

Chapel Street Conservation Group
Chapel Street
Penzance
Cornwall

info@savetheganges.org

24 July 2017

Dear Cornwall Council

Save 18 Chapel Street Penzance

We know you are aware of the disgraceful condition of the magnificent Grade II listed Georgian mansion at 18 Chapel Street which in recent decades has suffered serious damage while in the livery of The Ganges restaurant.

As you know the building is owned by two different freeholders (Ground Floor and First Floor, commonly known as a Flying Freehold) and you have observed that the two owners either can not or will not work together in the interests of the building to carry out even basic repairs.

The present ownership were in possession in July 2015 when roof slates fell dangerously into the street. Your contractors carried out temporary roof repairs which for two winters have been the only protection against the elements.

At time of writing it appears that at an owner has started to erect scaffold and improve the temporary roof repairs. Nonetheless from the street you can clearly see fallen facades, missing brickwork, failed gutters, absent rainwater goods and many other clear indications that urgent repair work is necessary and has not been carried out.

Shopowners, residents and Chapel Street users have had enough of the owners' dereliction of this building and of Cornwall Council's inadequate response. The opinion in our survey was gathered by the www.savetheganges.org website between 24 June and 21 July 2017. The fact that about 350 people made the effort to give their opinion shows the strength of feeling, and we invite you to read the many comments to get a flavour of people's anger and disbelief that Cornwall Council has allowed this situation to deteriorate.

Cornwall Council has powers of Compulsory Purchase in exactly situations like this. We know the Council has been monitoring 18 Chapel Street since 2012 because in December of that year you told The Cornishman

There is an active planning enforcement case on the grade two listed building as there are concerns about its deteriorating condition.

"The council is working to decide the most appropriate course of action to secure the preservation of the building which, in view of the condition of the building, we're aiming to progress as quickly as possible."

In the four and half years since nothing has happened. In July 2014 the former First Floor owners put their freehold up for auction and you missed a great opportunity to take decisive action.

Earlier this month you told us that you are “considering the potential option of compulsory purchase”.

The people who took part in our survey voted approximately **88% YES** in favour of Cornwall Council using compulsory purchase powers.

Our survey also shows the amazing diversity of uses enjoyed by Chapel Street. From residents and business owners, to shoppers and people enjoying the great pubs and restaurants, to tourists from Cornwall and far afield: It is revealing how many say in the Comments section – **the time to take action is now !**

There is a Cabinet Meeting on **6 September 2017**. At this meeting you must resolve to take Compulsory Purchase action. **We understand that some Cornwall Council officers believe, even after all this procrastination and further deterioration, that it is impossible to prepare in time for that meeting, that somehow six weeks is not enough.** If you miss that opportunity there will not be another meeting until 15 November 2017. This loss of over two months heading into winter would be unconscionable.

We strongly urge you to read the survey to understand the depth of people’s passion about Chapel Street and their amazing breadth of creative ideas about future uses for 18 Chapel Street. With three levels it offers stunning opportunities for **mixed use** and **housing need** is a big feature of the response. Approximately 54% are in favour of a **Community Venue** to enhance Chapel Street and all of Penzance. This should show you how this building generates out-of-the-box thinking and problem-solving ideas among people who love Chapel Street.

We strongly urge you to do the same, and quickly. There is strong impetus here to turn this eyesore into an asset before it is too late. In the words of one of our contributors (5 July, 23.10) –

“Cornwall Council get your finger out... There are councils all around the country who compulsory purchase....JUST DO IT !”

Yours sincerely

Chapel Street Conservation Group

Mike Baker
Dr Melissa Hardie
Dr Phil Budden
Miki Ashton
Kelvin Hearn
Holly Hearn
Nick Collinscontinued

Heather Rowe
Valerie Cock
Richard Ballinger
Kate Jones
Stephen Phillips
Polly White
Roger White
Emma Favata
Rick Peel
Kate Graham
Jane Royle
Garth Royle
Glyn Macey
Gill McNeil
Hilary Warner

Save the Ganges, Penzance. Save 18 Chapel Street

Supported by Penzance Civic Society

PS - Please note that the survey has been edited to remove people's identities and to exclude libellous or irrelevant material.