

Middle Colenso Farm,
Goldsithney,
Penzance,
Cornwall,
TR20 9JB
11th March 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing with regard to proposed repair work to The Bell Tower in Chapel Street, Penzance. The building is divided into four freehold flats. My husband and I bought Flat 1 last year and have been authorised by the other three freeholders to submit this pre-application advice form on behalf of all of four freeholders.

The Bell Tower was built as Penzance's first National School in 1834. During the mid-20th century it became part of West Penwith Rural District Council's offices and was converted into flats in the early 1980s.

The lower parts of the building have been pointed but at some point the top portion of the tower itself, including the spire and belfry, has been rendered with cement. This render is now failing and there is significant ingress of water into the tower to the extent that on a rainy day, pools of water gather on the spiral staircase inside the tower. The leaks are damaging the fabric of the building.

The ends of the roof trusses are beginning to rot where they meet the tower wall and during the recent heavy rain I noticed that the wooden floorboards which are original to the building are beginning to take up water. Flat 3 on the ground floor is experiencing significant damp problems.

We would like to repair the tower to prevent further damage and to restore the building, which is a significant and instantly recognisable part of Penzance's skyline.

Without scaffolding, my builder has been unable to access the exterior of the tower but I enclose some photographs taken the last time scaffolding was erected as well as some images taken from ground level.

As you can see, the render is badly cracked and my builder believes the only solution is to remove it, check the soundness of the structure underneath and carry out any necessary repairs. Ideally we would prefer to point the walls of the belfry and my builder has suggested that the spire be clad with zinc or copper to properly waterproof the tower and minimise the need for future maintenance. Before submitting an application for listed building consent we would like you to recommend the materials you would be acceptable for this.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,



Christen Pears