

LBB public statement regarding The Railway Hotel

Introduction and Key Facts

The Railway Hotel, located on Station Road, Edgware HA8 is a public house which has been closed since 2006. It is a Grade II Listed Building and is included on the Historic England's 'Heritage At Risk Register'. It is located within the Edgware Town Centre and is part of the secondary retail frontage. The Railway Hotel was entered onto the statutory list in June 2003 wherein it is described as *"a notable interwar feature of what was to become one of the classic suburbs in Greater London..."*



Image 1: Images of Railway Hotel before recent planning enforcement interventions

In order to protect the building from damage planners at Barnet have taken numerous steps over recent years. Such actions have included the service of formal notices and prosecutions against the owners.

The building is currently the subject of a 'Listed Building Repairs Notice' that stipulates a number of steps the owners must take to restore the building to the state in which it was when it was listed. The owner has not complied with the repairs notice and has therefore opened up the possibility of the council using its powers of compulsory purchase. Approval for officers to continue to explore options for a CPO of the Hotel and land to the rear was granted by committee earlier in 2023 but is subject to careful consideration.

Due to concerns over the immediate future of the Railway Hotel, Planning also issued an 'Urgent Works Notice' that required the owner to take some prompt and temporary steps, such as the boarding up of windows and making repairs to the roof; all designed to protect the building from further damage. The owner undertook only some of these works so the council appointed contractors to complete the works and is in the process of recouping the costs from the owner.

Land to the Rear

Caring for people, our places and the planet

The site to the rear is formal industrial land and is in the same ownership as the Railway Hotel. Numerous actions have been taken in respect of the industrial land, including the serving an 'untidy land notice', ordering the owners to clear all the fly-tipped rubbish. Non-compliance with this notice led to the owners being prosecuted and sentenced on conviction to over £8000 in fines, costs and victim surcharges. No recent planning permissions for use of the industrial land have been granted and it is current dormant, having become the subject of a 'closure order' issued to all occupiers.

Damage to the Building

The Railway Hotel has previously been a target to several presumed arson attacks, graffiti/vandalism, illegal encampments and fly-tipping. Other anti-social issues have been linked to the unauthorised uses of the vacant site over the years.

The London Fire Brigade confirmed that four fires have been attended to since 2016, with a further three false alarms raised by members of the public. As such, dealing with the Railway Hotel has taken up significant officer time, serving several planning related notices and pursuing prosecutions that seek to protect this heritage asset. Recent planning enforcement actions taken, relating to the Railway Hotel, include:

- **2018 Listed Building Notice** (ENF/00053/18, 29.03.2018) served in respect of the unauthorised demolition of boundary walls to a listed building and the erection of a metal gate. The walls in question have not yet been re-built, and the owners were prosecuted and fined on 03.12.2019 for non-compliance with the notice.
- **2022 Urgent Works Notice** under S.55 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – requiring owner to undertake works deemed urgently necessary for the preservation of the listed building.
- **2022 Repairs Notice** under S.48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – requiring owner to undertake significant restoration works to bring the building back to the condition it was when listed.
- **2023 Section 215 notice** under Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – requiring owner to repair boundary fence and clear site of remaining waste. The Council later repaired the fence at its own cost – see image 2 below.
- **2023 Section 55 notice** as per Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – requiring expenses incurred through urgent works notice to be repaid to the Council.

Further details on the above actions, and responses to recent resident concerns are provided below.



Image 2: Images showing broken fence (to left) and Council contractor fixed fence (to right)

Recent planning enforcement action

Planning enforcement's priority has remained to ensure the Railway Hotel is protected using all powers available, including the use of enforcement powers never before used in Barnet (and rarely used across the UK as per Historic England) such as the S54 Urgent works notice, S.48 Repairs Notice and the S.55 recovery of costs notification.

After continued concern regarding the state of the building, an entry warrant was granted via the courts, with a visit arranged for 22nd April 2022. The owner or any representative of the owner failed to meet on site on the set date. Nevertheless, entry was gained.

Following the site visit on 22nd April 2022, accompanied by the Heritage Team Manager LBB, Historic England and Oxley Conservation LTD, it was advised that the listed building was in severe danger of irreparable harm. It was therefore agreed that an Urgent Works Notice (UWN) was the most appropriate route of enforcement action in this instance. Officers prepared the documents necessary to serve Barnet's first ever UWN in May 2022.

Following the service of the UWN, and the initial failure of the owner to undertake any works listed within the urgent works notice, it was advised by the above specialist consultees that a Repairs Notice should be drafted and served. This would detail the work that was reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building i.e. to bring the building back to the state when listed in 2003.

After receiving the Repairs Notice, the owner undertook some selected works from the UWN. However, due to the urgent nature of the works, and the time taken by the owner, it was considered necessary for Planners to ultimately source and instruct contractors to carry out the remaining works listed in the UWN, to preserve and protect the Railway Hotel from vandalism and weather damage.

So, on the 5th October 2023, contractors procured by the council attended the site to undertake preservation works. Recovery of costs are being sought via the Section 55 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, notice of which was served on 30th November 2023.



Image 3: Officers on site with contractors



Image 4: Images showing Railway hotel after enforcement interventions

Response to recent resident concerns

Over the last few years, various council officers have visited the site - potentially up to one hundred times, conducted as a result of concerns over the state of the building or immediately surrounding land.

One concern most recently raised by residents, is damage to a suspected lightning conductor on the building. The item has not been confirmed to be lightning protection but if it is, the adjacency of a number of tall buildings should protect the building from lightning strikes, so the building is not thought to be at risk in this respect. Nevertheless, officers contacted the owners, who agreed to undertake repair works to the suspected conductor, and they will continue to follow-up with the owners to ensure, as far as possible, that the work is completed.

Next steps

The Grade II listed Railway Hotel remains a priority case for planning enforcement officers. Site visits are conducted regularly with a recent visit in November to the linked industrial site to the rear seeking to collect evidence necessary to seek improvements to the site. The planning enforcement team reserve the right to serve further Urgent Works Notices, if deemed necessary at a later date, to seek continued preservation of the property.