

Bexhill Heritage

☎ 01424 575065

🌐 bexhillheritage.org.uk

✉ info@bexhillheritage.org.uk



Caring for Bexhill's past,
present and future.

26 March 2019

Dear Mr Hickling,

Request for Building Preservation Notices – Baptist Church Buckhurst Road

Down Cottage Collington Lane East Bexhill

I write on behalf of Bexhill Heritage to request the Council to quickly serve Building Preservation Notices (BPN) in respect of the above buildings, which we have every reason to believe are both of listable quality and under immediate threat of demolition or alteration. Our planning officer has last week written to the Council (Conservation Officer) more than once seeking this action but to date has received no direct response to these requests.

Our Committee has now met in full session, has considered both buildings and has concluded it should press these requests and should continue to press them.

I refer to them separately –

Baptist Church

This stands at the junction of Buckhurst Road and Clifford Road, two much used thoroughfares near the town centre. It has a frontage to both roads which are largely Victorian/Edwardian in character still, though Buckhurst Road has seen a great deal of change in the last 30 years.

It is a prominent, distinctive, well-mannered, and graceful piece of architecture from 1898 with much attractive detailing and finely proportioned arched stained glass windows. Whilst it is somewhat compromised by 20th century additions, it transcends these convincingly.

Notice of the intended demolition was given some three weeks ago in the published weekly list of planning applications (RR/2019/342/DN) under the heading “information only” and this notice is not now to be found easily or at all on the Council’s web site. A search gives the response “no applications found for entered search criteria”, we presume it was a notification under the Building Act. Its disappearance from the web site is surprising as another DN application in Buckhurst Road (RR/2008/3452/DN) is still retained there.

Though we do not know whether the Baptist Church notice was accepted or rejected, we consider the building to be clearly under threat because of the submission of the notice. Even if it were not accepted for some reason that would not remove the threat.

We therefore ask that it be made the subject of a rapid BPN. No doubt the Council would then make the obligatory application for listing to Heritage England.

Down Cottage

This stands at the junction of Collington Lane East and Sutherland Avenue and is not currently prominent because of the trees and shrubs which somewhat obscure it from the roads. Part of it seems to be of considerable age though we have no means of determining this as we have no right of access. It stands next to Vine Cottage which is listed, stated to be 18th century.

In any event we are content at this stage to rely on the agent's particulars which describe it as being from 1561, extended in 1907. We think it was extended again later, the extensions have somewhat compromised it which is perhaps why it was not included on the original listing survey.

The house has just come onto the market, the agent describes it as having a plethora of original features and as an ideal development opportunity. The agent's board also refers to "development opportunity".

Clearly it is under immediate threat as it could be bought and demolished within days. We confirm previous requests for the service of a BPN in respect of Down Cottage, followed by an application for listing.

I hope to hear from you very soon.

As an aside, and I am sure you are aware of this, in late 2018 Heritage England introduced a trial scheme to indemnify local planning authorities against compensation claims arising from BPNs, subject to certain conditions. Its purpose is, we understand, to encourage Councils to be more proactive in the service of such notices. No doubt your solicitor or finance colleagues will be able to advise.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raymond Konyn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'R' and 'K'.

Raymond Konyn (Chairman)