

Old photograph of cottage wins over councillors

The owners of a 19th century cottage have been given the go ahead to change its windows after an old photograph was unearthed showing its original look.

East Lothian Council planners had recommended councillors refuse permission for the white timber frames of the windows at Engine Cottage, North Berwick, to be replaced with 'tarpaulin grey' modern aluclad alternative.

However a meeting of the council's planning committee heard that while the cottage was listed in the Eighties as a Category B building, its white frames were only installed in the 1960s and were not original.

Councillor Donna Collins shared a century old photograph she found online of the cottage which appeared to show it had much darker frames earning her the nickname 'Miss Marple' from the Provost.



Current windows at Engine Cottage, North Berwick, have white frames pic courtesy ELC planning portal

Councillor Collins told the committee: "This type of building is called Tudor timber and I trawled the internet trying to find images of this style with only ten, out of hundreds I found, white. Most were a darker timber."

The applicants wanted to put eight new windows in the home, replacing single glazed white timber ones with the new versions.

But a report by planners said the proposals should be refused even though the windows they were replacing were not all original to the building itself.

Planning officers said advise on listed buildings from Historic Environment Scotland said windows should only be replaced if repairs cannot be carried out and should be like for like.

The said of the proposed changes: "The loss of the single glazed, timber framed windows and their replacement with

grey coloured, non-traditional aluclad framed windows, some with unauthentic plant on type astragals would be harmful to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building and harmful to the character and appearance of the North Berwick Conservation Area.”

However the meeting heard the white windows which were in a poor state were not originals and other buildings on the Carlekemp plantation where the cottage is had darker window frames.

Councillor Collins produced an image she had found on a historic website showing the cottage with dark window frames.

Provost John McMillan thanked her for her efforts in tracing the original picture adding:” Councillor Collins may go by a new nickname Miss Marple.”

Councillor Cher Cassini, committee member, said: “Since the current windows are not the original and are in poor condition I see no reason not to support the application.”

And Councillor Neil Gilbert added: “I think the darker windows are going to be an improvement.”

Councillor Andrew Forrest, however, pointed out that while the white frames were not original, they were in place when the cottage was classified as a listed building and so should be protected.

The committee approved the new windows against officers’ recommendation by nine votes to one with only Councillor Forrest backing the planners report.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter