

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLACE

BELL COTTAGE, WOODLAND HEAD, YEOFORD EX17 5HF

Reason for Report:

To seek approval for an Urgent Works Notice under Section 54 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for the temporary works to a grade 2 Listed Building namely Bell Cottage, Woodland Head, Yeoford, EX17 5HF to make it wind and weather tight

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That an Urgent Works Notice be served under Section 54 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in respect of Bell Cottage Woodland Head to make it wind and weather-tight.

Relationship to Corporate Plan:

Managing the Environment

Financial Implications:

Cost of carrying out the works and costs to recover money spent.

Legal Implications:

Service of notice and possible recovery of monies

Risk Assessment:

Continued damage to the Listed Building and neighbouring property if essential repair works are not carried out.

Consultation carried out with:

1. Legal

1. Proposed Urgent Works Notice Bell Cottage Woodland Head Yeoford EX17 5HF

Bell Cottage is an end of terrace Grade 2 Listed two storey cottage of cob walls and thatch roof. It does not appear to be occupied at the current time, nor does it appear to have been occupied for quite some time. This however has not been confirmed.

It has been subject of previous Urgent Works Notices authorised by the Planning Committee in 2012 and 2017 and both times the works were undertaken by contractors engaged by the Council in the absence of the owner. The works involved patch repairs to the thatch in 2012 and in 2017 a base layer of reed thatch fixed with hazel spars.

The neighbours have over the last 2 or 3 years expressed concern to the Council over its deteriorating condition, in particular the need for repairs to the thatch.

Given the Council's concerns, a site visit was undertaken on Wednesday 20th July at 11.25am. The following photographs were taken which shows the extent of the current damage:



Whilst these photos have been recently taken, the damage as seen here was similar to that at the end of last year. As such, a letter with draft schedule of works required was sent to the address and posted on the door of the property on **1st December 2021** seeking that the owner attends to the matter and alerting him to the Council's statutory powers in such cases. No reply has been received. Unfortunately, previous attempts have also been made to contact him but without success.

The works in the attached draft schedule are those which we would seek to secure under the provisions of section 54. If such works were to be carried out by the Council, we would also be empowered under the provisions of section 5. of the same act to recover the expenses incurred.

A List of the urgent works required are:

Bell Cottage, Woodland Head Yeoford, Crediton, EX17 5HF

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 54

1. Cover up the external faces of ground and first floor windows so as to protect glass.

Use external grade plywood with 10 no. 25mm diameter drilled holes per window for ventilation, secured by long bolts with heads placed externally, through top and bottom sash openings.

2. Prevent ingress of rainwater:

Provide a temporary roof covering at areas of the roof damaged or missing by installing impervious flexible sheeting, supported on existing structure and additional temporary support if necessary. Secure with suitable fixings, battens or weights. Dress into gutters and outlets. Install self-adhesive membrane flashings to seal edges and abutments.

3. Cut back vegetation rooting into external walls and general tidy of vegetation to prohibit further damage.

The use of an Urgent Works Notice is the most appropriate and quickest formal procedure that is open to the Local Planning Authority to address this urgent concern.

The procedure for serving the Urgent Works Notice includes giving formal written notice to the owner to carry out the works within a specified period. In the event that the work is not carried out as required then the Council has the authority to instruct the work to be carried out. In this instance quotation will be requested from a local contractors for these works.

The cost will be claimed against the owner and a charge will be put on the building so that if and when it is sold the Council's cost can be recovered.

It should be noted that given the current state of the building, it is possible that bats or other protected species may have found their way into the roof void. Should this be the case, then the Council will need to seek appropriate advice from an ecologist to understand how the urgent works can be carried out without causing undue harm to any such species. It is considered likely that an ecologist will be required in the first instance to assess the building for such species before the Council is able to proceed.

Contact for any more information

Miss Angharad Williams (DM Manager)

Background Papers

Stop the Rot - English Heritage Advice

File Reference

N/A

Circulation of the Report

Cllr Coren
Members of the Planning Committee