

Speaking for
Scotland's Buildings
AHSS East Lothian Cases Panel,



Planning and Environment
East Lothian Council
John Muir House
Brewery Park
Haddington
East Lothian EH41 3HA
f.a.o. Stephanie McQueen

Our ref: 24.EH42 1NW

by email: environment@eastlothian.gov.uk

22 January 2024

Dear Ms McQueen

Bonard Belhaven Road Dunbar EH42 INW: Erection of 1 house, widening of vehicular access and associated works

Planning Application: 23/01477/P

OBJECTION

Bonard is a castellated villa, with a pan-tiled, hip-roofed Edwardian extension and porch facing onto Belhaven Road. The property, lying on the south side of Belhaven Road opposite Belhaven Parish Church, faces out onto the Conservation Area that includes Belhaven Hill, originally a 18th century classical house (now Belhaven Hill School). The south-eastern boundary of the CA encloses Belhaven Hill grounds, just to the north of Bonard. The Conservation Area Statement notes that '*the mature landscape settings of these large houses are an important characteristic of Belhaven...*'

Belhaven is peppered with large houses and villas in wooded grounds. Bonard, smaller than other of the 'grander' houses, is nevertheless a distinguished composition of some note. Although unlisted, Bonard brings an unexpected touch of scholarly, Georgian gothic facing onto the Conservation Area. Its bartizaned roofline is an attractive feature of the elevation facing the main road. All its elevations can be viewed from public spaces. The main (S) elevation is particularly fine. A reasoned case can be made that it is of architectural and historic interest within Belhaven, and of value to the CA setting.

We consider that the application does not meet the requirements of CH2: '*All development proposals within or affecting a Conservation Area or its setting must be located and designed to preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic character or appearance of the CA.*' We **OBJECT** to **both the demolition of Bonard and to its replacement.**

- The application shows no appraisal of the exterior of the existing house, its context, the architectural composition or features of the property, nor its contribution to Belhaven Road, and how it sits alongside the Conservation Area. The CA Character Statement

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asserts that any new development must not *'interfere with public views of the mansion houses of Belhaven and must not result in the loss of trees that form the setting of both the individual buildings and the Conservation Area itself.'*

- The loss of this distinguished building will damage the integrity of the CA and townscape character of the main Belhaven to Dunbar approach. The Society hopes the Council will treat the claim that the building should be demolished with suitable scepticism. Since its sale in 2021, it has lain neglected – the application photos indicating it suffers from lack of maintenance. But the cost of restoration would be most unlikely to exceed the cost of demolition and new construction or compensate for the loss of this important heritage asset.
- The existing vehicular access off Belhaven Road has stood the test of time and is adequate as can be seen in the attached photo (2010). There is no justified need to demolish and widen this architectural statement, on the roadside.
- The design of the new house will damage the integrity of the CA and townscape character of the main Belhaven to Dunbar approach. This would be contrary to LDP policy on design, notably the importance placed in DP2 on a design which respects the site's context. The proposed house replaces a distinguished building of some architectural merit and distinct character (see Existing elevation plans), with an undistinguished timber-framed, pre-packaged house. Thus, 19th and early 20th century bespoke quality is lost to an 'off the peg' construction. The new design is bland and characterless thus at odds with the main aims of adopted policy.

We urge the Council to do all within its remit to secure the future of this villa. Our notes, from a preliminary trawl of sources emphasise the architectural and historic value of Bonard to the setting of the Belhaven CA, and the townscape of Dunbar -Belhaven.

Yours faithfully,

The AHSS East Lothian Cases Panel

c.c. Historic Environment Scotland steven.robb@hes.scot
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BONARD BELHAVEN ROAD DUNBAR EH42 INW

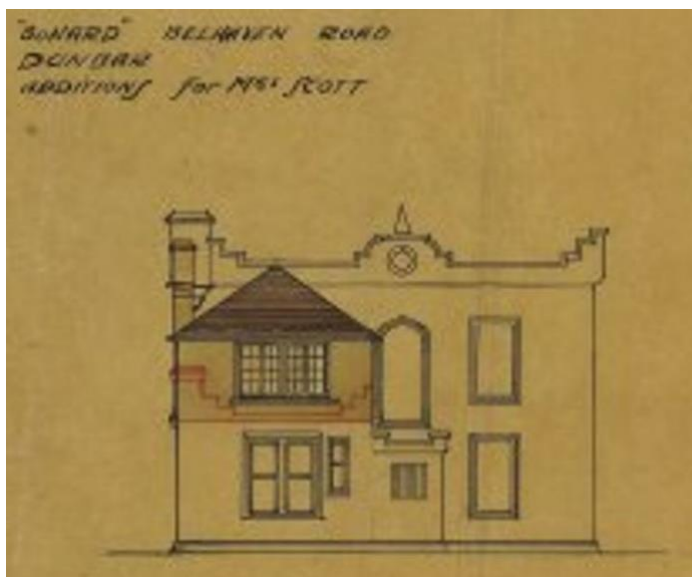
Preliminary desktop appraisal



i) *Bonard, Belhaven Road: North front 2010*

Although not on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, its absence reflects the resources available when undertaking survey, as the lists are far from comprehensive.

- Canmore notes that the architects Peddie and McKay prepared plans, sections and elevations of additions and alterations for a Miss Scott in 1907, and surviving plans relate to the Edwardian wing on the north, roadside façade. However, their attribution appears inaccurate.
- The Buildings of Scotland Lothian (second edition 2024, Jane Geddes, Ian Gow, Aonghus MacKechnie, Chris Tabraham and Colin McWilliam, page 176) notes: “*To its [Summerfield House] E, BONARD, a presumptuous late C19 square box villa, its flat roofline enhanced with one small angle turret with corbels and crenellations, the other corners and centre pediment crowstepped, and corbelled chimney top. Minor addition of*

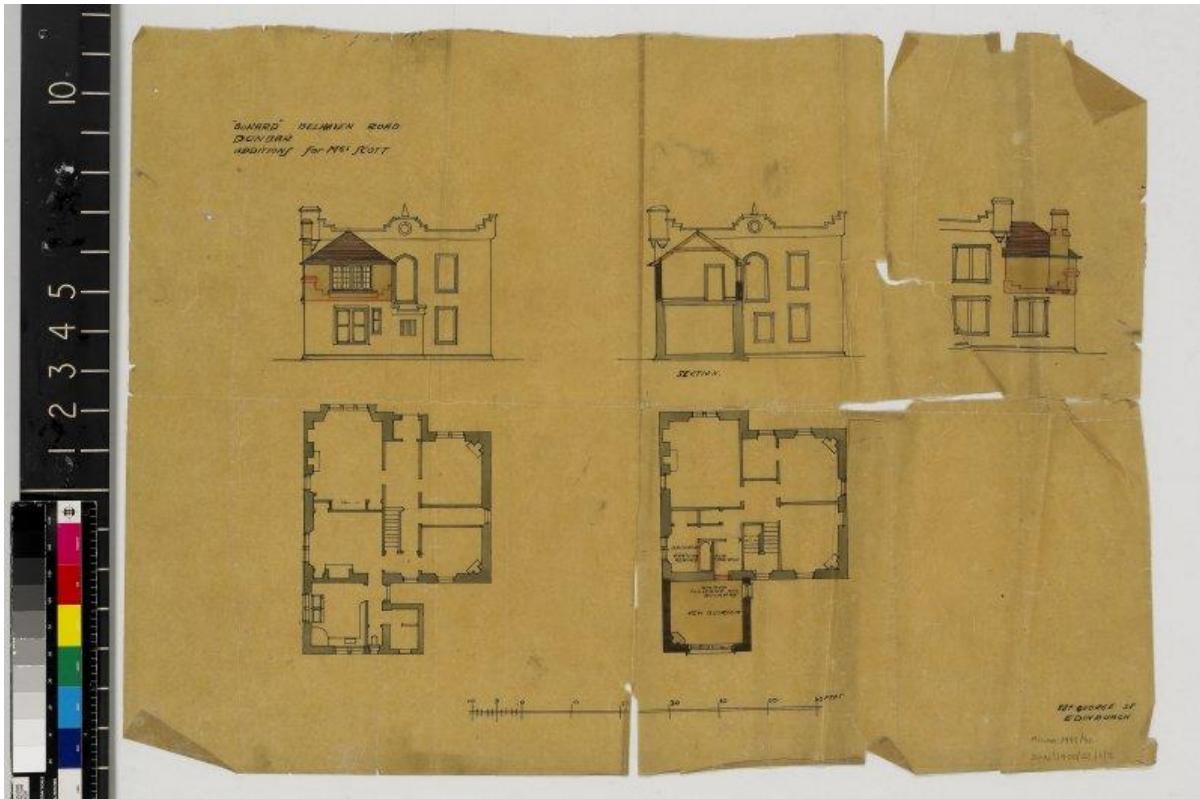


1907 by A. E. Horsfield'.

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- ii) *Canmore: 1907 extension on north façade and porch*
- Dictionary of Scottish Architects gives the following information under Arthur Eustace Horsfield (1878-1931) “1907 Bonard, Dunbar, East Lothian, Additions”.



- iii) *Canmore: 1907 extension on north façade and porch. Notes read... 'additions for Miss Scott' with the architect's address given as '88a George Street Edinburgh', which is where Horsfield was c. 1907-1913*



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iv) *Aerial view, north to top showing clearly the earlier square layout of the gothic villa and the early C20 extension to north*



v). *Bonard, Belhaven Road: North front, current*

- Behind the Edwardian wing lies a flat-roofed castellated mansion, in style a picturesque house which could well be early C19, with sandstone castellations and corbels, and interesting fenestration. Although little is known about its origins and little information is submitted as part of this planning application, the AHSS have serious concerns about its loss due to its impacts on the setting of the Conservation Area and the architectural history and character of Belhaven-Dunbar.
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We request that consideration be given to appraising the building adequately, with a view to HES spotlisting the building,

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