



Speaking for Scotland's Buildings

This comment was submitted by the AHSS Highlands & Islands Cases Panel via an online planning portal

Council: Fife

Application reference: 21/02187/LBC

Address: Kitty McGinty's Auld Post Hotel, 1 Hunter Street, Kirkcaldy

Date AHSS comment submitted: 27th August 2021

The AHSS Forth & Borders Cases Panel has examined the proposals for conversion of a former Post Office building into flats, located within the Abbotshall & Central Kirkcaldy Conservation Area. This B-Listed building is notable for its detailed Jacobean-Baronial design with traditional stonework, sited on a prominent corner and reflecting its status as an important civic structure. We object to this application as follows:

- 1) Full replacement of original windows: Replacement of original windows without confirmation of their condition is contrary to local guidance, which states: '...retention of original features is always preferable in historic buildings or areas because it retains character and authenticity.' (see Fife's Windows in Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas).
- 2) Loss of internal staircase at Post Office entrance: The Post Office's entrance staircase is one of the few clear surviving internal elements of this building, and every effort should be made to retain it as an integral element of original building fabric.
- 3) Conversion of three exterior doors to windows. Historic doorways along Hunter Street form an essential part of the design of this prominent building. The proposed conversion of three doors to windows is excessive, and undermines the façade's intended rhythm at street level.
- 4) Use of "roof terrace" rooflight windows at rear. Although the rear wall of the Post Office is being entirely rebuilt, the use of large rooflights that cover both the sidewall and roof planes are entirely inappropriate for a listed building. This also follows local guidance, which suggests that rooflights on listed buildings '...should be of a "conservation" standard (historically accurate in detailing) and should be flush to the roof, not raised from it.' (see Fife's Windows in Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas).

All of these notes also follow Fife's Local Development Plan (2017; Policy 14.7); for these reasons, we look forward to reviewing revisions that more fully integrate the architectural elements that make this building a unique historic asset.