



Strategic Place Planning

Report of Handling by Development Management Manager

Site Address:	20 Westholme Avenue, Aberdeen, AB15 6AA
Application Description:	Straightening of both hipped gables, erection of two storey extension with balcony to rear, and erection of replacement garage
Application Ref:	250516/DPP
Application Type:	Detailed Planning Permission
Application Date:	20 May 2025
Applicant:	Mr Gary Easdown
Ward:	Hazlehead/Queen's Cross/Countesswells
Community Council:	Queen's Cross and Harlaw

DECISION

Refuse.

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Site Description

The application site comprises the curtilage of a traditional, mid-20th century one-and-a-half storey detached dwelling situated on the north-eastern side of Westholme Avenue. The grey granite walled dwelling has a hipped slate roof with front and rear dormers. A single-storey garage with lean-to roof is attached to the side (southern) elevation and adjacent boundary wall. The garage extends beyond the rear (eastern) elevation of the dwelling. A small single-storey extension projects from the northern end of the rear elevation. The site is bound on either side (north and south) by neighbouring detached dwellings of a similar style, with long rear curtilages bound by a mid-level granite wall. The rear of the property is bound by a narrow lane.

The area surrounding the application site along Westholme Avenue features similarly designed detached dwellings. The north-eastern side of Westholme Avenue features a consistent row of similarly designed, one-and-a-half storey, hipped roof mid-20th century dwellings. Some dwellings of alternative ages and designs are also present in the vicinity, namely four late 20th century two-storey pitched roof dwellings with front-facing gables to the south of the application property (on the opposite side of the street) and two late 20th-century one-and-a-half storey dwelling's with front facing gables are sited to the west, adjacent to the North Burn of Rubislaw and with Westholme Crescent North.

Relevant Planning History

None.

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

Description of Proposal

Detailed planning permission is sought for the following:

- Hip-to-gable roof extensions to both side elevations of the original dwelling;
- Erection of a two-storey extension that would project from the full width of the rear elevation, with a pitched roof, rear gable end, and Juliet balcony; and
- Erection of a replacement garage and extension to side.

Amendments

In agreement with the applicant, the following amendments were made to the application:

- Depth of rear fascia reduced.

Supporting Documents

All drawings can be viewed on the Council's website at:

<https://publicaccess.aberdeencity.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=SWK3ZFBZJ1W00>

CONSULTATIONS

External Consultees

- **Queen's Cross and Harlaw Community Council** – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

One representation has been received objecting to the proposal. The matters raised can be summarised as follows:

Material Considerations

1. The treatment of the mutual granite boundary is unclear.
2. The south-facing, first floor rooflight would impact on the privacy of the neighbouring property and rear garden as well as its north-facing ground floor kitchen window.
3. The massing of the proposal would impact on the daylight receipt of the neighbouring property.
4. The proposed use of granite gables in place of the current hipped slated sides to the gables is in conflict with all the other properties on the street.
5. The proposed hip-to-gable extension would set an unwelcome precedence for the street. The resulting massing and contemporary blockwork would create a significant impact on the character and appearance of the property.
6. The proposed black standing seam panels and off-white fibre cement board to the rear extension would not be consistent with other properties in the street.

7. The proposed rear windows and Juliet balcony would be detrimental to the amenity and privacy of the neighbouring property's rear garden.

Each point is addressed in the evaluation below.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Legislative Requirements

Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that where making any determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the provisions of the Development Plan; and, that any determination shall be made in accordance with the plan, so far as material to the application, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

National Planning Framework 4

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the long-term spatial strategy for Scotland and contains a comprehensive set of national planning policies that form part of the statutory development plan.

- Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises)
- Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation)
- Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place)
- Policy 16 (Quality Homes)

Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

- Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking)
- Policy D7 (Our Granite Heritage)
- Policy H1 (Residential Areas)

Aberdeen Planning Guidance

- Householder Development Guide
- Materials

EVALUATION

Key Determining Factors

The key determining factors in the assessment of this application are whether the proposed development would:

- impact upon the character and appearance of the existing dwelling or the surrounding area; and
- impact upon the amenity of the area, including the residential amenity of immediately neighbouring properties.

Policy Context

Policy 16 (Quality Homes), paragraph (g) of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) states that householder development proposals will be supported where they:

- i. *do not have a detrimental impact on the character or environmental quality of the home and the surrounding area, in terms of size, design and materials; and*
- ii. *do not have a detrimental effect on the neighbouring properties in terms of physical impact, overshadowing or overlooking.*

The application site also lies within a Residential Area, as zoned in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP) Proposals Map. Policy H1 (Residential Areas) of the ALDP states that within existing residential areas, proposals for new householder development will be approved in principle if it:

1. *does not constitute overdevelopment; and*
2. *does not have an adverse impact to residential amenity and the character and appearance of an area; and*
3. *does not result in the loss of open space.*

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

In determining whether the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and the surrounding area, Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place) of NPF4 is relevant. Policy 14 encourages and promotes well-designed development that makes successful places by taking a design-led approach. Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking) of the ALDP substantively reiterates the aims and requirements of Policy 14. The Householder Development Guide (HDG), part of the Council's Aberdeen Planning Guidance, supports the above policies and outlines general principles and type-specific considerations to apply when considering householder development.

Siting, Scale, Design and Materials

General Principle 1 of the HDG outlines that extensions should be “*architecturally compatible in design and scale with the original house and its surrounding area*” and that they “*should not overwhelm or dominate the original form or appearance of the dwelling and should be visually subservient in terms of height, mass and scale.*” Additionally, section 2.10 of the HDG outlines that hip-to-gable roof extensions should not result in an unbalanced appearance to dwellings. While the text specifically refers to semi-detached buildings, the guidance exists to ensure that where a hip-to-gable extension is proposed, its mass and scale would not unbalance the appearance of a property and thus preserve the character and appearance of the wider streetscape. As such, following the principles of the guidance set out in section 2.10 of the HDG, it is considered that the straightening of a detached dwelling's hipped gables, in a streetscape that is characterised by predominantly hipped gables, could result in harm to the character of the area.

The proposed hip-to-gable roof extensions to either side of the original dwelling would increase the massing of the building resulting in a significantly contrasting architectural form which would clash with the prevailing context of the area. The surrounding area is typified by traditional, mid-20th century granite bungalows with hipped roofs. The north-eastern side of Westholme Avenue features a continuous run of this style of dwelling. It is noted that there are small pockets of alternatively styled roofs along this street, notably a set of four, two-storey detached dwellings to the south with gable ends facing the street. However, this group of dwellings is set back from the street at a further distance than the 1½ storey dwellings and thus has a lesser contribution towards the character of

the overall streetscene. These dwellings are also noticeably of a different age (late 20th century) and are thus not appreciated in the same context as the older, more traditional hip-roofed dwellings that occupy the vast majority of the street and typify its character. The massing of the later two-storey dwellings is also, somewhat reduced by their pitched roof slopes being on their side elevations, thus replicating, to an extent, the hipped gable form of the older dwellings when seen in long-distance views along the street.

A set of two dwellings to the north-west of the site, on the opposite side of the street, are also later 20th century additions of a contrasting design, also feature principal gable ends and are also set back a further distance. Finally, a single property around a bend of Westholme Avenue before it joins with Queen's Road, is the only example featuring features side gable ends, and beyond located toward the end of the street, doesn't interrupt the rhythm of the hipped-roof character of the street. These groups of dwellings form a small minority in terms architectural style which is set by the distinct characteristics of the traditional 1½ storey dwellings. The pockets of front-facing gable buildings sit recessed from the street, which separates them somewhat from the continuous run of 1½ storey dwellings, thus reducing their impact on, and contribution towards, the character of the area. The application site is sited in line with the other 1½ storey dwellings featuring hipped roofs. The introduction of hip-to-gable extensions to either side of the property would introduce an unbalanced appearance in the context of the established appearance of the roof scape and street scene, and would thus have an adverse impact on the character of the area (*Issue 5*).

In discussion with the agent, it was noted that an application on the nearby Angusfield Avenue for a hip-to-gable extension had been approved in 2022. The report of handling for this application noted that 32 Angusfield Avenue featured distinct character pockets of architectural styles. The report also noted that the site was located on a section of street where character of the street changes (from hipped to gable roofs). The overall character of Angusfield Avenue consists of traditional hipped 1½ storey dwellings largely to the western side of the street, the eastern side features groups of both hipped and gable-ended dwellings. The approval for this application was thus based on the site specific context of the application site noting its presence at the edge of an established gable pocket and does not set a precedent for a proposal on Westholme Avenue. For the application site at 20 Westholme Avenue, it is set within a distinct and established run of 1½ storey hipped dwellings. This established character and defining building run is a material consideration in an assessment on the impact to the character and appearance of the area.

The hip-to-gable extensions are proposed to consist of granite blockwork built up above the traditional granite walls of the ground-floor level. It is noted that Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Materials states that the addition of new granite may be appropriate depending on the surrounding area and type proposed. Additionally, given the unique variations in granite type, patterns, and sourcing, the importing of granite may be a detriment to the overall character of a traditional building. The proposal notes that the proposed granite blockwork would consist of a matching grey colour. However, as outlined within the Materials guidance, further detail would be required relating to the granite type, pattern, and sourcing prior to determination as to the acceptability of the material (*Issue 4*). Unless a suitable match to the existing granite could be achieved, which is unlikely given the age and source of the existing granite, it is likely that an alternative material would be more appropriate, to avoid an unsympathetic contrast with the existing walls. Nevertheless, the hip-to-gable extensions are not acceptable in principle, for the reasons noted above.

The proposed two-storey rear extension and single-storey side extension would be appropriately sited for the context of the site. The side extension would replace an existing garage and largely replicates its form, with a 0.5 m increase in eaves height along the mutual boundary. The scale and design of the replacement side extension is appropriate, with its side elevation to be replaced with granite block work while the existing mutual granite boundary wall is to be retained on the neighbouring side. (*Issue 1*).

The two-storey rear extension would match the width of the rear elevation and feature a pitched roof with rear gable and flat top section at a height of c. 6.6 m. The height and width would thus introduce a significant scale to the rear of the dwelling by extending back the existing building lines. It should be noted that HDG guidance seeks to ensure that any proposed extension should be subservient in mass and scale to the original dwelling. In this case, as the proposed extension is shown to be set behind hip-to-gable extensions, it itself would not pose an adverse impact on the scale and appearance of the original dwelling. However, as noted in the separate assessment above of the hip-to-gable extensions, the proposal to the front of the dwelling would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area by introducing an overwhelming and dominating scale. It is therefore important to note that while in combination, the rear extension would be acceptable, on its own, without the hip-to-gable extensions, its scale would not appear visually subservient to the original dwelling. The design of the two-storey rear extension, consisting of contemporary black standing seam panels to the roof and off-white fibre cement panels to the rear, is generally acceptable, and would not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the original dwelling given its siting to the rear, not visible from Westholme Avenue (*Issue 6*).

Overdevelopment

General Principles 4 and 5 of the HDG outline overdevelopment considerations. These state that the built footprint of a dwellinghouse, as extended, should not exceed twice that of the original dwelling and no more than 50% of the rear curtilage of a dwelling should be covered by development. In terms of the current proposal, calculations confirm that the existing rear curtilage extends to c. 515 sqm, and whilst the proposed extension would add c. 73 sqm, the built area, including both the extension and associated replacement garage would result in c. 82% of the rear curtilage remaining unbuilt and the size of the extension would increase the dwelling's overall footprint by c. 75% thus not resulting in the original house being more than doubled in footprint. The proposal would therefore not be overdevelopment.

Open Space

The proposed householder development would be wholly contained within the existing residential curtilage of the application property and no open space would be lost.

Summary

To summarise, the proposal would not constitute overdevelopment or result in the loss of open space. However, the hip-to-gable extensions would increase the scale and mass of the principal elevation, introducing an architecturally dominating structure that would contrast with, and adversely impact upon, the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Further detail would be required for the proposed granite to the gable ends. As currently proposed, there would be some tension with the Materials APG. The proposed side extension and garage replacement would be appropriate for the site context and would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the site or area. The proposed rear two-storey extension would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the application site or area as it is proposed to be set to the rear and behind a roof extension. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies 14 and 16 of NPF4 and Policies D1 and H1 of the ALDP, as well as the relevant guidance contained within the HDG.

Impact on the Amenity of the Area

In relation to assessing impacts on residential amenity, General Principle 2 of the HDG states that *"no extension or alteration should result in a situation where the amenity of any neighbouring*

properties would be adversely affected. Significant adverse impact on privacy, daylight and general amenity will count against a development proposal.”

Daylight and Sunlight Receipt

Based on a 45° Method assessment, as outlined in the HDG, the proposed extension passes on both elevation and plan view when measuring potential impact to the neighbouring property to the north-west at No. 22. Therefore, there would not be an adverse impact to the internal daylight receipt of this property.

Using the same assessment method for the neighbouring property to the south-east at No. 18, the proposed extension passes when measured on an elevation view, however, a plan view angle would intersect the rear (north-east) facing window of the neighbouring property.

No. 18 shares a mutual, mid-level boundary wall with the application site. An existing garage extension projects c. 3.8 m from the rear of the application dwelling, along the mutual boundary. The extension's eaves face the neighbour and have a height of c. 2.1 m. The neighbour has an existing garden shed set adjacent to this garage extension. No. 18 also has a single-storey rear extension that projects from the centre of its rear elevation. Its side (north-west) elevation, facing the applicant's dwelling, is set c. 4.5 m from the mutual boundary. The side elevation has a single window serving a kitchen, however this window would not be significantly impacted, based on a 45° Method assessment.

While the proposed extension would increase the eaves height to c. 2.6 m adjacent to the boundary, the potential impact to the daylight receipt of No. 18's adjacent window would not be adverse given that the existing situation would already have some level of impact and a c. 50 cm increase in height would not significantly alter this situation.

Using the 45° Method once again for both neighbouring properties to assess potential impact to sunlight receipt in the rear garden; given the reasonable plot sizes, respective compass orientation, and separation distances the extension passes to both sides. The proposed two-storey rear extension would project c. 4 m from the existing rear elevation, adding a height of c. 6.6 m. While the proposal passes based on a 45° assessment, there would still be some level of impact to sunlight receipt to neighbouring properties given the scale of the rear extension. However, noting the minimal projection in the context of the full rear curtilage, pitched roof, and set back from the mutual boundaries, this would not have any significant adverse impact to neighbouring rear curtilages.

Finally, the hip-to-gable extensions would add height to each side elevation, with the introduction of gable ends. The gable ends would be facing the respective roof slopes and side elevations of each neighbouring property which both do not feature openings or glazing. As such, while some overshadowing may result from the introduction of the gable ends, the impact would be minimal and largely fall across the side elevation, side garage, and mutual boundary (*Issue 3*).

Privacy and Outlook

The proposed extension would feature high levels of glazing to the rear elevation. Noting the c. 4 m project from the existing rear elevation, the view provided from the proposed rear elevation would not allow for direct overlooking of other neighbouring dwellings. While the view would be oriented toward the applicant's rear garden, some overlooking would also be possible to neighbouring rear gardens. This is, however, not a significant change to the existing situation where both the application and neighbouring properties to either side have rear facing ground-floor and first-floor windows. As is common with plots that share mutual rear boundaries, some degree of overlooking is expected as a result in a suburban context. Therefore, the presence of rear-facing windows on

the proposed extension would not cause any significant adverse impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties.

The proposed Juliet balcony to the rear elevation of the first floor extension would not provide for an additional projected vantage point from the first floor windows thus not adding for the potential of direct overlooking to neighbouring properties. Given the style of a Juliet balcony as a barrier for an open window, it forms part of the first floor rear elevation window layout and as identified above, would not have any significant adverse impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties (*Issue 7*).

The proposed extension would also feature several rooflights. Two rooflights would be sited in the hip-to-gable extensions facing toward the rear and would not pose a concern in terms of privacy impact. The north-west (side) facing rooflight would face the rear curtilage of the neighbouring property. Given the angle of the rooflight, any potential overlooking would be minimal and would not pose and adverse impact to the neighbouring property. The south-east (side) facing rooflight would be generally aligned with the ground floor side window of No. 18's rear kitchen extension. This window would be approximately 10 m way from the midpoint of the opposing rooflight and is sited on the ground floor level. The distance between the rooflights, angle of view (c. 26°), and angle of the rooflight itself would limit any potential overlooking thus not having a significant impact on the privacy of the neighbour (*Issue 2*).

Summary

To summarise, the proposed development would not have any significant adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding area, including the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties, in accordance with Policy 16 of NPF4 and Policy H1 of the ALDP, as well as the relevant guidance contained within the HDG.

Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises, Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises) of NPF4 requires significant weight to be given to the global climate and nature crises in the consideration of all development proposals. Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaptation) of NPF4 requires development proposals to be sited and designed to adapt to current and future risks from climate change.

The proposed householder development would be sufficiently small-scale such that it would not make any material difference to the global climate and nature crises, nor to climate mitigation and adaptation. The proposals are thus acceptable and do not conflict with the aims and requirements of Policies 1 and 2 of NPF4.

DECISION

Refuse.

REASON FOR DECISION

The proposed hip-to-gable extensions of the dwelling, which is sited within a long line of relatively unaltered, traditionally designed mid-20th century granite 1½ storey hip-roofed dwellings, would introduce an overwhelming and dominating scale and roof form that would contrast significantly with the prevailing character of the streetscape on Westholme Avenue. The proposed development would therefore have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of both the application dwelling and the surrounding area, and is thus contrary to Policies 14 (Design, Quality and Place)

and 16 (Quality Homes) of National Planning Framework 4, Policies D1 (Quality Placemaking) and H1 (Residential Areas) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023, and the Aberdeen Planning Guidance: Householder Development Guide.