



INSTITUTE OF HISTORIC BUILDING CONSERVATION

Empty Homes Consultation,
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Housing Private Sector Division,
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Dear Sir/Madam

Empty Homes: Temporary Management, Lasting Solutions

I refer to the above consultation document.

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation is the professional institute, representing conservation specialists and practitioners in the public and private sectors in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. It has around fourteen hundred members divided between fourteen branches. The Institute exists to establish the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all.

The IHBC welcomes any initiative which encourages the reuse of the existing building stock. Many of the members of the Institute are actively involved in the successful reuse of vacant buildings through a variety of conservation-led regeneration schemes and buildings at risk projects, often in partnership with their colleagues involved in housing.

Many of the empty homes with which the management orders are concerned may be vacant Listed Buildings, Buildings in Conservation Areas or simply old buildings which contribute to the character of their town or village. The concluding report or new statute from this consultation should make reference to the special protection such buildings enjoy and of the need for housing officers to work with conservation specialists in securing the reuse of empty historic buildings without conflicting with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

There is also scope for a more creative approach to reusing historic buildings where owners are guilty of neglect. Compulsory Leasehold Orders could be introduced where the LA might take over the management of listed buildings, repair them, but only then return them to the owner over a period

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rather longer than that now proposed in the housing field. There would be a good case for 25 years or longer in complex cases.

It may be useful to convene a meeting involving the IHBC, ODPM, DCMS and English Heritage to consider taking forward specific variations of the Management Order concept to be applicable to listed building cases generally, not just empty housing.

Perhaps you would care to come back to me with suitable dates in the near future? I am copying this response to the relevant contacts within DCMS and English Heritage.

I trust that these comments are helpful.

Yours faithfully

Dave Chetwyn
Consultations Secretary

Cc Duncan McCallum, English Heritage
Frances McLeod, DCMS