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Local Review Application



**56 Hilton Place  
Aberdeen  
AB24 4QY**

## Reasons for Review

A local review application has been lodged to request that the rear facing dormer be approved to allow the applicants to install a replacement staircase to the current building regulations and improve the fire safety of the current property.

At the current moment the stair case is open to the kitchen and does not conform to the current building regulations.

Other rear dormers are present on neighboring properties and one of these is directly next door.

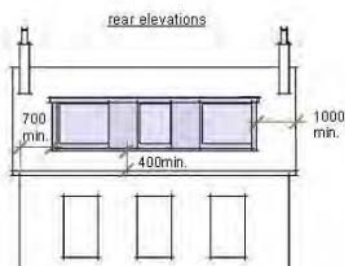
## Extract from the Householder Development Guide (HDG).

### **Rear Elevations and Exceptions**

The guidelines for older properties may be relaxed where a property is situated between two properties which have existing box dormer extensions, or in a street where many such extensions have already been constructed. They may also be relaxed on the non-public (rear) side of a property.

**In such cases, and notwithstanding the design and finish of neighbouring development, the following minimum requirements will apply:**

- The aggregate area of all dormers should not dominate the original roof slope;
- Dormer hafts should be a minimum of 400mm in from the inside face of the gable tabling;
- The front face of dormer extensions should be a minimum of 400mm back from the front edge of the roof, but not so far back that the dormer appears to be pushed unnaturally up the roof slope;
- Flat roofs on box dormers should be a reasonable distance below the ridge;
- Windows should be located at both ends of box dormers;
- A small apron may be permitted below a rear window; and
- Solid panels between windows in box dormers may be permitted but should not dominate the dormer elevation.



The application complies with the HDG with regards to the following:

*"The aggregate of all dormer should not dominate the original roof slope".*

The existing dormers visible from the private access lane are built off the wall head, contain larger proportions of solid areas, built closer to the tabling/ shared boundaries and are either in line with the ridge or higher. The neighbouring dormer is actually built higher than the ridge.

The proposed dormer in this application is reduced in size compared to the other dormers, follows the recommendations of the HDG and is subservient to the neighbours dormer. Based on this reduced size and impact compared to the other existing dormers visible from the non-public (rear) side of the property, it is deemed that the proposed dormer does not dominate the original roof slope.

*"Dormer soffits should be a minimum of 400 mm in from the inside face of the gable tabling".*

The proposed dormer in this application measures 550 mm and 450 mm to the tabling so exceeds the minimum distance, therefore complying with the HDG.

*"Flat roofs on a dormer should be a reasonable distance below the ridge".*

In this case the flat roof on the proposed dormer is 72 mm below the ridge, this is the maximum distance possible on this roof otherwise the internal ceiling height would be less than 2 m and would not comply with the building regulations above a stair.

A 70 mm distance has been accepted on other Aberdeen City Planning approved applications with limited roof height so it should be acceptable on this application.

If the dormer was set lower the building regulations would not be met in terms of head height, insulation levels and structural sizes.

The distance between the flat roof and the ridge was not raised as an issue by the planner during the application.

*"windows should be located on both ends of box dormers"*

Windows are located at both ends of the proposed box dormer therefore complies with the HDG.

*" a small apron may be permitted below a window"*

The proposed dormer features a small apron below the window.

It should be noted that immediately under the actual window frame, a lead trim/flashing would be positioned before the apron starts. The elevations prepared for the planning application are at a scale of 1:100, details such as the lead trim/flashing cannot be shown at this scale.

The apron under the flashing will be less than 3 slates in height. This is evident as the cill on the window next door is higher but an apron height of 3 slates can clearly be seen. The cill height in this proposed dormer application is lower so the apron will be smaller, again subservient in scale to the existing. The HDG does not specify the size of a small apron.

*" solid panels between windows in box dormers may be permitted but should not dominate the dormer elevation"*

The proposed windows are symmetrical, the window to the stair and hall area fully fills the wall, it would not be possible to increase the width of the window above the stairs. It also does not look aesthetically pleasing to have different sized windows. A small solid panel is proposed. This is acceptable on other Aberdeen City Planning Approved applications therefore it should be acceptable here.

Areas of the windows and solid panel were provided to the planner and the area of window increased to 6.6 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of glazing is larger than the area of solid. This has been accepted on other dormer applications therefore should be acceptable here.

The HDG notes that the guidelines for dormers on older properties may be relaxed where a property is situated between two properties which have existing box dormers or in a street where many such extensions have already been constructed and where on the non-public (rear) side of a property.

The planner states in his report of handling that his interpretation of the guidelines are that the vast majority of rear elevations on this street as a whole retain the original unaltered roof slope. No part of the guidance states this, the guidance is clear that it may be relaxed in certain situations. In this instance a dormer is positioned to the direct neighbour and many are already constructed. The guidance does not specify `the vast majority` so this interpretation is incorrect and not based on the guidance or current planning policy.

### Errors in the Delegated Report

The planner describes the private access at the rear of the property as `Hilton Lane` this is incorrect, neither the Ordnance Survey map or title deeds identify the private access as Hilton Lane.



Extract from OS map, showing the unidentified private lane to the rear of Hilton Place.

We also carried out a search online, Hilton Lane is not a recognised street or road in Aberdeen.

The planner describes the dormer as `horizontally proportioned`, this is incorrect. Horizontally proportioned would imply that the dormer features are in equal proportion on the horizontal axis.

The proposed dormer features windows at a height of 1340 mm and apron of 560 mm. The 560 mm measurement for the apron would also feature trims beneath the window and a lead trim at the join with the sloped roof. 1340 mm and 560 mm are not in a horizontal proportion.

The planner states "the dormer would rise c 2.2m above the roof" this is incorrect, the dormer is set below the ridge line of the roof, it therefore cannot rise above the roof.

The planner states the dormer would be set 500 mm and 400 mm from the tabling. Again, this is incorrect, the dormer is set 700 mm from the boundary line as per the Householder Guidance document (HG), this provides a distance of 550 mm and 450 mm to the tabling. The HG states that new dormers should be a minimum of 400 mm to the inside face of tabling.

The planner states that the only revision in the application was the addition of vertical bars in the windows, this is incorrect. The windows were increased in height at the request of the planner.



Existing example in the street, viewed from private road.



Existing example in the street, viewed from private road.



Existing example in the street, viewed from private road.

### Key Design Considerations.

The dormer has been designed to allow the new staircase to be fitted underneath as detailed in our design statement.

If the dormer face is pushed back into the property more than proposed, the stairs cannot be constructed.

The access stair must be positioned & accessed from the hall as shown.

The stairs must be constructed as shown, other designs have been considered but these do not comply with the current building regulations, would remove access to first floor rooms and remove useable space on the first floor, rendering either the kitchen or bedroom unusable.

Setting the dormer 900 mm back as the planner suggested would result in the staircase not complying with the building regulations. It was suggested that by the planner that the internal walls of the dwelling could be re arranged.

It was highlighted that the stairs could only be positioned in the way shown, moving the stairs would remove the usability of a room.

Complete internal re modelling as suggested by the planner, would not be cost effective nor would it be a sustainable practice (it creates unnecessary waste & far greater quantity of new construction materials).

The planner was asked to clarify what guidance 900 mm was taken from, but this was not provided.

Egress from a bedroom cannot be via a kitchen. The current staircase exits via the kitchen. The proposals are to improve fire safety in the property and bring the property up to current fire escape standards.