

EUONYMOUS BITES THE DUST

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A DEMOLITION gang swooped suddenly yesterday on a quaint old thatched cottage near the centre of Christchurch. As the dust settled around the ruins of Euonymous, one of the town's last cob-walled cottages, so anger mounted among a number of councillors who only a few days earlier were fighting to save the building—and thought they might have won.

"I'm flabbergasted," declared Cllr. Mrs. Irene Stevenson, chairman of Christchurch Health and Housing Committee, which wanted a preservation order placed on the cottage.

It has stood in Bargates for some 200 years, and the committee considered it was of special architectural and historic interest.

"I'm absolutely shattered," declared Cllr. Mrs. Vera Newbury, who at Tuesday's council meeting, when the future of the building was keenly debated, described it as "a gem."

"OFFENSIVE"



Declared Cllr. Tom Staniforth: "It is most offensive to the people of Christchurch that someone should come along and openly defy the council."

The cottage was in fact the subject of a demolition order as the town's Public Health Department considered it unfit for habitation due to rising damp, woodworm

and other defects.

For this reason the Planning Committee were loath to take action over preserving it.

On Tuesday, however, the preservationists had their way. By 10 votes to nine they told the Planning Committee to think again.

But they reckoned without yesterday's activities. By tea time the whitewashed walls of Euonymous were reduced to a pile of rubble.

One of the workmen told me: "We had the order to do this two months ago," was the reply. "We've only just got round to it."

The Chief Public Health Inspector, Mr. Clement Willard, said today: "The owners were instructed by the order to demolish. They were quite entitled to do so. Had they not taken the action within a certain, time it would have been up to the council to go along and demolish it in default."

The demolition took local historian Mr. Allen White by surprise. He is making a study of cob-walled cottages in the area and was planning shortly to photograph this building and have drawings made of its interior construction.