in the same location but open to moving the building too to preserve it and protect it from further harm.

It's very foundations and history are all in that spot rebuilding it anywhere else it then just becomes a wonky building

Historical and cultural significance

I always visited when I was younger up until it closed down, it's a brilliant place to go also such a historic building not to be in the Black Country

As above if should never have been demolished in the 1st place and if it hadn't if could have been restored to how it was prior to the fire. It has stood on that site all those years before the mindless crass fire, but to be demolished unlawfully was just plain wrong. It should be restored to its full splendour in its original location.

The Crooked House was what it was because of where it was and its continued existence despite adversity was emblematic of the spirit of the people of the Black Country. Its use as a farmhouse/mill and then public house showed how the place changed with the times as everyone in the Black Country did too. When the Crooked House became structurally unsafe it was lovingly propped up, sured up and then carried on being used. It's the dogged spirit of the area and a symbol of permanence, perseverance and fortitude in the area. It was unique and the building was loved in the same way that Big Ben is. We haven't all visited it all the time, but it belongs where it is and people from all over the country and the world love it.

It was a fantastic building, an icon in the relatively local area and now worldwide. It was the way it was due to the local mining and all of the tunnels and mineshafts. To put it anywhere else it would just be a quirky wonky pub. It needs to be back where it was, how it was in that beautiful peaceful setting surrounded by woodland. It's the area's history and needs to be in the environment that made it wonky, not anywhere else.

Because it is where it was originally, the whole site is the history that surrounded the house and the house itself made it unique, and it should be rebuilt and a lesson learned that you cannot demolish without proper permission

You can't just sit back and allow arguably convenient incidents with property across the country like this to be allowed to be erased from the landscape purely because of what an owner might want to do with the land without going through the proper channels, particularly if they know the outcome of any application for a change would be refused.

Prosecution must be enforced if there is to be a stop to such behaviour otherwise history will continue to repeat itself and perpetrators will continue to be allowed to get away with it. The law is the law for a reason.

Vast historical significance for the local area, where many old buildings are being legally torn down. The building was unique as shown by the worldwide media reporting of the incident and must be rebuilt on the coal seam that caused its unique facade. The building should have been listed and once it is rebuilt the group and committee should continue to ensure all local historical buildings are listed and protected.

It's a iconic building that should never have been demolished at all. Three generations of my family used it and it should be rebuilt as it was. With global reports and interest surrounding the bulldozing of it and exceptional local support, I believe it should be rebuilt

That is the location where it has stood for many years and it would not be the same if in a different location

It was unlawfully knocked down and it's a place us locals all have cherished all the years and will do for future generations. It's a part of our heritage & history and should be rebuilt brick by brick to its original state no questions asked in the place we all know and will cherish.

Because the land it was built on is the reason it subsided and therefore a crucial part of its history.

Historically correct

It was a unique part of British and Black Country heritage. It was an asset to the area and beloved by the community.

That is where it always was and should be. The very essence of it and all it meant is in that location. The very earth it stands on gave the place its name and to rebuild it anywhere else would be a fallacy.

It's important it goes back where it has stood all its life. Building it somewhere else wouldn't be the same

The Crooked House is part of Dudley's heritage and must be rebuilt where it was once stood. The site is of equal importance as the building itself.

It was in a good location and to be being brought up around here was taken to as a child and have brought my children here. The pub was unique and well known for its crooked features and a well- known landmark of the area. I feel that the pub should stand again on its original ground and hopefully regain the authentic features of the original building

It holds significant local cultural and community importance

It should never have been demolished in the first place.

The Crooked house stood from 1765-2023 and faced many challenges during its lifetime but came through them all until it was taken away in such a devastating way. It has been done before and no doubt this will be a challenging rebuild however it has to be put back as it was where it was. Pride needs to be restored in what we have, in our history and all be it late, the local community deserve to be respected.

Belongs there

It was there for hundreds of years. It was a quirky pub with local history and value.

It was/ is a national asset and brings the community together, it is of museum quality and should be retained at all costs

"Firstly, it is important that owners of buildings act responsibly and in accordance with planning law. It will be an important deterrent to other owners to see that justice is being done in accordance with the law.

Secondly, the Crooked House had a very unique historical significance. It is a well-established principal of historic building conservation that historic significance is gained through the life of the building and is not a fixed period of time. An example would be an historic stately home that was used as a hospital during the war. The changes to convert it to a hospital can have a greater historic significance than the original historic fabric that was lost during the conversion works. It may therefore be wrong to undo the war time changes in order to return it to its original condition. Conservation needs to consider the whole life story of the building.

If Crooked House is not rebuilt its historic significance is gone forever. If, however, it is rebuilt, albeit with some differences to its foundations etc. its historic significance will continue and the fire, demolition and rebuild will form part of an ongoing historic significance that future generations can learn from. "

"Rebuilding it in a different position defeats the purpose of getting it rebuilt. It's a historical building and needs to be where it's always been.

Allowing the owners to utilise the historic site for financial gain is detrimental to the integrity of preserving what can be preserved. It needs to be rebuilt where it has always stood.

The fire and subsequent demolition is no reason to reward the audacity of the site owners request with new planning permits/change of use etc.,

We don't want a 'pastiche' of the Crooked House. We want it in place and as original as possible. "

"It was unique with historical significance. "

There has to be a meaningful deterrent against the illegal destruction of similar properties to protect our national historical properties. "

The Crooked House is part of our historic buildings.

That's where it belongs.

It still has its foundation there. xxx history should not be destroyed.

Because it's the right thing to do

I visited a number of times during my childhood. When family and friends visited from outside the local area, we used to take them there because it was such a unique and iconic building. The journey down the lane was part of the whole experience of visiting - nobody expected to see such an amazing building at the end of it.

"I believe that the requirement for the building to be re-erected on its original site is unrealistic both in terms of the practicality of recreating an exact replica and the economic viability of an operational Crooked House in the original location.

This building was a unique historic landmark and curiosity. It was a magical place that I remember from my childhood: I grew up in Birmingham and we would occasionally drive out to the Crooked House at the weekend. I've also visited there a couple of times as an adult, to introduce friends to this fascinating place!

What was done is illegal and they should be made to revert back to how the crooked house was

An example needs to be set that buildings of historical importance should not be destroyed without good reason.

Because it should be where it's been for 200 hundred years, not moved so the owners can just make it landfill

The building needs to be rebuilt in its original setting as to build it anywhere else would not be doing a dis service to the history of the building and the context in which you view the history of the building

Ideally it should be rebuilt where it is to maintain its historical ties. It hasn't always been a pub and maybe it might not be again in its future, but it should be tied to its history. The story and works of how this building was saved and stabilised should be maintained. Hopefully we'll have a new story of how it was saved again. But if for whatever reason that's not possible to rebuild on site, it should be saved and built somewhere else. Better to have it in some place than no place.

This is where it has stood since 1765 when originally built as a farmhouse

It's the right thing to do

The site is historically important if it is not rebuilt the destroyers have won by default

The pub was a historical oddity, and I am sure it could be a successful business with a unique selling point particularly after all the controversy surrounding its demise.

Because it's our heritage

Because it's apart of our Black Country heritage, it should have been protected in the 1st place could be a wedding venue a history museum, we need it back

Because it's always been there where it was 1st built it apart of our history the land around has animals that need protecting

This is an historical building and, i believe, should be rebuilt back in the spot it has inhabited since it was first built.

Historic value, local interest & a protest against personal greed and disrespect shown by the current owners

"The Crooked House had been standing in its original position since the war of American Independence. It was older than the battle of Trafalgar, Charles Darwin's ""On the Origin of Species"", Queen Victoria's coronation, and the Peterloo Massacre. It had survived two world wars, the boom and bust of the chain making and mining industry in Dudley and the recent exponential loss of Public Houses in the UK. All to be set on fire and the remains obliterated by sheer carelessness and greed.

The UK is suffering from a spate of historically important buildings being left abandoned and/or set on fire and being demolished; I can count on both hands the historic buildings lost this way in the West Midlands alone in the last five years. The only difference is, out of all of them, two or three were used almost right up to being targeted - including The Crooked House.

One can walk down their local high street and walk past 2, 3 or even 4 public houses almost identical to one another but sporting a different name - bland interior with sticky carpets and worn barstools. The Crooked House, however, was unique due to its age and 15° tilt. Generations of Black Country folk graced their presence inside its slanted walls, including myself, rolling marbles and pound coins upwards... and many others from around the world in its nearly 2 and a half centuries in that very spot.

Some drank their last pint before going to one of the wars aforementioned, and never returned home. Many 'wet their baby's head', celebrated weddings, mourned after funerals, enjoyed meals, talked, danced, cried... If only those siden walls could have talked of its history maybe the place would still be standing.

Alas, it is up to us, the public to fight for its importance. It is imperative that the Crooked House is rebuilt and in its original position, for the interest of the current Public and future generations to enjoy the heart of the community once more. "

The whole reason the building was crooked was due to the mill undermining the foundations, and mining substance, moving it to another location will remove a major part of its history and reason for being.

It has stood there since it was built. It belongs there and is part of our local history

Historically correct

It is part of our heritage and demolishing it was illegal, and they should be made to put right their wrong!

Cause it shouldn't be anywhere else

To honour the history, and to honour the memories that have been created there over many years. This is where our families gathered, where people have had weddings, funerals, birthdays etc. Historically an integral part of our community and this needs to be the case again, by recreating it as closely as possible, detail for detail to honour the whole. It's not just a case of principle. It's rooted so much deeper than that, as an embedded facet that runs through each of us and our identity as Black Country folk. Long live the Crooked House.

Because to place it elsewhere would be to give the offenders exactly what they want. It will show that crime does pay and invite others to do the same.

Has I've said above the building has stood for over 200 years, seen 9 monarchs, the industrial revolution, the Crimean war, battle of Waterloo, 2 World Wars, to be burnt to the ground by the greed of individuals that have no respect for the history and heritage of the area. They should made to build it brick by brick and take the punishment they deserve

History and it's criminal the way it was set on fire and demolished, the owners shouldn't be allowed to get away with it. The Crooked house holds lots of great memories for people and should be put back to how it was.

That's how I've always known it

"Because it was an iconic building with amazing history the landlords who were in charge before all the criminal acts were turning its fortunes around and it deserves the chance to show what it can do and with all the support and interest shown I believe it will thrive

Thank you for taking time to listen "

Historical buildings, especially one with so much personality, are incredibly valued by the community in which it stands, and The Crooked House should be rebuilt in its original position and condition as it was before the fire for the community to once more enjoy as well as the regional, national and international community that has followed the story of The Crooked House. Rebuilding of this pub as it was before the fire, should be a catalyst for more protection of community history and buildings of historical and community importance, whether that community is local, regional, national or international, and prevent owners/developers from disregarding their responsibilities to communities and historical integrity of those communities' history and buildings. Rebuild The Crooked House.

It should have had a preservation order because of its history

It stood there for over 250 years and survived a lot of turmoil. The rebuild should incorporate part of the original foundations in order to preserve its unique history and heritage.

Local landmark which should still be there. Loss of amenity. Outrageous behaviour by new owners cannot be allowed to stand.

The crooked house was demolished because they wanted the pub gone. This should be rebuilt in the same location. Permission needs to be granted to demolish a

building, and they never received permission. If the crooked house is not rebuilt on the original site, it will give other people the opinion that you can do anything you like with a building without permission. This building was unique and should be built in the same location and the same design as prior to the fire.

Seeing the pub emerge in all its wonky glory at the end of the lane was a delight. The fact that the pub was wonky is down to its location. The 2 are intertwined and need to remain so.

Seeing the pub emerge in all its wonky glory at the end of the lane was a delight. The fact that the pub was wonky is down to its location. The 2 are intertwined and need to remain so.

I want to support the rebuilding of this community asset. This building was unique and was clearly set fire to and subsequently demolished with the sole intention of improving the financial value of the site. The owners bought this pub with the sole intention of erasing it from the landscape and to deny future generations the possibility of visiting such a unique and historically important building. Generations of past owners and interested parties made every effort for the building to have a future. The owners purchased it with no intention of keeping it as the lawful use dictated, and so set out to vandalise and demolish it as quickly as possible as they knew there was no possibility that the council would allow change of use.

It's the history where it belongs

As someone who has been in the pub trade for some years too many pub have been torn down or made into shops. All pub are our nations landmarks and our history. Anyone who asks for directions they say go by so and so pub. No they can't do that no more as half the pub have gone. All part of our history again.

Because the location is part of the pubs story for being crooked. The only issue was never knowing if it would be open due to blockages in the access lane and damage to the pub which may have been targeted to bur certainly had the effect of it being sold to the people who had issues with it being open.

"It would not mean anything anywhere else, and all of this support and good will would be lost. Where could that be? - along a noisy main road? in an estate? What point? - people who think that don't get it. It could only become a theme park pub, doomed to fail.

The demise of the CH started with the landfill and deliberate actions by others for reasons that have now become obvious to make it unviable - pot holes, lane closure, break-ins, smells etc.

The area could be beautiful again, the lane can be sorted, nature reserves can be established from the landfill, the Crooked House can be rebuilt as it was, in situ, and can once again be a wonderful community asset shaped to meet those needs. Memories can be reconnected in the peaceful setting of old, and a new chapter of the Crooked House's journey can begin.

Part of our local heritage that should not be forgotten

Because it would have still been there, if it was for the dirty tricks played by those people who knew exactly what they were doing.

The Crooked House only existed because it was geological fortuitous, sitting on a thick Westphalian / Late Carboniferous aged coal seam. This coal seam is largely the reason for the Industrial Revolution nexus in the Black Country. To move it would merely create a theme bar dedicated to its memory.

It's our local history and should be exactly where it should still be!

This is a crime and needs to be put right

With the right management and ownership, it could be made to thrive as it used to. In my opinion Marstons really held it back

All of the history involved and how it had survived all these years

I was upset and outraged at what happened to the pub, it is a well-known and well-loved part of unique history in the area. Saddened it did not have any legal protections prior to the unapproved destruction, which is why it is important that the local community get to have some input into the hearing. Thank you for reading this.

It wouldn't be the same place anywhere else.

English heritage needs to be protected

It's our local heritage and it must be rebuilt in the same place

It was an iconic building with lots of past and personality it was loved by people far and wide we have lost a truly iconic quirky building

It's a Black Country landmark, part of the area's rich heritage. Unscrupulous millionaire property developers have used arson as a tool to clear the way to making more millions many times in the past and it's important that we, the little people, stand up to them.

Because it should never have been destroyed in the first place and would still be standing today if not for criminal activity. It should be rebuilt where it originally stood, and the surrounding area regenerated to make a local visitors attraction. If it is rebuilt elsewhere, the original site would be vulnerable to developers and at risk of losing the history of the site.

Cus it was a very good tbf

It's been there for 250 years. The whole area and business is more than capable of being viable if run and accessed appropriately and it could be a community asset to support regeneration. In the 90's it was heaving with young and older alike!

There is nowhere else it should be

To see the amazing structure of this pub in full glory once again would be a site to be seen and would attract in numbers what can be achieved by justice of this thoughtless act of fire many families including mine would be able to share those

memories and create many more by rebuilding this pub to its once mesmerising site and once more be a part of our black country roots

It's our history and should never have been knocked down in the first place

It is a local historic building and should be rebuilt in situ. The owners should be made to rebuild as close as possible "brick by brick"

Authenticity for its unique position as part of our local history and geography

It was a historical place and a great landmark for tourism. It was burnt down with ill intent. I believe that if it is rebuilt, it will attract even more people to visit based on its exposure.

The Crooked House is part of Our Heritage in the Black Country and needs to be rebuilt in same location for future generations!!!

It should never have been burned down or demolished. It was so unique and well known. Our Crooked House needs to be built brick by brick. It stood for many many years and its history is amazing

It was there since the 1700s and all too often greed takes over. This is mine and the future's heritage of our black country. It's a crying shame. An outrageous thing to do was to set on fire and demolish it when one told to take down 2 or 3 parts of the building and orders completely disregarded. There not a law to themselves. . The crooked house should be rebuilt #brickbybrick

This building was uniquely special to the area and many, many people both locally, nationally and even internationally were drawn to its door. It truly was an ancient, incredibly quirky building and such history and heritage deserves respect. I feel it is imperative for people to learn that unlawful behaviour cannot go unpunished, and they should be made to put right an extreme wrong that was dealt on this famous, history laden building.

Because that's where it was originally and so it should be put back where it was

So much character and history of this building

If the Council support a rebuild in the exact location that would be ideal. The absolute must is a rebuild. Whether it becomes a pub or museum is immaterial. The building was unique.

The building was of historical interest.

A lot of family memories

Because it an iconic historic building

It needs to be rebuilt on its original footprint and foundations which subsided.

See statement above

It is where it has stood for over 200 years. With better access (safer and more open lane) to the crooked house it could once again thrive again

Because it should never have been illegally demolished and should be rebuilt for future generations

That is its 'home'.

We'll know black country history

The history of the building doesn't just lie within the building, but also its location...both make up part of the history of the black country.

It will be a little like the 'Ship of Theseus' story but at least it will be a reconstruction of the original building, so that it can be admired the world over and people can learn about its unique story - negative as well as positive.

It is our culture, our heritage it was more than just a pub - it was an icon, an institution - a Black Country landmark that should be respected and treated with the same deference and respect as other important buildings.

It was an interesting building. I had never seen something what you can compare with it.

This pub represents what the Black Country has overcome and the cost of its industrial contribution to the country.

That's where it belongs

The appellant states in their appeal that they were in no way responsible for the start of the fire. This is yet to be confirmed by the police investigation. The appeal contests that the demolition does not constitute a breach of planning control, but it is a matter of public record that the Council only gave permission for limited demolition to make the building safe after the fire. The appellant also states they had not been notified that applications had been made to Historic England about the Crooked House, which is surely true, since the timeline suggests the application would only have been received about 4 days before the fire - it is unreasonable to think that HE could have processed an application in that time - and what would the owners have done differently even if they knew about it, since the fire was "not their fault"? Finally, the assertion is made in the appeal that the building was no longer operating as a public house, Marstons had sold it as it was "not viable" - however, it was widely reported (Shropshire Star etc.) that the Crooked House was sold as a going concern, part of Project Aramis - a sale of assets to generate capital, not a sale of non-viable pubs. I have more reasons but hopefully these are a few comments for starters as to why I do not support the appeal that has been made by the owners of the Crooked House.

Because it should not have been burnt down

It has stood there for generations and has been part of the local landscape with no issue. I'd like future generations to have the same opportunity as I've had to enjoy it in as close to its original form and location as possible.

I lived near this pub nearly all my life. It's our history!

"I was born and bred in Staffordshire, Mum was from Dudley and Dad was from Wolverhampton. There were a few places we were taken to as a family that will resonate for the rest of my life: Dudley Zoo, Black Country Museum, The Crooked House, Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory.

These are all iconic places that Mum and Dad took us to in our formative years.

Even though I left Wolverhampton over 30 years ago, I have taken my partner and children to all of these places and they were in awe.

Three of the four places we visited still exist and one has been bulldozed. My children still remember the Crooked House and offer up their own stories if it is mentioned. When I told them it was gone they had one question - WHY? Naturally, I have explained the nuances of the situation and they have one thought process - someone should rebuild it. Truth comes from the mouths of babes and anything other than recreating this iconic pub in its true location would be a travesty of justice."

"I believe that with proper redevelopment & marketing, the Crooked House can be a successful pub & restaurant once again. The arguments that it was an unviable pub based on its location are completely wrong - there are many pubs all across the country in locations that are 'off-track' but people still make the effort to visit them based on the great beer & food that they have to offer.

The location is also historic to the pub."

Historical accuracy, local heritage and its value on the local community

Because what happened was illegal.

What is the likelihood of the pub succeeding as a profitable business once rebuilt it may get custom to first due to publicity but once that dies down I doubt it could survive, before being destroyed it wasn't profitable and was closed so what has changed, also with the council short on funds anyway social care, education, the vulnerable, housing and other areas should be a priority over wasting funds on this legal battle over the rebuild.

It is the historical home for the pub

The crooked house became crooked due to the sinking of the foundations this could not be replicated elsewhere

Needs to be in its historical context from a location point of view

The pub is an iconic point of reference and a large part of the area history. It needs to be rebuilt and preserved for generations to come.

It is its home, it is the location it is known for, it is where it was built and proudly stood for hundreds of years. The foundations are there, and it should remain there.

It's a historical building and should have been protected by law

Because of the historical importance of the building locally.

The foundations were already subsiding, so to rebuild in situ would be insane. Plus the access road is in disrepair. The site next to it is a landfill site, which is what the Crooked House site wants to be used as. If the pub is rebuilt in situ it will be burnt down again & again. A new suitable site should be found, this may not what people want to hear, but it is realistic. Marstons sold the pub as it was a failing business so they sold it, what happened afterwards is of the consequence of this. If the locals had visited more often it would still be a thriving pub, but they didn't & this is what has happened. A realistic solution is to rebuild it somewhere else with better access.

The pub has been on this site since c.1765, the criminals who intentionally burnt it to the ground are arguing that it's not viable to rebuild the pub in the same location, but it seems to me that it only suits the owners to move the pub elsewhere, whereas the locals & many fans of historic pubs want to see this beautiful & unique pub restored in all of its former crooked glory & in its original location.

Because it's our local heritage, if they had sought permission to demolish and relocate while it was still standing it would have been denied, it's for that reason that it should be rebuilt where it belongs, the land was the reason for the subsidence and to rebuild anywhere else wouldn't make sense. If they had nothing to do with the fire and demolition, they shouldn't have a problem with the building being where it would have been had the fire and demolition not happened. Building retirement lodges around a public house doesn't seem a suitable planning project. The only reason I can see for them wanting it rebuilt somewhere else is that they had plans for the land where it stood....

The Crooked House is a part of our heritage, we have planning laws and procedures in place so that the local people can have a say prior to any changes to the local landscape. The Crooked house's foundations have been in the exact same position since 1765 and should remain where it belongs!

The heritage of Crooked House has the backing of local people and far and wide, this public house has been in the people's hearts for decades. For the mindless business to destroy such a place with hundreds of years of life, should in my opinion be brought to account for the rebuild of this property and surroundings for everyone to appreciate once again. The amount of anger at the demise of the Crooked House shows the reason for this most famous Public House to be rebuilt again to its former glory

It's historic, visitor attraction and an important part of the west Midlands

It was in the best place

It was unique. People visited from afar. Its historic background is an amazing story.

It's a unique part of our cultural heritage

It should have never been destroyed

Part of my history

"It's where the crooked house belongs

She's stood there hundreds of years "

It's disgusting what happened to TCH. And the way they went about it. Owners should have the book thrown at them. Fined jailed etc.the history of TCH.

Unbelievable

Demolished for greed and should be rebuild where it was unlawfully demolished

I would say yes but believe owners Will make road undriveable.so it might be better to get it rebuilt near a good bus route and then it will allways be busy

Although sold due to falling trade through marketing the right food offering beers and then buy land around to reinstate possibly holiday lodges this pub is part of black country heritage site we don't want a homologised version just because of someone's greed, to state to others this can't happen again

Because nowhere else is offering an appropriate rebuild site as a possibility anyway. Rebuild where it was. That's history and our community

Should never have been demolished, fire done deliberately

Because, in all likelihood, criminal activity was behind the arson and demolition of the Crooked House. Therefore, if no ostensible crime had originally been committed, the Crooked House would still be standing

It's where it stood all these years, and it should be put back in its rightful position.

Because it was such an historic and wonderful place. It should have had protected status and I believe it was deliberately destroyed by people who did not care for the history of our country. It must be rebuilt to replicate the original and using as much original materials that were salvaged. This cannot keep happening to the buildings of our country without being challenged and the perpetrators made to rebuild. There is nothing like The Crooked House it was totally unique.

The Crooked House should be rebuilt exactly as it was and where it was. It had stood strong despite the mining subsidence for over 300 years and that's where it should remain for the next 300 years. The current location is the true home of the Crooked House and much of the history would be lost if it were moved somewhere else.

As already mentioned above, it should be rebuilt because morally it is the right thing to do and as well as everyone that loved the pub throughout the years that have gone by, future generations should be able to enjoy the uniqueness of the pub like we used to! This is something that has affected a lot of people emotionally. As one of our precious landmarks of the Black Country, it should be restored fully, it should never have been taken away!

This is our local history and heritage, it needs rebuilding to its full originality

"If its rebuilt elsewhere it's pointless, that's where it was built and that's where it should stay .

These people should not be allowed to get away with the destruction of this iconic place.

We need to send a strong message that this will not be tolerated, so other individuals with designs on other historic buildings will think twice."

Because it's shouldn't have been knock down that quickly. So it could have been rebuilt if given the chance. I just believe someone just wanted the land the crooked house was sitting on."

It should be restored as far as possible to its original state and location

Because it's where it belongs

That is where it was built. The memories are not just the building. It's the lane and the surrounding area. I used to bike down the lane when I was a kid and walked down there when I worked there through floods and snow

Should never have been destroyed. Important party of our heritage

That's where the Crooked House belongs no ifs no buts.

The Crooked House was a unique building, and an important part of the UK's social heritage. This public house is known the world over. It would appear the new owners of the pub were involved in its hasty demolition, following on from the fire which damaged parts of the property. It would appear this may have been to facilitate an alternative use for the site. It is important that property owners and developers respect the law and that the dwindling number of heritage buildings are protected for future generations to enjoy.

It's history and embedded in many people's lives, always been there, always should be there

It was a local attraction with no permission for it to be demolished

It was a unique historic building and needs to be rebuilt.

It is a Black Country icon!

The people who did this should be made to re-build the pub exactly as it was, exactly where it stood. So much history and heritage has been lost already but at least if it is rebuilt it will deter other dodgy individuals from trying the same with other old pubs. It also means a lot to local people and has been a part of many people's lives.

it's history needs to be put back

As above Part of our National Heritage and should be saved

Illegally demolished, should be rebuilt on same site due to its History.

"It is our heritage and should be left at the site where she belongs. People love her for her location.

Relocation she would lose her identity.

Make the access to her better and let her live again"

There is no alternative. Quite simply, it needs to be returned to its former state prior to the fire. It needs the chance to thrive again as a local pub and a national landmark. This question is also answered above. There is an opportunity, a final chance to bring back our heritage and show the world that your voice matters. The appalling demise of The Crooked House has captured the attention and support of the worldwide media. Things would not be the same as before it was destroyed. It would have a worldwide audience. A real opportunity to thrive, with increased focus on international tourism, boosting the economy. It would stand as an important message to future generations to fight for what should believe in, what you think is right. That is why it should rebuilt, in the same location and given the chance to shine again as a pub and tourist attraction.

It's an iconic part of Gornal

It is part of black country history and must be protected, we are losing our heritage at an alarming rate and the line must be drawn.

"Historically that is the location. The footings are there , the history is there .

That is where it always was, visitors from far and wide knew it to be there visited it there."

It should never have been destroyed by fire or digger, it belongs on the original site!

It is part of our heritage; no-one has the right to take it away.

Because that's where it was and that's where it should be again, it's the charm of it too.

That is its proper place. The company owners with to profiteer from the actions of knocking it down. This should not be allowed.

It stood there for over a hundred years and was a draw for locals and visitors alike and should do so again.

It was a historic quirky building that should be restored

The site was part of the charm of the Crooked House with its secluded location representing an oasis of peace away from a busy world.

It was special and unique. Should have been preserved for ever. It was not dangerous or causing any problems and was much loved by all who knew of it.

In order to comply with the law. Although access to the site needs to be cleaned up and better lit

To be consistent with the history of the building and to keep the pub local for Black Country people.

It needs to be back in original footprint as it stood for years

We have so much history in our area. They are rebuilding Dudley Tramway , but there won't be much left to see. We have the Black Country Living Museum which is fantastic and Dudley castle, Himley Hall. Surely, we need to preserve these buildings to encourage people to visit our area to bring money back into the area.

It was a pub with a lot of history for the Black Country and would not have any meaning if situated anywhere else. it was a travesty what happened to it and should NEVER have been allowed to happen.

The Crooked House is a very important part of our local history. I think it needs to be rebuilt in its original setting, as an example to any developers, or owners of vintage properties, (or properties with local interest) with similar ideas of demolition. If the Crooked House is rebuilt in a different location, as put forward by the owners, then they will have won, as the owners want the land the pub stood on to extend the landfill area. The lane and woodland surrounding the area, is an important place for wildlife, which (properly maintained) would be make an idyllic approach to the pub.

Because it is a symbol of our history and its story. It directly links to the hard workers of the land in the black country and shows the strength of the people from the area. To of been brutally demolished

It was an amazing building and a unique experience to visit which is why it needs replacing exactly where it was. There is nothing like it in the whole country.

A historical landmark, not just a public house. Although the pub trade is facing difficulties, rising prices putting people off visiting etc. due to the overwhelming publicity regarding the Crooked House, it has been put back on the map and people worldwide now want to visit it. It doesn't just have to act as a public house, it can be a meeting place for the community and wider area.

Demolition following arson was completely unacceptable.

It is an iconic building and has been in that location from many many years, if you ask anyone where the crooked house is they can tell you. It is part of black county heritage

It is where it belongs

It's been on that site for a long time it belongs there

The crooked house should stand where it used to be. Why shouldn't it it's been there since the 1700s. Greed above our Heritage.

How can it be built in another location. The history of the area will be lost. Would Notre Dame or Buckingham Palace be built in another location, this suggestion is just laughable sadly

Because it was illegally destroyed

It's the heart of the black country and it's stood the test of time it was perfect for everyone

Because if two individuals are allowed to buy, burn down and demolish this building why wouldn't anyone with the means buy heritage buildings with a view to getting free and open access to the bounty of the land it stands on? Where does that stop? There has to be a deterrent. At the very least the Taylors should be denied permission to build on or in any way capitalise on that parcel of land. More personally it was a favourite place to take visitors from outside of the region and abroad when they come to stay (American friends especially loved it) and even with local friends, while being too far from me in Birmingham to use as a local, it was a pleasant place to go for an "outing" drink occasionally

Times change. The old people cling on.

Because it is a unique part of the local landscape and heritage and should never have been demolished

"Its black country heritage

It was destroyed in such a terrible act for self-gain "

It was there for hundreds of years, it should still be there

The original location is the whole reason the house was crooked, it is a local landmark and attraction. We used to love going for a walk in the grounds of Himley Hall and then enjoying a few drinks in the Crooked House it would not be the same in a different location

The building and where it is located is of historic relevance and importance and needs to be preserved so our younger generation truly understand the building and location's significance and relevance to the Black Country and its history

It would not be the same otherwise, it was a fabulous old building with so much history please let's get it rebuilt as before so that the generations of people like us and our families before us can enjoy it again.

History, it's a landmark in the local area. To move it would take away it's meaning and value to the local community

A special place that should have been preserved. Rebuilding is essential... national monument status needed

It's important history. It should be compulsory purchased and the surrounding land landscaped making the entrance more desirable. I believe we must maintain the history, it has to be preserved for future generations. We the public also have a duty to ensure developers don't play with the planning process. It will send a message to unscrupulous developers. The original location must be used as placing it elsewhere would devalue the unique characteristics of the building and the landscape.

Because it should never have been destroyed in the first place!!!

There was no need to knock the pub down

The crooked house needs to be rebuilt back as close as possible to as it can be. This was a unique building of historical interest, character and tourist attraction and should be put back in the same place otherwise it will not be keeping with in its original surroundings and historical setting. I think building it somewhere else would make the pub lose its genuine historical feel.

As above this pub is part of our history and should be rebuilt and protected

Historical context

It deserves to be where it originally was there was no structure reasons to knock it down this was done for pure greed and having no respect for rules and regulations it's disgusting that their appeal has been allowed to have such a long delay.

Because it should not have been demolished to begin with. This was against council instructions

The building stood there for centuries, rebuilding in a different location would be pointless, it's crooked because of the ground it was built on, so it needs to be rebuilt exactly where it was.

As it's the original place we're it was built and just moving it won't be the same save wonky

It's part of black country heritage