

5p E/10/0416/A – Urgent works to a Grade II* Listed Building at 30 High Street, Bishops Stortford, Herts, CM23 2LX

Parish: BISHOPS STORTFORD

Ward: BISHOPS STORTFORD - CENTRAL

RECOMMENDATION

That the Director of Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Director of Internal Services, be authorised to serve an Urgent Works notice under Section 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and any such further steps as may be required to secure the implementation of urgent works required in order to protect the building from further decline.

Period for compliance: 14 Days.

Reason why it is expedient to issue an Urgent Works notice:

The exposed condition of parts of the building is damaging to its historic fabric and threatens its long term retention. The building is at such risk from further decline that, should the owner fail to comply with the Notice, the Council will be required to carry out works in default.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The site is shown on the attached Ordnance Survey extract. It is located on the north side of High Street and comprises an impressive Grade II* listed building dating from the C15 occupying a prominent and sensitive location within the High Street, which in itself is central to the town's Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The Council has been aware of a decline in the condition of the building for some time and a recent inspection has revealed that the building is in need of urgent repairs in some areas in order to ensure that it is weather tight. The owner has been made aware of the Council's concerns in this respect but, to date, no response has been received and no action taken to secure the necessary works to the building. Parts of the building are, as a result, left open to the elements; exposing parts of the original timber frame and allowing damaging water penetration into the structure. Urgent works are therefore required to the damaged render on the front elevation and to the damaged weatherboarding on the side elevation.

1.3 The cement render to the front elevation of the building along with the weather boarding to the side elevation is in a poor condition and has, in a number of places, broken away from the building exposing the original timber stud work and the internal lathes and plaster. Due to the missing render and weatherboard the weather is now considered to be affecting the timber stud work which will progressively lead to further damp and damage to the internal structure of the building.

2.0 Considerations.

2.1 Section 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 enables local authorities to serve Urgent Works Notices for the preservation of listed buildings. These powers are confined to emergency repairs, for example, to keep the building wind and weatherproof and safe from collapse.

2.2 The procedure involves the Council serving notice that it intends to do the Urgent Works within a fixed period, giving the owner seven days' notice that the works are to be carried out. This provides an opportunity for the owner to negotiate with the Council to carry out the works himself. Failure to complete the works within a specified timescale can result in a Notice from the Council with formal indication of its intention to do the work.

2.3 The steps specified in the Notice should be the minimum necessary to secure the safety and preservation of the building and should not involve the owner in great expense. If the Council carries out the work, then it can recover the cost from the owner.

2.4 In this case, the required works will be specified in detail on the Notice, in consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer. The works are likely to involve replacing elements of the weatherboarding to the side of the building and boarding over and weatherproofing the existing damaged areas of render on the front elevation.

2.5 These works are considered to be the minimum necessary to secure the proper preservation of the building and would not involve great expense for the site owner. Should the Council need to carry out the works itself, in default of the Notice, then these expenses can be reclaimed from the owner of the land.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 For the above reasons therefore, it is recommended that authorisation be given to issue and serve an Urgent Works Notice requiring temporary works (to be specified in consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer) to be carried out to ensure that the affected areas of the front and side elevations of the building are secured and weather tight.