



Planning Committee

Central Ward

7th October 2008

ENFORCEMENT REPORT - 2008/025/ENF

Condition of land considered harmful to the visual amenity of the area Edward Street/Bromsgrove Road, Town Centre, Redditch

1. Background / Key Issues

- 1.1 This matter comes before the Committee with regard to the condition of this land, in particular, the derelict state of the buildings on the site, and the overgrown condition of the land surrounding them, and the resultant effect on the visual amenity of the town centre for both residents and visitors (travelling by bus, train car or on foot), given its location at a primary gateway into the town centre.
- 1.2 The site consists of land fronting Edward Street and Bromsgrove Road, and also has an elevation overlooking Redditch railway station. It is a traditional "old" Redditch industrial site with the main works to the rear running parallel with the railway station platform. Consequently, this industrial building provides the first impression of Redditch to visitors arriving by train.
- 1.3 Contained within the site are a number of buildings of note which are locally listed. These include the Probable Masters House and Broxwood House. The site and its history are probably best described in the Council's Edward Street Supplementary Planning Document adopted in September 2007.
- 1.4 The deteriorating condition of the land and the buildings thereon has been of concern for some time now, and in February 2008 your Enforcement Officer undertook a photographic survey of the land. That survey revealed that the condition of the factory building facing on to the railway platform, the Probable Masters House, and Broxwood House were all in a dilapidated condition with broken windows, missing roof tiles, deteriorating facades and the surrounds heavily overgrown.
- 1.5 On the 10 March 2008, the company owning the land were contacted and asked to carry out improvements to the land in order to alleviate the harm to the amenity. This included re-painting works, removal of all broken glazing and boarding up of the windows and doors in such a manner to simulate the appearance of what formerly existed, and cutting back all overgrown vegetation. They responded by claiming the company was in financial difficulty and that the land had been put up for sale. It was therefore agreed to defer action for a short time to allow this to be done.

- 1.6 Although negotiations have taken place with the agents handling the sale of the land, your officers have been unable to agree any suitable interim arrangements, and the land remains unsold.
- 1.7 On the 16 September 2008, your Enforcement Officer again surveyed the site and found that the condition of the land, and in particular the Probable Masters House and Broxwood House, had deteriorated further. A series of photographs were taken to show the poor condition of the land.
- 1.8 The company owning the land remain in financial difficulty but are still trading. To date, they have not undertaken any works to alleviate the situation as requested back in March 2008.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 Officers consider that the condition of this land adversely affects the visual amenity of the town centre, and provides a poor first impression of the town to visitors arriving in to the town centre by whatever means. At present Officers see little prospect of voluntary improvement in the foreseeable future. Your officers consider this to be a serious breach of planning control causing harm to visual amenity which needs to be remediated.

3. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services, in consultation with the Acting Head of Planning and Building Control to take Enforcement action, including the instigation of legal proceedings if necessary, in relation to a breach of planning control, namely, allowing the condition of land to adversely affect the visual amenity of the area. Enforcement action would be by way of the serving of a notice under Section 215 of the 1990 Act and the instigating of prosecution proceedings if necessary in the event of any failure to comply with any requirement of that Notice.