



## Speaking for Scotland's Buildings

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

**Council:** Falkirk

**Application reference:** P/20/0361/LBC

**Address:** Erskine Church Hodge Street Falkirk

**Date AHSS comment submitted:** 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020

The AHSS Forth and Borders Cases Panel objects to parts of this application. Though the panel accepts that adaptation of the C-listed Erskine Church into flats may be one way of ensuring its survival, the modern interventions on the exterior draw attention away from the historic aspects of the church and its character. The panel wishes to object to:

1. the proposed glass turrets. The large expanses of glass strike a discord with the Gothic stonework of the original church fabric and create a new silhouette that disproportionately emphasises the turrets over the tower and nave roof. The Falkirk Supplementary Guidance Residential Extensions and Alterations from April 2020, the 2016 Design Guidance for Extensions in Listed Buildings and Unlisted Properties in Conservation Areas and the Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 from August 2020 all require that new extensions reflect the character of the original building and be respectful in terms of 'material type, colour, texture [and] roof materials". We feel that this design does not meet this requirement.

2. the removal of the historical slate roof from the town house. For similar reasons, the introduction of a glass and zinc topper to a stone residence creates a discontinuity with the original fabric. The loss of a traditional slate roof should always be examined with care, and the panel feels it is unnecessary and detrimental in this case.

In addition, the panel is concerned that the alterations will remove some important artefacts of the church's previous use, including stained glass windows, and a pipe organ in good condition. While we do not object to these as part of this scheme, we would like to see their professional relocation to an appropriate alternative location as part of any planning permission.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this case.