

Bonnyrigg restaurant wins first step to new car park

A restaurant bid to build a customer car park on open land across the road has been approved after it claimed double yellow lines put down on its street had “seriously affected’ business.

Gigi’s in Bonnyrigg’s Lothian Street, appealed after Midlothian Council planning officers refused permission for the new car park, saying it would remove an ‘attractive open landscape area’.

The restaurant’s proposals would create space for nine cars as well as cycle parking, a community orchard and seating. It received 29 objections and three letters of support.

The restaurant argued the changes would enhance the area rather than lose the space.

Their agent said: “The car parking is necessary for the viability of Gigi’s Restaurant, which has been seriously affected by the introduction of double yellow lines.

“The proposal will clearly enhance the current situation and will not be removing the landscaping, as indicated on the refusal decision. The grassed car parking area is an improvement and the community orchard being introduced will be an amenity to the local area and residents.”

A meeting of the council’s Local Review Body this week saw

councillors back the business with one saying he would allow triple the size of car park, if the land was there.

Councillor Willie McEwan said: "It is refreshing to sit here and have local companies demonstrate a commitment to Midlothian. The background to this is the double yellow lines going all along Lothian Street which was not conducive to what a lot of residents would have liked.

"The applicant is trying to alleviate the problems and I welcome that. It won't solve all the problems, I would welcome a car park that is treble the size if the land was available."

And fellow councillor Connor McManus said: "I don't really have any issues with it. I think it could be possibly a better use given the changes to the area recently. There are parking challenges and I am happy with it being changed into a car park."

The review body heard the restaurant did not own the land and any issues regarding its use were separate to their decision. They upheld the appeal and approved the car park.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter