Dear Councillor Jacqueline Hardie

**Vacant properties and their upkeep in Lowestoft**

Thank you for your email.  Your concerns are noted and I agree that the items you raise are issues

which can affect the overall appearance of the town centre.

As you say, the serving of a section 215 Notice is able to control clearance, tidying,  external repairs and repainting.

The test for serving such a notice being whether the land adversely affects the amenity of the area.

Historic England s advice states that ***“‘Amenity’ is a broad common-sense concept and not formally defined in the legislation***

***or procedural guidance. For buildings, it usually means that any remedial***

***works would be confined to improving the appearance of external visible parts.”***

I will visit the area shortly and take a look at the buildings you have

highlighted below, so we can respond with full knowledge of the current situation.

Once I have surveyed the properties and the matter has been discussed with

the Council’s Planning Development Manager and Enforcement Officer,

I will be in touch again.

Meanwhile, as you are probably aware, the new Heritage Action Zone which has just been announced

for South Lowestoft, the boundary of which covers the South Lowestoft Conservation Area is hopefully to start in April 2020.

This could be a good way to addressing some of the issues highlighted as it will have

the benefit of being able to offer financial assistance for improvements to the street scene

as part of the grant element of the scheme.

Regards

**Elizabeth Martin** | **Senior Design & Conservation Officer**

East Suffolk Council

01502 523078 | 07780 339527

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