

**From:** Jim Scanlon <[chair@leithlinksc.org.uk](mailto:chair@leithlinksc.org.uk)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024 7:26 PM

**To:** [esrs@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:esrs@edinburgh.gov.uk); [barr@hes.scot](mailto:barr@hes.scot)

**Subject:** URGENT John's Lane warehouse, off Queen Charlotte Street, Leith

*Dear City of Edinburgh Planning Department*

*I am writing in support of correspondence you have received from Leith Links Community Council (LLCC) member Teresa Perchard to request that you take **urgent action** to require the owner of a Listed Building in the LLCC area to make the building safe.*

*The premises is at 22 John's Lane, EH6 and a link to its Listing is here [22 JOHN'S LANE \(LB27530\)](https://www.historicenvironment.scot/22-Johns-Lane-LB27530)*

*It is also on the **Buildings at Risk** register*

*[22, John's Lane, Leith | Buildings at Risk Register](#)*

*The building is in a position and condition where a 3 storey stone wall is leaning and at risk of collapse in a narrow lane within which there are a number of commercial properties, including a garage, operating with vehicles and staff coming and going. If the wall collapses this could cause injury, possibly fatalities, as well as damage to the opposite buildings.*

*The sustained period of rain we have had recently will only have brought further deterioration to mortar which is the only thing holding the large wall upright and there is visible evidence of use of cementitious mortar for repairs in the upper sections which has eroded the stone.*

***I feel this is a very urgent issue because of the risks to life that the condition of the building currently represents.***

*The Council has been aware of the condition of this building for more than 10 years because it has been the subject of numerous planning applications most of which have been refused. No works have been undertaken to make the building safe in the meantime, to ensure it does not collapse, and the outer wall facing John's Lane seems to have limited structure, and no roof (it is notable that at the time the property was listed in 1991 a slate roof was still present).. There is no longer any roof and no work has been undertaken in that time to make this building safe.*

*Whilst the most recent planning application has been appealed due to non determination, even IF that is granted there could be a considerable period of time before any work commenced on the property and the risk of collapse persists.*

***This is an urgent public safety issue now – not merely a heritage conservation issue. The LLCC urges you to act to protect the public.***

*I understand from the Buildings At Risk Service Scotland that the Council has powers to take action to protect the built heritage. Some of the most commonly exercised for listed buildings are*

- ***Urgent Works Notices*** can be served on vacant listed properties and allow the local planning authority to undertake emergency works such as the erection of supportive scaffolding or temporary roof structures.

- **Dangerous Building Notices** can be served on both listed and unlisted properties, and require the owner to make safe or demolish a building that poses a threat to public safety. Repair Notices can be served on both listed and unlisted properties, and specify those works considered reasonable and necessary for the preservation of a building, along with a timescale within which these works should be completed. Failure to comply within the specified deadline may result in works being undertaken by the local planning authority, and a charge being made to the owner(s)

***I believe this qualifies as a Dangerous Building and that the owner should be required to make it safe – not demolish it, but make safe and repair.***

***The City of Edinburgh Council Planning Charter states ‘Planning enforcement has a responsibility in helping ensure that the character and appearance of land and buildings which contribute positively to the city’s heritage are preserved.’ I would suggest you also have a responsibility to take action where it is clear there is risk of public safety from an owner’s neglect of a building.***

*This is a case where years of neglect of a building have caused it to now be in a condition where it is at risk of collapse. It sits in a lane close to Constitution Street, EH6 which has commercial premises within 6m of the wall that is at risk of collapse. Collapse could cause injury, possibly fatal, and damage to opposite buildings. The building has been on the Buildings at Risk Register for some time and there are some images on their website.*

*Viewing it today, the vehicles associated with the garage are no longer parked on the warehouse side of the road as the risk of collapse is clear.*

***I strongly request that you visit this premises as a matter of urgency and consider taking urgent action to require the owner to make the building safe and to carry out repairs.***

*I will be publishing this letter on the LLCC website.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Jim Scanlon*

*Jim Scanlon MBE  
Chair Leith Links Community Council*