

**Application for Financial Assistance (Historic Buildings Grants) from the Conservation and Heritage Fund –The Beehive, Main Road, Betley (Ref: 18/19004/HBG)**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Working Party indicate its views on proposals going to the Planning Committee for:-**

- 1. £5,000 Historic Building Grant to repair a timber framed gable, including propping, new timber framing with joints/pegs, replacement brick infills with lime mortar, making good the internal walls, subject to the appropriate standard conditions**

**Purpose of report**

To inform the Working Party of applications for financial assistance towards the cost of repairs to the west gable fronting the roadside, known as Gable 1, and give the Working Party an opportunity to express its views on the application.

The Beehive (Grade II) is a cottage originally of cruck construction, probably 15<sup>th</sup> Century with 17<sup>th</sup> additions. The timber framing has painted brick infill panels. The Listing description states the building is of T-shaped plan with a single cell baffle-entry plan hall range with cruck frame aligned north-south. It also has a 17<sup>th</sup> century two bay crosswing on the north side, aligned east west. The cruck framing is largely complete.



Following removal of some vegetation to the soleplate at the bottom of the cruck on the south gable and some movement of the brick panels the owners undertook some investigation of both the west and south gables by an appropriately qualified conservation builder. This work has cost in the region of £7,000 but they have covered the cost of this to enable the two full quotes to be received for the main repair work.

This initial work included erection of scaffolding and careful investigation which has revealed severe structural problems within both of the gables. The south cruck gable, has problems which have originated because the soleplate has rotted, compressed and many of the joints have failed and caused movement in the framing and panels have started to loosen. Previous work on this gable, prior to the current owners purchasing the property, have been poorly carried out by not fixing the new repairs into the oak frame with mortice and tenons creating an unstable frame. The west gable has also been investigated and the soleplate has also completely failed and requires complete replacement and vertical studs also require sections of timber to be spliced in. The tie beam at eaves level is of most concern as it appears completely rotten and is moving out taking with it the upper section of wall and the lower gable. This gable also requires tying back to the return walls. The brick panels are also moving out and need to be removed and relaid. Careful shoring and propping is required during this repair so ensure the load is appropriately dealt with.

It is unfortunate that the current owners are suffering the great cost of previous neglect and the typical inappropriate repair of such buildings by patching up, painting over the cracks and using cement mortar to repair joints and fill holes. The application of years of paint and applying bitumen to the timbers only traps moisture into these buildings and allows rot to set in.

This grant application is for repairs to the west gable (gable 1), the worst affected by rot and movement and will be tackled within the next month or so. The other gable will be targeted in the second phase although this is still relatively urgent and will be undertaken when gable 1 is complete, and subject to the owners being able to raise the necessary funds. The south gable repair is estimated to cost £73,388.

The total cost of the works for gable 1 (west gable) is estimated at £90,973.00. The works are eligible for a grant of up to 20% or up to a maximum of £5,000.

### **Financial Implications**

There is sufficient funding to meet this grant application with £23,788 in the Fund; allowing for commitments. This Fund will receive additional funding of £10,000 on 1 April 2019.