

4 HILLVIEW ROAD, PETERCULTER

CONSTRUCTION OF A 1.5 STOREY
GABLE EXTENSION

For: Mr Andrew Findlay

Application Ref. : P111140
Application Date : 08/09/2011
Officer : Gavin Evans
Ward: Lower Deeside (M Boulton/A
Malone/A Milne)

Advert :
Advertised on :
Committee Date : 16 February 2012
Community Council : Comments



RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the northern side of Hillview Road, adjacent to its junction with Craighton Crescent, and comprises an existing 1 ¾ storey semi-detached dwellinghouse, with associated garden grounds and freestanding single garage. The site is in a position of some prominence, adjacent to the road junction and facing down Craighton Crescent.

The existing dwellinghouse is constructed in pink granite ashlar, with a smooth cement finish to detailing around windows, doors and quoins. The property has a 'hipped' slated roof, with a single upper floor window partially built into the roofline in a '¾ floor' style. An existing pitched felt-roof garage sits to the west of the existing property.

HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history on this site, though it is noted that there are examples of similar extensions further along Hillview Road.

A7/1412 - Consent was granted in August 2007 for the construction of a 1 ¾ storey extension to 12 Hillview Road. This proposal involved the use of natural granite to on the principal/front elevation, with synthetic granite/fyfestone to side and rear elevations. This application was approved under delegated powers.

A8/0059 – Consent was granted (in accordance with officer recommendation) at the 5th June 2008 meeting of the Development Management Sub-committee for the construction of a 1 ¾ storey extension to 20 Hillview Road. This extension was approved initially with rendered walls, though a non-material variation to that consent later permitted the use of natural granite walls and cement dressings.

PROPOSAL

This application proposes the construction of a 1 ¾ storey off the western (side) wall of the existing dwellinghouse. The proposed extension would maintain the line of the existing rear wall, and would be set back around 200mm from the front face of the building. At 4.5m wide, the extension would be constructed to within approximately 1m of the western site boundary. The existing freestanding garage would be removed to make way for the extension.

The extension would be constructed with synthetic granite/fyfestone on its front elevation, pink harled side and rear walls, and a hipped slated roof. The applicant has stated that the roof slates would match those existing, or as close as could be obtained. An upper floor window would be formed to match the existing ¾ style dormer. Windows and doors would be in white upvc, while no mention has been made of window/door surrounds and quoin detailing.

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE

This application appears before members due to the representations made by the local Culter Community Council. Under the Council's scheme of delegation, applications subject to objection from the local community council require reference to the Development Management Sub-committee.

CONSULTATIONS

ROADS SECTION – No observations

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – No comments received

COMMUNITY COUNCIL – Culter Community Council wrote to advise of their pleasure at the design of the proposed extension being in keeping with the original building, though noted their concern at the absence of any details on construction and finishing materials at that time. The Community Council advised that they would support the application should it utilise natural granite from doughtings on its frontage, and natural slates on the extended roof. However, it was also stated their possible objection to the proposal, asking that conditions be attached to require the use of such materials.

REPRESENTATIONS

No letters of representation were received in relation to this application.

PLANNING POLICY

Aberdeen Local Plan (2008)

Policy 1: Design

Requires that new development be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting. In assessing this, factors such as scale, massing, colour, materials, details, the proportions of building elements and landscaping will be of relevance.

Policy 8: Design & Policy Guidance

Policy 8 states that all development is expected to be designed with regard to any of the City Council's published supplementary guidance which is of relevance to the proposal. In this instance, relevant guidance is contained in the Dwelling Extensions in Aberdeen document.

Policy 40: Residential Areas

Within areas zoned R40 on the proposals map, the predominantly residential character and amenity will be retained. Proposals for residential development within such areas will be considered favourably subject to applications being satisfactory in terms of all other relevant policies contained in the local plan and in terms of siting, design and external appearance of buildings, means of access thereto, landscaping of the site and on the further considerations of amenity, public and community safety, drainage and the need for community facilities.

Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan Proposed Plan was published for consultation on 24th September 2010, with comments on the plan invited until 17th January 2011. The examination of the local development plan by the Scottish Government Reporters took place between 20th June and 21 December 2011. The Reporters Examination Report was considered by the Council on 25th January 2012 when it was resolved to proceed towards adoption of the local development plan on 29th February 2012. Accordingly, the Proposed Plan is a

significant material consideration in the assessment and determination of this planning application.

EVALUATION

The proposed development would take place within an area designated as a 'Residential Area' (R40) in the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008). The relevant zoning policy seeks to protect the amenity of existing residents by restricting alternative land uses which are not compatible with residential use and by controlling any development which would result in an adverse impact upon that amenity.

Policy 1 (Design) of the local plan requires that development be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting.

This proposal must therefore be assessed on its likely impact on the existing residential amenity of the area and also on whether the design approach taken demonstrates due regard for the site and its context. The supplementary guidance on 'Dwelling Extensions in Aberdeen City' states that extensions to semi-detached properties will normally be restricted to 4m along a common boundary. This is taken to mean a boundary which is also directly adjoined by a neighbouring dwelling.

In its scale, massing and proportions, the extended dwelling would adequately reflect the existing house. The presence of similar extensions in Hillview Road indicates that this approach has been accepted previously by the planning authority. Nevertheless, those examples incorporate appropriate natural granite frontages to complement the original buildings. It is considered that, while synthetic granite may be accepted in some instances, it would not stand up to the direct comparison which would result from an extension which appears to accurately reflect the original building in most other ways. It is felt that the use of these materials in such close proximity would only serve to underline the distinction between the two, resulting in a poor match and a jarring appearance.

Due to the arrangement of the respective dwellings, it is not considered that there would be any adverse impact on daylight or sunlight to adjacent dwellinghouses. The scale, proportions, massing and siting of the proposed extension are accepted. The proposed extension would be constructed in synthetic granite, commonly known as 'Fyfestone' which is a brand name. Such products are designed to resemble natural stone, and are generally formed through mixing a granite aggregate and a cement-based binding. This material has been used extensively across the city, though it has generally considered to be unwise to utilise the product where is likely to be seen in the same context as natural granite. While the product can be a good mimic from distance, it is not considered to be appropriate for use on the same frontage as natural granite. This is highlighted by the extension at 12 Hillview Road, where natural granite was used on the frontage of an extension, but synthetic granite was permitted on the less prominent side and rear elevations. This would be an acceptable proposition in this instance also.

While it is acknowledged that the inappropriate use of fyfestone is one matter among many, the resulting visual impact of this seemingly minor detail would be readily discernible, would detract from the character of the wider area, and would risk setting a precedent for the acceptance of inappropriate and poorly

considered building and finishing materials in the surrounding area, to the detriment of residential amenity.

The Council's supplementary guidance on 'Extensions in Aberdeen City' sets out size restrictions for dwelling extensions along shared boundaries, but does not include any such specific guidance on gable extensions such as that proposed. The proposal does not therefore result in any conflict with the relevant supplementary guidance and by extension complies with policy 8 (Design and Policy Guidance) of the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008).

No material considerations suggest that this application should be determined other than in accordance with the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008). As detailed above, the residential nature of the proposed development would accord with the zoning of the site within a designated residential area, but it is further considered that the adverse visual impact resulting from the proposal would be to the detriment of the wider residential amenity, and therefore the proposal would not accord with policy 40 of the Aberdeen Local Plan. The proposal accords with the size restrictions set out in the relevant supplementary guidance, and is therefore consistent with policy 8 of the local plan.

In using a synthetic stone on the same principal elevation as natural granite, where the two would be seen in the same context, the proposal fails to comply with the requirements of Policy 1 (Design, which states that all development should be designed with due regard for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting. This proposal is considered likely to result in an adverse impact on the setting of the existing building, and by virtue of inappropriate design, would not demonstrate due regard for its context. It is therefore recommended that this application be refused.

In the event that members resolve to approve this application, it is recommended that conditions be applied in relation to the following matters; submission of samples of proposed blockwork and slate; submission of a scheme demonstrating the detailing of window and door surrounds and quoins.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. The proposed development would, by virtue of its inappropriate use of unsympathetic materials on the principal elevation of a traditional granite property, represent a failure to demonstrate due regard for its context, and is therefore considered to be contrary to policy 1 (design) of the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008).

2. The visual impact of the proposed extension, which is exacerbated by its prominent location and the presence of better considered and more sympathetic extensions of a similar type in the immediate area, is considered likely to result in an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding residential area, contrary to policy 40 of the Aberdeen Local Plan (2008).

3. The approval of this extension would risk setting an unwelcome precedent for similar proposals involving poorly chosen materials, potentially resulting in a cumulative erosion of the character of the townscape in the surrounding area.

Dr Margaret Bochel

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.