



Press Release

7 February 2025

Council adds pressure to complete work on private property in Wisbech Market Place

Members of the public and local councillors have expressed frustration with the slow pace of work on privately owned historic buildings in Wisbech Market Place.

The council is working closely with property owners to drive improvements to buildings that have legal protection due to their special architectural or historic interest.

While the Council has very limited power to intervene, where private property is concerned, all avenues are being considered.

The council has been communicating with the owners of the former Cashino slots store at 5 Market Place since it was ravaged by fire. Work has begun on a project to retain the façade of the grade II listed building whilst allowing partial demolition of the rest of the building which was damaged by fire and water. It is hoped an application will be forthcoming in the future to rebuild at the site and in the meantime the council is committed to doing all it can to ensure the site remains as well maintained as possible, within the scope of its limited legal powers.

The council is also working with the owners of the Grade II listed former Franks butchers at 10 Market Place where there have been structural concerns. The council's conservation officer is working closely with the owners on the timescale for works and the council has been advised the works are now imminent.

Cllr Dee Laws, Fenland District Council's portfolio holder for planning, said: "Preserving the heritage of Fenland is incredibly important to us as a council.

"At Wisbech Market Place we've been working closely with property owners to drive improvements for many months as we do at other heritage sites across Fenland.

"Unfortunately, this process does take time and doesn't move as fast as anyone would prefer. This is partly down to the complexity of the projects as well as the private investment involved.

"We are aware of public frustration in regards to this matter, and we are also frustrated. Local councillors contact officers regularly to chase this up.

“In the meantime, our project to be hands on in the restoration of the streetscene at Wisbech High Street goes on with work moving apace in the rebuild of the former Cook’s butchers ‘The Gap’ site at 24 High Street and plans being considered for the derelict 11-12 High Street, both sites which we bought to allow us to lead and manage this vital restoration work.”

The former Franks butchers at 10 Market Place was built in the early 19th century, probably as a shop with living accommodation above. At some point it was occupied by a chemist before being taken over in 1908 by the pork butcher George William Frank whose descendants continued to run the family business until 2015.

The former Cashino slots store at 5 Market Place was listed as a late 18th century shop built with a 17th century basement.

Listed buildings are given special protections in law to manage alterations to them and push owners to preserve them.

Fenland District Council is doing everything possible to help the owners do the necessary work. However, consideration is also being given to what other legal avenues can be taken, if work remains stalled.

Ends

Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: communications@fenland.gov.uk