# Ballater antiques shop transformed into flood-protected home after appeal success



A former antiques shop located in the heart of Ballater is set to undergo transformation into a residential property, following a successful appeal by its owner against council officials' initial objections due to flood risk concerns. Dasha Mukhina, who purchased the C-listed building on Victoria Road three years ago, faced significant challenges as the property had previously suffered extensive damage during Storm Frank in 2015, leading to ongoing issues such as woodworm and rot.

The building, which once served as the Gray & Kellas solicitors office and later the Rowan Antiques and Jewellery store, has been unoccupied for some time. Initially, Ms Mukhina had ambitions to convert it into a café, but this plan was abandoned amidst criticism that the village was already saturated with similar establishments. Subsequently, she pivoted her focus towards revamping the site into a one-bedroom home—a proposal put forward to Aberdeenshire Council last October. Council planners, citing the area’s significant flood risk, rejected the application earlier this year, asserting that such a change might pose "risk to life" in the event of flooding.

Despite this setback, Ms Mukhina appealed the decision, bringing her case before Aberdeenshire Council’s local review body. During this hearing, planning documents provided insight into the intended redesign, which included a bedroom and en-suite bathroom on the first floor, accompanied by an open-plan kitchen, living, and dining area on the ground level. To further enhance the property’s resilience, she proposed the addition of a balcony. The appeal attracted support from local councillors, with Richard Menard stressing the importance of averting further deterioration of the building. He suggested that incorporating flood protection measures could be essential, a view echoed by councillor Catherine Victor, who recommended the installation of specially designed flood doors to mitigate future risks.

Ultimately, the councillors unanimously agreed to overturn the previous refusal, permitting the conversion, contingent upon the installation of flood doors to protect against potential flooding incidents.

The context surrounding Ballater’s flood risk is critical to understanding the community’s sentiments. Since the devastating impacts of Storm Frank, which highlighted significant vulnerabilities in the village's flood defence mechanisms, local advocacy groups have mobilised to address these challenges. The Ballater Community Trust has led several initiatives aimed at enhancing flood protection; their notable project involved the construction of a 150-metre bund wall along the River Dee, completed ahead of schedule and under budget. This action has provided crucial safeguards against lower-level flooding in the area.

Moreover, in an effort to galvanise further protective measures, the Ballater Flood Group has been vocal in its demands for improved flood defences, proposing a public-private partnership to fund an extensive flood alleviation scheme. Their critiques of Aberdeenshire Council's lack of response and perceived reluctance underscore the community's pressing need for effective flood safety strategies.

The need for comprehensive flood mitigation was further underscored during a recent meeting attended by over 200 residents, where discussions focused on addressing the root causes of flooding. Many voiced concerns regarding the adequacy of existing measures, prompting calls for affordable, sustainable solutions that integrate local insights with expert recommendations.

In response to previous flooding events, Aberdeenshire Council had proposed a £31 million flood prevention plan which includes an ambitious strategy of constructing extensive physical barriers; however, implementation has been fraught with delays and apprehensions regarding potential impacts on local tourism and economy. As these discussions continue, the approval of Ms Mukhina’s development marks a small yet significant victory within a broader narrative of community resilience and adaptation to the ongoing threat of flooding.

The evolution of this property from an antiques shop into a home reflects not just individual ambition but also a community grappling with environmental challenges, shaping its future in the face of adversity.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6765643/ballater-antiques-shop-house/), [[4]](https://www.aberdeenlive.news/news/aberdeen-news/two-hundred-ballater-residents-attend-8917372)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6765643/ballater-antiques-shop-house/), [[2]](https://www.ballatercommunitytrust.co.uk/projects/flooddefences), [[5]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6353626/ballater-flooding-defence-aberdeenshire-community-project/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/983472/aberdeenshire-group-battling-for-flood-defences-slams-unenthusiastic-council/), [[6]](https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/1878872/massive-31-million-flood-defence-plan-for-ballater-revealed-after-after-devastation-of-storm-frank/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6765643/ballater-antiques-shop-house/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ballatercommunitytrust.co.uk/projects/flooddefences> - The Ballater Community Trust has been actively involved in flood mitigation efforts since Storm Frank in 2015. They have implemented various initiatives, including the installation of a 150-metre bund wall along the River Dee to protect the village from flooding. The project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget, providing the lower village with protection against lower-level flooding. The final phase involves covering the water side of the HESCO boxes with soil and planting windblown trees to further enhance flood protection. The Trust is seeking additional funding to complete this phase and is committed to ongoing flood mitigation efforts in the community.
3. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/983472/aberdeenshire-group-battling-for-flood-defences-slams-unenthusiastic-council/> - The Ballater Flood Group, a voluntary organisation, has been advocating for improved flood defences in the village, which was severely affected by flooding in December 2015. They proposed a public-private partnership to fund a flood alleviation scheme but criticised Aberdeenshire Council for its lack of enthusiasm and delayed responses. The group emphasised the urgency of implementing effective flood protection measures to prevent future damage and protect the community.
4. <https://www.aberdeenlive.news/news/aberdeen-news/two-hundred-ballater-residents-attend-8917372> - Over 200 residents attended a community meeting in Ballater to discuss options for flood mitigation, highlighting the village's chronic flooding problems. The meeting focused on addressing the root causes of flooding and emphasised the importance of incorporating local knowledge and expert opinions into any proposed solutions. Councillor Glen Reynolds expressed the community's frustration and called for affordable, sustainable flood defence plans that the residents could embrace.
5. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6353626/ballater-flooding-defence-aberdeenshire-community-project/> - In response to the inadequate progress of official flood defence plans, a group of Ballater residents initiated their own flood protection project. They constructed a 500-foot wall along the River Dee to safeguard the village from flooding. The community-driven initiative was completed ahead of schedule and under budget, providing immediate protection against lower-level flooding. The project reflects the residents' proactive approach to safeguarding their community from future flood risks.
6. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/1878872/massive-31-million-flood-defence-plan-for-ballater-revealed-after-after-devastation-of-storm-frank/> - Following the devastation caused by Storm Frank in 2015, Aberdeenshire Council proposed a £31 million flood prevention plan for Ballater. The plan includes constructing two miles of direct defences, such as earth embankments, reinforced concrete walls, and glass barriers. The proposal aims to protect the village from future flooding but has raised concerns among residents about potential impacts on tourism and the local economy. The plan is still under consideration, with ongoing discussions about its implementation.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-38332590> - Nearly a year after severe flooding in Aberdeenshire, doubts have been expressed about the effectiveness of flood prevention measures in Ballater. Local residents and volunteers have raised concerns that the council's efforts may not address the most significant flood risks. The council has spent £40,000 on rebuilding a section of the riverbank, but some believe that the repairs do not adequately protect the village from future flooding events.