

Owners of former bank appeal after latest plan refused

The owners of a former bank hall in North Berwick have launched a new appeal with Scottish Ministers after being refused permission to change it into a home for a fourth time.

The old Royal Bank of Scotland branch, on the town's Westgate, was bought for more than double the £225,000 asking price when it went on the market in 2018.

Attempts by its owners to turn it into a home have repeatedly been rejected by East Lothian Council planners who say it is a commercial unit and should remain so while the local community council have objected.

Now its owners are asking Scottish Ministers to overturn a decision to refuse Listed Building Consent for the partial demolition of the building after it was rejected once again.

They argue the design created by their architects is 'sympathetic to the area' and should be approved.

Planning officers refused Listed Building Consent even though Historic Environment Scotland confirmed the bank building itself is not listed.

It is, however, attached to a Listed building and planners said the impact of the new building designed for the site on it would be detrimental.

They said: "The proposed extension by virtue of its size, scale, alignment and height would not be subservient to the existing listed building and as such would be harmful to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of this part of the North Berwick Conservation."

The proposal to demolish the single storey extension and replace it with a two story building with a basement would, the applicants said, create a "home that will be a delight to live in whilst respecting its environs and context in which it lies".

However planners said the proposed home would be 'tightly crammed' between two listed buildings. Eight objections were lodged to the application which was rejected by planners earlier this year.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter