

South Queensferry shopkeeper disappointed about decision on colour scheme

A business owner who painted his shopfront purple without permission says he has 'nowhere left to go' after losing a lengthy battle with the council.

Andrew Richardson has been in dispute with the authority since receiving an enforcement notice in October ordering him to return the building to a "muted grey colour".

He said this week he was "really disappointed" after The Scottish Government upheld the ruling in response to an appeal, adding it could cost him up to £4,000 to restore the shop to its former shade.

The owner of South Queensferry's House of Boë gave the High Street gin shop a lick of paint last year, but said he was unaware permission was needed to change the shopfront from grey to purple and white.

He argued that "half the high street is a different colour" highlighting the town centre's multicoloured theme.

Mr Richardson also pointed out that more than 1,500 people had signed a petition in favour of the building keeping its brighter palette.

He added the debacle had been sparked by a complaint from "one individual here who didn't like what we done".

The initial notice served by the council said the painting of the shopfront from “a single dark and muted grey colour to a white and purple colour scheme” had “affected the character of the listed building, thereby requiring listed building consent”.

After lodging an appeal with the Scottish Government, a planning reporter upheld the enforcement and confirmed the shop must be repainted again.

“We thought we had a chance...It’s really disappointing – I’m a bit taken aback actually,” Mr Richardson said in response to the decision.

“I’m left with nowhere to go now. The only way you can take it further is if there’s a legal challenge on something which we haven’t got.”

He has since written to the council to agree on a new colour for his shop but wants to wait until after winter to carry out the works.

And he estimated it would cost up to £4,000 to have the paintwork carefully removed and a new coat added.

Reflecting on his experience navigating the council’s “odd” planning system, Mr Richardson said it was time for a rethink to allow community views to be given greater influence on decisions.

He said: “It’s a rather warped and weird way of looking at things. It’s incredibly bureaucratic and inward looking, it’s not at all about helping people.”

by Donald Turvill

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Andrew Richardson