

The Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
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By email

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8 September 2017

Dear Mrs Bradley,

15 Small Street Bristol, & interim protection for historic buildings

I am sure you will have seen the news that an ornate 400-year-old Jacobean ceiling in Bristol was demolished last week, prior to Historic England visiting the site to assess it for listing.

The removal of this historic feature appears to have been a deliberate act by the owner to prevent the building from being designated, and Historic England have since confirmed that the building will not be listed, due to the fragmentary amount of surviving fabric.

The case has attracted significant outrage, both locally and nationally, and has been covered extensively in the national press. We believe it highlights a major national issue that must be addressed – the need for interim protection for buildings being assessed for listing.

The heritage sector has campaigned for interim protection for buildings being assessed for listing for a long time. The 2008 draft Heritage Protection Bill included a provision for interim protection, but the bill did not make it onto the statute book (The full text of the draft bill can be seen [here](#), with clauses on interim protection at pages 140-141). Interim protection is already available in Wales, as of this year.

As a national campaigning organisation, SAVE is contacted on a daily basis by members of the public concerned with the protection of historic buildings and areas. Our remit extends

to the entire country and to all types of historic buildings, so consequently we see a large variety of different issues affecting the historic environment.

Intentional damage to historic buildings prior to a listing assessment is an issue that deserves significant attention, with numerous examples of where this has taken place available from other parts of the country. The most notable recent example is the Carlton Tavern in the City of Westminster in 2015, but I also draw your attention to two cases in Liverpool - Josephine Butler House in 2008, and 6 Sir Thomas Street in c.2006. In both cases architectural features were summarily removed prior to Historic England (then English Heritage) visiting the sites.

In light of the Bristol case, we believe now is an opportune time to revive the issue of interim protection. A [petition](#) launched on 4 September has attracted almost 3,000 signatures, and demonstrates the clear public interest in this point.

I would be pleased to provide more information, and SAVE Director Henrietta Billings and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your departmental colleagues to provide a briefing on this subject.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Fox', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Fox
Deputy Director