



## Design Statement

### THE PROJECT:

#### **Internal, External Alterations & Window Replacement 67 High Street, Crail, Fife**

*Formerly East Neuk Hotel, Proposed Shoregate Restaurant, Bar and Hotel*

#### The Applicant

Mr D Reynolds, 2 Shoregate, Crail, Anstruther, KY10 3ST.

#### The Agent

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## 1 Introduction

This application relates to a detached two storey building which is situated in a unique position on the main street in Crail with a vehicle access and pedestrian access on each side and a public square and parking area to the rear. Sitting island-like between the High Street North and the West Green, 67 High Street salutes the top of Shoregate and benefits from striking views out to the Firth of Forth, particularly from the upper floors. The property, although currently vacant, is an established hotel/restaurant premises and is a Category C Listed Building situated within the Crail Conservation Area.

## 2 Recent Planning History:

15/01091/LBC Listed building and 15/01072/FULL consent for installation of replacement windows, rooflights and partial replacement of render Permitted: 29.05.15

06/01719/EFULL and 06/02220/ELBC Installation of 3 no. canopies/awnings and electric heaters to building. Permitted 06.11.06 and 05.10.06

02/03818/ELBC and 02/03816/EFULL Install replacement windows in hotel (works already undertaken) Permitted 10.03.03

99/00001/EADV and 99/00003/ELBC Display externally illuminated fascia and projecting signs Permitted 01.02.99 and 10.02.19

## 3 The Property & History

67 High Street Crail was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as a family house. From 1883 Crail was served by the railway which wandered around the coast of east Fife; this stimulated holidays. The house was subsequently converted into an hotel and through various owners and alterations has almost continuously acted as such through to the present day (with some periods of vacancy).



## 67 High Street circa 1890

The original house is a gabled, part crow-stepped, part skewed, two storeys plus an attic, with two storey and single storey extensions to the rear. The building has been modified throughout its history with the façade “refined” around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the installation of a cornice parapet gutter, render and slate roof finish with two front canted dormer windows with a central skylight. The building has an early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century flat-roofed extension to the High Street front.

Although the property has benefited from some internal improvements in recent years, these are not compatible with the planned sustainable future use and the external fabric is also showing signs of deterioration and requires general maintenance, fabric repair and sensitive improvement. Previous modifications, such as the awnings, have not aged well and tend to detract from the property, and are planned for removal.



Existing Condition Present Day

## 4 The Proposals

The proposal is to revitalise the existing building to provide a new accessible restaurant and bar, reducing the number of lettable rooms to four large ensuite bedrooms for guests. Modifications are required to allow access for all restaurant patrons. Externally a new main entrance door is proposed to be formed in the east facing gabled wall, aligned with the sloping pavement, to allow access without steps. The existing main entrance is clearly unsuitable for this, being four steep steps straight into the restaurant area. The new entrance not only allows unimpeded entry to a welcoming entrance hall but provides direct access to a new accessible toilet and entry to the restaurant. To mark the new entrance, it is intended the door is framed by an over-head projecting cornice and adjacent pilasters. This is a sympathetic approach to the building and is similar to the original entrance to the house.

## 5 Design Guidance

The following policies relating to the design in the development plan have been considered:

- Crail Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Area Management Plan (2013);
- Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997;
- Scottish Planning Policy (2014) (Valuing the Historic Environment);
- Scottish Historic Environment Policy (2011);
- Historic Environment Scotland Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Windows;
- Historic Environment Scotland Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Interiors;
- Adopted St Andrews and East Fife Local Plan (2012): Policies E2 (Development within town and village envelopes), E4 (Development Quality – Design), E7 (Conservation Areas) and E8 (Listed Buildings);
- Proposed Fife Local Development Plan (2017): Policies 1 (Development Principles), 5 (Employment Land and Policy), 6 (Town Centres First), 10 (Amenity) and 14 (Built and Historic Environment);
- Fife Council Planning Guides: Design and Access Statements; Painting the Exterior of a Listed or Unlisted Building in a Conservation Area; Shop Front Design Guidelines; Windows in Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

## 6 Design Approach

The approach taken is to create a high-quality external treatment, removing and simplifying later attached wall furniture (such as wall mounted signage, awnings and heat lamps) and repairing and enhancing the existing fabric. To draw distinction between the later extension forming the dining space, and the original 19<sup>th</sup> century building, new taller windows will be added to the extension, replacing the existing timber casement hoppers with fresh aluminium frames. The existing front door and steps will be removed and replaced with a window to create a balanced street elevation.

The new accessible main entrance located on the north-east facing gable is framed around a new timber surround of projecting cornice and pilasters which respects and enhances the original fabric of the building and the general treatment of sympathetic shop fronts throughout the High Street. This surround will be formed in timber and will adopt appropriate moulding patterns and design. It is recognised that the new entrance is formed through the original gable wall. However, in so doing this will transform the accessibility of the building, not only for those with ambulatory issues, but also families with push chairs: dramatically widening the potential use and sustainability of the restaurant.

Other external modifications include the formation of a kitchen door in the space of a window. This is seen as an essential improvement to the fire escape provision within the kitchen and serves as a useful service entrance. In addition, in order that the top floor staircase can be used with ease and closer to current building regulations, the existing cat-slide dormer is raised by approximately 0.5m to provide compliant escape headroom which also allows the formation of an enhanced shower room space.

On the south-west elevation a former blocked-up window is opened with a new sash and case window inserted to match the existing windows on the property.

To the rear of the property, a vertical boarded timber fence is added to enclose the existing bin and oil stores and improve the visual appearance around the existing cellar hatch. Also, a redundant wall mounted cooler unit is to be removed to further improve the appearance of the elevation.

Internally the alterations include reforming the toilet provision to provide an accessible toilet, with an entrance hall capable of easy wheelchair movement and a rationalisation of the fire escape provision serving the upper floors. On the first floor the bedroom provision is reduced by two to three. These bedrooms are brought back to their original form by removing later unsympathetic ensuite shower rooms. Instead, new shower rooms are created with bedroom entrance spaces, better suited to the character of the original house. On the top floor the suite of attic rooms is modified to provide better family accommodation with a shared shower room facility.

New signage will be painted directly onto the south-east facing façade above the central window, and above the new main entrance. The simplicity of the proposed design and limited colour palette seek to declutter the existing treatment with a well-considered, appropriate design logo and treatment. To highlight the signage discreet LED strip lights are proposed both above the front building side (under the projecting cope stones) and above the projecting cornice lighting the logo and name from beneath. Otherwise lighting will be limited to two up/down pencil lights either side of the main entrance and via the self-illuminated menu board at the front door.

It is proposed to repaint all existing rendered walls in colour Keim 9477 (light grey) with window margins in a contrasting RAL 250 40 15 (blue-grey). These colours provide a pleasant but subtle differentiation from the ubiquitous white of the adjacent buildings.

## 7 Prior Consultation

The client, Damon Reynolds and architect, Ian Reid met with conservation officer Matthew Price on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and walked through the property and discussed the general intent of the proposals. The meeting usefully highlighted potential approaches to the modification of the building and areas which are held to be significant, and other areas less so.

## 8 Access Statement

The Shoregate is committed to improving access for those with limited mobility or carers with push chairs to the restaurant facilities. The principle changes to the existing building, such as relocating the main entrance and alterations to the toilets, are specifically to meet the needs of all users, and particularly those who may have limited mobility requirements.

**Parking:** Whilst the restaurant does not have dedicated parking spaces, there are publicly available free to use spaces a short distance from the restaurant, accessible by pavement, including to the rear of the property. The new entrance is accessed via a slightly sloping path.

The outward opening doorway is sufficiently wide for normal wheelchairs and push chairs. The entrance hall is generously sized to allow easy turning to either the restaurant door or the unisex accessible toilet. The entrance will be well lit and clearly visible.

Within the accessible toilet there will be horizontal and vertical grab rails adjacent to the toilet. An emergency alarm pull chord will be provided with flashing light should any user get into difficulties. The sink will include a lever tap and there will be good colour contrast between surfaces. A folding-down changing table will be provided.

There is no change in level between the entrance hall and the restaurant. Two lobby doors, required for fire regulations, will be kept open on magnetic hold-open devices. The doors will close in the event of a fire but are designed to be manually openable for users in wheelchairs.

As the Shoregate is an historic building, adapted many times over the years, it has not been possible to make provision for internal level access to the rear bar or a lift to the upper rooms. Although there are two steps internally to access the rear bar, it is possible to gain entry to the bar externally without steps via a door on the south-west gable, using the main entrance door and sloping pavement.

## 9 Applicant's Business Objectives

Our proposals for the refurbishment of the property have been driven by our overall 5-year business objectives, which in turn have drawn heavily from the Fife Tourism Strategy 2014-2024<sup>1</sup>

In line with that strategy, we must create a business

- that is sustainable and profitable all year round
- provides more high quality, long term jobs at all levels
- supports the local community by using local suppliers and distributors
- is accessible for locals and visitors with mobility impairment, and inclusive for families and older customers with a variety of needs

The building as it is currently configured assumes a trading operation that is largely driven by wet sales from the two bars. Changing lifestyles and demographics mean that this is now completely unsustainable as the large numbers of pubs across the country closing each week clearly demonstrates. There is also a huge downturn in the winter months as discretionary spend from summer tourism dries up; jobs become seasonal, staff turnover thus increases, and wages stagnate.

We must create a destination that is as appealing to residents throughout the whole year, as it is to transient visitors in the summer.

The kitchen is currently small and cramped and is unsuited for the preparation of fresh food. The overwhelming majority of the menu items served over the past 4 years have been pre-packaged, pre-prepared and frozen, to be simply reheated and served. Few ingredients if any have been sourced from local farms and suppliers.

The poor access and maze of corridors makes the building hard to get in and out of and provides an unwelcoming face to first time visitors.

### **Creating a sustainable business**

Our proposals for the ground floor alterations address all these issues.

The expansion of the kitchen by creating a separate wash up provides the space to offer a full, fresh food service. Access to both front and back areas from the kitchen enables a more efficient service and safer working environment.

Fresh food service will allow us to source ingredients and products from local suppliers and producers, reduce our environmental footprint and engage with the community to showcase Fife quality.

The creation of separate but complimentary restaurant / bar areas means both these spaces can be more fully utilised for lunch and dinner service. The business can concentrate on a single simple

proposition to customers rather than trying, and failing, to be all things to everyone. This will spearhead our marketing proposal and so provide our unique approach.

A single main entrance allows for better flow and management of customers and for interaction with staff. In addition to providing level access for wheelchair users, the building will be considerably more user friendly for families and the better access will make it easier for visually impaired customers to navigate the different areas.<sup>2</sup>

With year-round revenue, staff will benefit from long term job security. We aim to offer a profit share scheme and ongoing training for all employees. As a pub, the business had between 3 and 5 full time equivalent staff depending on the time of year. Our plans will allow us to increase that to 8, all year round.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fifetourismpartnership.org/resources/fife-tourism-strategy/fife-tourism-strategy-2014-24/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fifetourismpartnership.org/resources/accessible-tourism/accessible-tourism-fife/>