

Time catches up with old gazebo

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A BIZARRE wrangle over the fate of a 160-year-old summer house in Stroud has come to an end with the decision to finally consign the building to the history books.

Stroud district planners have reluctantly backed an application to demolish the infamous gazebo - almost four years after it first disappeared from a wall in Acre Street.

Dating back to at least 1820 the summer house once enjoyed panoramic views across to Rodborough Common.

Derelict

It was rediscovered five years ago by local historian Mr Ian Mackintosh after being hidden away in a derelict garden.

Considered the oldest summerhouse in the town it was immediately spotlisted by English Heritage in a bid to preserve it.

Despite its new found fame, the building was taken down by builders working on a nearby housing scheme.

Historians reported the disappearance but as soon as council officers moved to take the two developers to court, both companies went bankrupt.

Despite repeated assurances that the gazebo would be restored, a meeting of the council's planning executive sub-committee was told only two stone steps and a few

by Andy Read

rotting timbers now remained.

Ironically the gazebo recently appeared towards the top of the council's listed buildings at risk survey.

While councillors reluctantly agreed that little could now be done to save the building, local historians said the whole episode was a scandal.

Stroud Civic Society once put in an application to demolish the building themselves in a bid to highlight the case.

They said a replica of the gazebo should be resited close to the Stratford Park Mansion House.

"This is a very sad story indeed," said the council's architect Chris Bladon. "I'm quite sure there are lessons for everyone here. However the reinstatement of a replica would be just that - a travesty."

Discovered

"I'm pleased to see these two companies have gone into liquidation," said Councillor John Marjoram (Green, Trinity). "They have totally disregarded what was a delightful little building."

"I will be very sad to see it go - especially as it was only just discovered," said Mr Mackintosh.