



Speaking for Scotland's Buildings

This comment was submitted by the AHSS Forth & Borders Cases Panel via an online planning portal

Council: City of Edinburgh

Application reference: 20/05842/FUL

Address: 84 - 88 Candlemaker Row Edinburgh

Date AHSS comment submitted: 5th February 2021

The AHSS Forth & Borders Cases Panel has examined the proposals for a new pavilion at the Grassmarket Community Project, lying within the Old Town Conservation Area and the World Heritage Site. The panel notes it objected to earlier proposals for a similar extension on the site in 2018 (18/10228/FUL). Having considered the new proposals we object to this application as follows:

- 1) The present open space on the site plays an important role in opening up the otherwise cramped junction and footways at the roundabout on the Cowgate and Candlemaker Row, an important gateway into the Grassmarket. The new pavilion is detrimental to this open character, occupying an excessive proportion of the plot footprint, and the gating-off of the remaining space adds to the reduction of this space. Sympathy to the spatial pattern the historic environment is given in the Conservation Area guidance as an expectation for new buildings (Old Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal, p. 49).
- 2) The pavilion's positioning directly on the building line intensifies this loss. The volume is too far forward on the site and reduces the legibility of the site history by removing the existing steps to the court which form the transition from pavement to courtyard. This contravenes part (b) of the Local Development Plan Policy ENV6, Conservation Areas - Development.
- 3) We also regret that the proposal obscures the positive characteristics of the Community Project's existing building, which, although not a designated asset, itself represents a sympathetic modern insertion into the historic streetscape in line with statutory guidance.

We object to these elements of the proposals, as they do not respect the special interest of this site within the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site, and conflict with the Local Development Plan as well as national guidance on the historic environment.