

PROPERTY NAME : The Kirna, Walkerburn, Scottish Borders, EH43 6DB

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REVIEW:

1. Summary of Proposals:

Proposals are to replace the existing out building with a summer house incorporating a sun room, double garage and garden store. A previously removed glazed, metal framed canopy is to be reinstated over the cellar access stair, extending over the existing garage doors.

The outbuilding is of low quality design and construction and elements of the structure are decayed and deteriorated. It's replacement with a new structure, predominantly of traditional materials, is considered not to be detrimental to The Kirna.

The canopy additions, required to improve the weather resistance of the building, are to be of a traditional design in keeping with The Kirna's form. There is limited impact upon the fabric of the main residence building. The canopy additions are completely reversible.

This HIA is to be read in conjunction with Drawing references "Kirna House – Sun room 02 – 07" showing existing structures and proposed additions.

2. Summary of Site and Condition and Universal Value (History and Description)

Building:

The Kirna is a fine Category A listed 2 storey detached residential villa (with attic room and partial cellar) located on the northern edge of Walkerburn.

The property was designed by FT Pilkington for George Ballantyne in 1867 in an "High Victorian Gothic" style (or Ruskinian-Gothic) with coursed whinstone rubble and dressed, patterned sandstone ashlar to openings, quoins and moulded features. The building has fine sandstone roll and rope mouldings, band courses, foliate capitals and numerous ornate, individual leaf and flower carvings and grotesques. The building has slated pitched and leaded flat roofs and includes a turret.

Internally, the building has a significant central scale-and-platt stair with arcaded galley above with elaborately carved timber finials including grotesques holding the Ballantyne crested shields. Principal rooms have plastered moulded ceilings and panelled timber doors with moulded facings exist throughout.

The original building has an early 2 storey extension to the west. To the west of the main building is a small single storey brick and timber clad outbuilding with slated pitched roof which serves as a general store.

George Ballantyne was the son of Henry Ballantyne, founder of Walkerburn and its textile mills.

The building's significance is attributed to both its design and use of high quality carved stonework, notable internal features and very close connections to the establishment and development of Walkerburn.

Site:

The Kirna sits above, and has uninterrupted views over, the Tweed Valley and river itself and stands within its own grounds with access from a private drive off the Edinburgh Road.



Photo 1 : The Kirna – Principal Elevations



Photo 2 : South elevation of existing outbuilding to west of The Kirna.



Photo 3 : North elevation of existing outbuilding to west of The Kirna.



Photo 4 : South elevation of existing outbuilding to west of The Kirna in context.



Photo 5: Existing garage and cellar access steps to left (north) over which a canopy is proposed to be installed.



Photo 6: Existing garage and cellar access steps over which a canopy is proposed to be installed. Note existing metal railings and gate.

3. Outline Methodology for HIA

Parties Consulted

No external consultations have taken place nor are they considered necessary given the limited impact of the proposals.

Scope of Assessment

Assessment included all relevant aspects of the existing buildings affected directly by the proposals.

Reference has been made to the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Listing description of the property when assessing the impact of the proposals.

Surveys

Surveys undertaken relied upon inspection (non-intrusive) of the various elements of the building physically affected by the works.

4. Detailed Description of Proposals

The external additions and alterations specifically including the following works:-

- Demolition of existing outbuilding immediately to the west of The Kirna and replacement with a new summer house accommodating a sun room / dining area, a double width car garage and a store area for garden machinery and the like.
- Reinstatement of former canopy over existing garage entrance doors and over cellar access stair. Form to be traditional design using metal framework, in keeping with the existing metal railing and gate, supporting glazed roof panels.

5. Assessment of Overall Impact of Proposals

a. Baseline Conditions:

The existing outbuilding is undersized for current requirements having limited storage space for garden machinery and general stores. The outbuilding is insecure (and not readily capable of being made secure without significant expenditure) and is also damp, having no damp proof membranes within the rear retaining wall sections (rendering the building unsuitable for storing certain more moisture susceptible items). Structural timber posts on the west elevation are significantly decayed at low level adversely affecting the structural integrity of the outbuilding.

Due to the sloping site on which The Kirna is built there are no alternative accessible locations for siting a sun room or garage.

The existing single garage is not sufficiently wide to house a modern family car.

The original cellar stair canopy has been removed prior to the current owners ownership and consequently the stair and cellar collect water during periods of rain. Similarly the west facing existing garage doors suffer from ingress of wind driven rain noting the weather comes predominantly from the west. There is evidence within the coping stones of the low stone wall around the cellar stair and within the elevation stonework over the stair and garage doors identifying where a former canopy once existed.

b. Need for Change:

The current building owners wish to form a new summer house which will provide accommodation for year round outdoor dining and secure storage for both vehicles and garden machinery. The existing outbuilding is not of suitable condition or size to meet these needs nor be adapted or extended sufficiently in any meaningful way.

The degree of water entering the cellar via the exposed stair compromises both the use of the cellar and also the safety of using the access stair. The west facing garage doors are decaying due to excess wetting and lack of shelter with wind blown rain regularly entering the garage via the head of the door opening. Reinstatement of a canopy over these areas will address these ongoing problems.

c. Potential Effects of Proposals, Significance and Justification

The effect of the proposals are considered minimal and consequently will have no impact upon the significance of the building nor site. The outbuilding is considered likely to post date the original construction of The Kirna and may have been built as a simple wood store before being enclosed by a basic, timber clad south wall. The proposed summer house is located to the north west of the Kirna and therefore very much to the rear of the property. The proposed canopy is similarly located on the west and north elevations ie on the rear, less decorative elevations of the building.

Proposals have minimal visual affect upon the exterior of the main building, to which special attention is paid in the HES Listing particulars.

The fine interior elements of the building are unaffected by the works.

The canopy installation may be considered “temporary” in that they do not physically or irreversibly alter the fabric of the building in any way.

d. Assessment of Magnitude of Impact

Based upon ICOMOS guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments the magnitude of impact of these proposals is considered to be **Neutral**.

e. Mitigation Measures

- i. The canopy additions are reversable with very minimal damage to historic building fabric. Note there are holes within the stonework already where a previous, possibly original, canopy built as part of the of the western extension, has been removed in the past.
- ii. The canopy metal framework will be slender in profile and simple in design. This will be finished with a black paint and will complement and be similar in style to the existing railing around the cellar stair.
- iii. The new summer house will be single storey with a pitched slated roof in keeping with the existing outbuilding it is proposed to replace. Above ground elements of the north, east and west elevation walls will be of natural stone, sympathetic to the stone built Kirna. The south facing elevations of the eastern garage and store elements will be timber clad and representative of the existing outbuilding’s south façade. The fabric surrounding and enclosing the sun room, to the west of the building, will be an aluminium framed glazing with bi-folding screens. The finish colour of the aluminium framework will be a dark, muted tone.
- iv. Record drawings of the existing layout and records of works undertaken will be maintained for future reference.

6. Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, the proposals are not considered to adversely affect the historical significance and Listed status of the building nor the appearance thereof. Alterations are required to provide secure garden and vehicular storage and out door living space as well as improving the weather resistance of the existing building.



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