



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: 21/01376/FUL

Address: 358 - 360 High Street Leslie Glenrothes Fife KY6 3AX

Date AHSS comment submitted: 26th August 2021

The AHSS Forth & Borders Cases Panel objects to two aspects of this scheme: the loss of more of the original ground floor façade to the front, and the second floor east wall of the proposed extension to the rear due to its very close B-listed church neighbour.

358-360 High Street is one of the most prominent properties in Leslie, due to its siting where the main road from the West turns from South to West again, precisely centred on this property. It is therefore the first element of Leslie High Street seen by drivers approaching this way.

It also forms a group with the apparently identical property to the right. Both have the same form, and like its neighbour this property would originally have had two doors in the centre. The east side has been converted into the shop front. These two buildings are of simple form, but careful symmetry and built of particularly high quality coursed and snecked squared whin, which is echoed in a handful of other buildings along the High Street.

The proposed alterations would therefore lose all sense of the domestic origins of this property, and destroy most of the remaining ground floor elevation. They are unnecessary, as the windows are not presently used, and could be readily brought into use as-is (with the blocked door enlarged to ground level), thereby adding significant natural light without detracting from the conservation area.

If the intent is not to add light but to increase advertising area, this is not appropriate for this site on a busy road junction. The proposed result would also be very unbalanced, as it does not (and should not) extend to match the existing. This ground floor element should be omitted entirely.

To the east, the neighbour is a B-listed church set well back on the plot. The proposed treatment of the rear of this east or side elevation would significantly compromise the setting of this church, as it is the nearest part of the building to the church (approximately 4 metres), and the building is presently of traditional form. The insertion of a modern design and material, just four metres away from the ornate skews and gable of the church's principal elevation, would be to the considerable detriment of the church.

A traditional pitched roof in this location (i.e. on top of the wall on the church boundary) would not be objectionable, at a typical historic pitch and meeting with the main roof in a concave joint. The remainder of the proposed extension at this level would not be visible and is not of concern, but any balcony should not be visible from the front garden of the church, and all visible materials should be traditional.

If the East elevation can not compromise the church's setting, by avoiding visible modern materials and design,

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and the North elevation can retain the existing fenestration at ground level, then the remaining aspects of this proposal do not raise issues of heritage concern.