

Council to take no action over removal of historic shop sign

An Edinburgh shop that removed and 'destroyed' a retro ghost sign will face no action from the council despite breaching planning rules.

Locals hit out at Cockburn Street's Mama Said earlier this year after photos shared online showed the old signage cut up and left beside a bin.

Hand-painted lettering for the former baby carriage manufacturer Scott Brothers' – established in the 1880s – was revealed after the b-listed Old Town property's shopfront was stripped back.

An investigation following a complaint from city conservation group the Cockburn Association has concluded there was a "minor breach" of planning, however no action is to be taken.

The council said the loss of the historic sign was "regreatable" as the overall impact on the building was "relatively minor".

However the works sparked outrage among locals on social media after the photos first emerged in June.

One asked: "Why the hell did they cut it up? It's part o' Edinburgh history, all these auld signs are!"

Another called the act "criminal," whilst questioning whether the parts had been salvaged.

Historic Environment Scotland's guidance on shopfronts sets out that "as a general principle lettering on fascia which contribute to the significance of a historic shopfront should be retained".

However it also acknowledges “a balance needs to be achieved between accommodating commercial needs and maintaining the historic significance of the shopfront”.

A report by planning officers compiled after the probe said: “Investigations established that a hand-painted timber fascia sign has been removed from the shopfront. While the precise age of the fascia is unknown it is understood to be historic in nature and as such contributed to the character of the building as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

“Under the circumstances the removal of the fascia does affect the character of the building and listed building consent would be required. As the works have been carried out without consent a breach of listed building control has occurred.”

It added: “While the loss of the signage is regrettable, when considered with the context of the listed building as a whole...the overall impact on the character of the listed building is relatively minor.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

