

**Design Statement**  
**for external alterations to**  
**The former Boyne Hotel, Portsoy**



**NB Planning and Architecture**

**Nov 2021**

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## **Introduction**

This design statement is written in support of Planning Permission application to carry out alterations to the former Boyne Hotel, 2 North High Street, Portsoy. The property is situated at the top of a prominent street corner, where Culbert Street meets North High Street, within the heart of the Portsoy Conservation Area, just to the north-east of the old town square. The proposed works affect the rear of the Hotel on Culbert Street, which is specifically mentioned within the Statutory Listing (ID 386171) as being 'not included in the listing'.

## **Background**

The Boyne Hotel has functioned as a vibrant 13-bed hotel with bar and restaurant in the northern core of the historic coastal town for decades, particularly flourishing during the 20<sup>th</sup> century prior to the rise of cheap flight holidays. In recent times, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the hospitality sector has faced significant customer decline and, sadly, the hotel function was deemed no longer viable. The property was up for commercial sale for several years and now has new owners. The property received Planning Permission to convert into three townhouses in 2021 (ref APP/2021/2303).

The front section of the Hotel is a Category C Listed Building situated in the heart of the Portsoy Outstanding Conservation Area. The Hotel has its built origins in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when Portsoy was a fledgling port with financial support from the Earl of Findlater. Flourishing during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the railway connection and local tourism market, the hotel expanded and rear extensions (which are not part of the statutory Listing) were added. The original property was also heightened to three storeys with a steeply pitched mansard roof to provide additional accommodation.

The whole building now takes a slight U- shaped footprint, with the original building and hotel frontage facing west, directly on to North High Street. There is a rear, 1980s addition extension, which completes the slight U- shaped footprint for the full building. This rear extension is set back slightly from Culbert Street by a small outdoor seating area. The extension wing has a rendered finish and also includes a steeply pitched mansard roof.

## **Heritage Statement**

The Statutory Listing (see appendix) refers only to the North High Street frontage, i.e. the later rear buildings are modern and not listed (albeit they follow a 19<sup>th</sup> century footprint). It is acknowledged that the front Listed Building has been 'much altered', with a radical early-20<sup>th</sup> century top storey

addition with a slated mansard roof to increase the bedroom accommodation, and a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century flat roof single storey extension appended to its north gable. The front, however, with its symmetry, multi-pane sash and case windows, metal railings, and panelled entrance door with stone relief around its hood, has retained much of its original dignity (see cover photo).

Although the Listed Building has generally retained its early layout with rooms either side of a central stair, there are few original fixtures and fittings remaining in the property, due to repeated modernisation.

The rear extensions are not Listed and very plain internally. This includes the rear lean-tos. These harled wing extensions have been designed to copy the form of the existing Hotel, including the entrance door relief moulding and, therefore, integrate well into the townscape.

The rear entrance is accessed by modern steps and a concrete paved area, with a modern circular executed above ground in cemented stonework. The boundary to Culbert Street is defined by a much-altered low masonry wall with harl finish and stone cope. The central rear area is currently decked over in timber to serve as a beer garden, and the area next to the front building is tarred with gate access from the street.



The north wall of the Hotel is hard onto the neighbouring boundary and, therefore, has few features, other than some window openings at low and high level.

There are no trees in the vicinity and the building has not decayed to the point where it has become occupied by any flying animals.



## **Proposals**

The proposed works are to repair, conserve, restore, and enhance much of the building exterior, particularly the roofs, rainwater goods, windows, and doors.

The proposals would, however, introduce several relatively minor external alterations to the rear wings and garden ground off Culbert Street. That is : (a) establish a new doorway (to House 2) on the west facing recessed wall of the north-west rear wing; (b) remove the current outdoor Lounge bar floor decking and create a car parking space; (c) add a painted timber picket fence to segregate the garden grounds; (d) add Conservation Skylights to the rear single storey lean-to; (e) install a black metal stove flue on the north-east corner wall; and (f) add solar pv panels to the rooftop.

## **Justification**

The proposals are justified for the following reasons : (a) a new side doorway for House 2 will give it disability access at two levels, i.e. from North High Street as well as Culbert Street; (b) removal of the bar decking will permit another off-street parking bay; (c) a picket fence will provide privacy and improve amenity; (d) skylights will provide necessary sunlight into the lean-to and main lower level rooms; (e) a stove flue is required for space heating; and (f) solar pv panels sited on south facing roof planes will generate electricity and reduce the carbon footprint of the property.

## **Consultation**

The proposals have been compiled following off-site consultation with Local Planning Officer Marie Higgins, which has included off-site consultation with Conservation Planning Team Leader Cheryl Roberts and Transportation Officer Rhiannon Johnson. The Historic Environment Scotland Area Inspector has not been involved to date. Only informal conversations with immediate neighbours have taken place to date.

## **Policy Guidance**

The proposals have been put forward following policy guidance outlined in the Aberdeenshire Development Plan 2023, with specific reference to sections relating to 'Shaping Banff and Buchan' and Section 11 'Historic Environment'.

Policy HE2 advises that the design, scale, layout, siting, and materials used in development within a Conservation Area must be of the highest quality and respect the individual characteristics for which the Conservation Area was designated. The proposals would involve meeting client needs for access, parking, privacy, light, and energy without impacting detrimentally upon the Conservation Area.

## **Design solution**

The design solution is based upon minimum intervention upon the existing fabric, and the preservation of historic features. The solutions attempt to respect the existing building as much as possible without significantly altering features, such as external doors or windows.

The limited number of alterations to the main building with no new window openings means that the proposals do not give rise to any overlooking, privacy, or overshadowing concerns. Installing a timber picket fence will aid privacy and amenity for all concerned.

HES guidance encourages the restoration of elements of original design based on sound evidence, i.e. especially where they have been unsympathetically altered. Fortunately, there is mapping, Listing, and historical evidence to inform the development of the property, as well as strong guidance from HES and the Local Authority.

Any external alterations, such as the new doorway to House 2 and the re-profiled boundary fence along Culbert Street, are designed and specified to be of a high quality and, thereby, sensitive to the Conservation Area.

The installation of solar pv panels is carefully sited at high level, on the shallow-pitch top mansard roof plane, so that the panels will have minimal visual impact upon the Conservation Area. They will be specified to be coloured similarly to the existing slates, so that they do not stand out. They will also be specified to fit on top of the slates, so that they can be removed at some point in the future.



## Additional information

A site visit is possible at any time to exterior; and by arrangement with agent to view interior.



## Summary

The demise of the Boyne Hotel is regrettable and independent evidence indicated that it was not sustainable as a hotel. Conversion is inevitable if the building is not to lie redundant and fall into a state of disrepair.

By converting the property, removing later additions, repairing the exterior in traditional materials, and establishing private amenity spaces along historic lines, the proposals not only preserve and enhance the character of the property, the Square, and the Central Conservation Area, they also ensure the long-term health and viability of a Category C building of local importance.

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*NBPA/PB Nov 2023*

## **Appendix**

### **Listing Information**

**2 North High Street, Portsoy**

**Category** C

**Date Added** 22/02/1972

**Supplementary Information Updated** 15/03/1995

**Local Authority** Aberdeenshire

**Planning Authority** Aberdeenshire

**Burgh** Portsoy

**NGR** NJ 58888 66169

**Coordinates** 358888, 866169

#### **Description**

*Mid-later 18th century , but much altered. Originally 2-storey and attic, 3-bays with advanced centre bay, now raised to full 3 storeys with steeply pitched modern mansard. Heavily pointed rubble, painted ashlar margins. Centre entrance with lugged, moulded and corniced doorpiece. Regular fenestration, the centre gable attic window enlarged with rendered margins and flanked by mansard dormers under shallow catslide roofs. 12-pane timber sash and case glazing.*

*Return rubble gable to Culbert Street; coped end stacks; slate roof.*

*Much altered rear and rear extension.*

#### **Statement of Special Interest**

*Listed for street frontage only. Non-traditional rear extension with frontage and entrance to Culbert Street not included in listing.*