

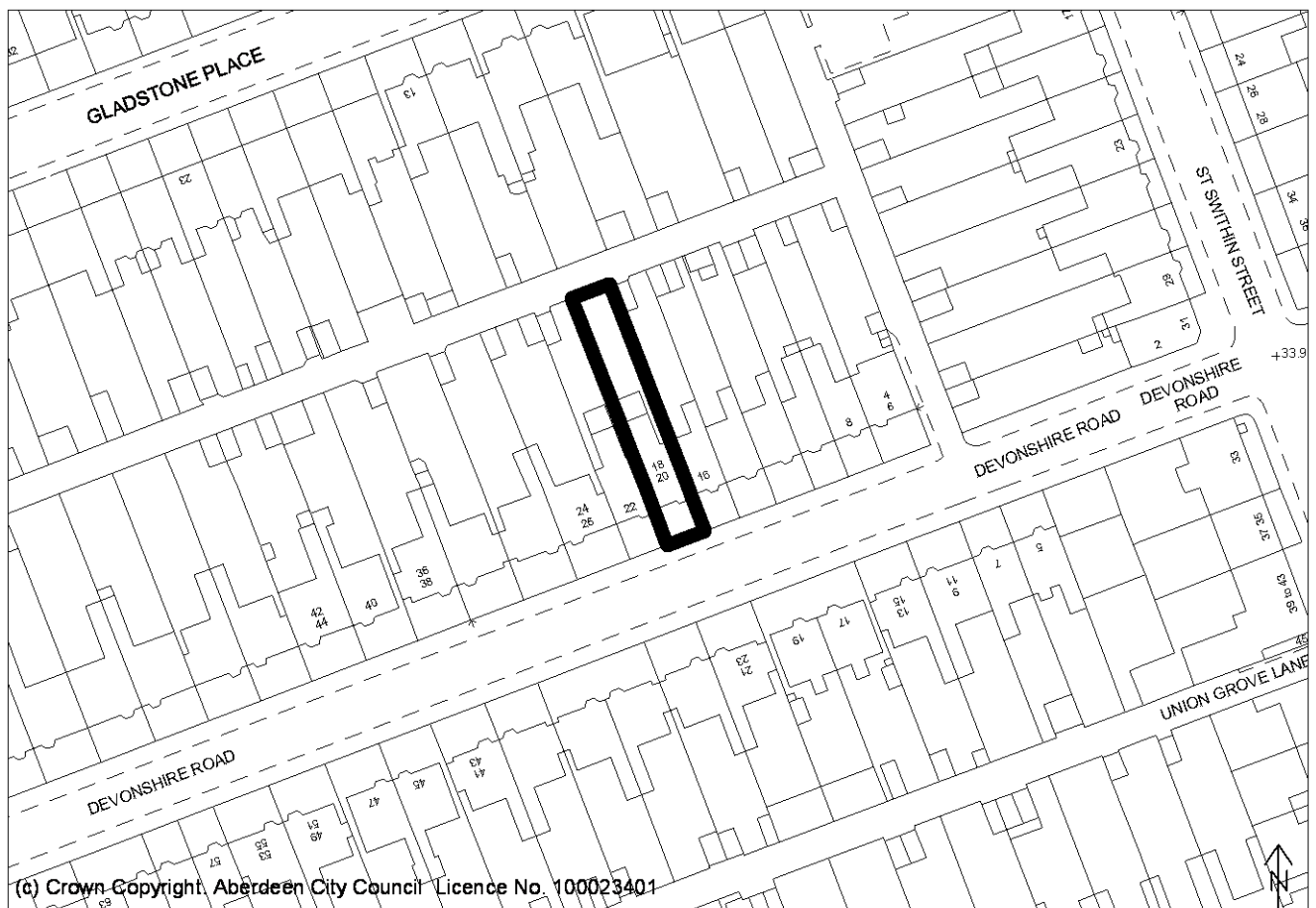
20 DEVONSHIRE ROAD, ABERDEEN

ALTERATION TO EXISTING REAR  
ANNEXE TO PROPERTY INCLUDING NEW  
OR REVISED FENESTRATION, PART  
INCREASE IN ROOF HEIGHT, BALCONY &  
EXTERNAL STAIR, VELUX WINDOWS TO  
FRONT ELEVATION REPLACING  
EXISTING SKYLIGHTS.

For: Mr S. Heron

Application Ref. : P120120  
Application Date : 30/01/2012  
Officer : Sheila Robertson  
Ward: Hazlehead/Ashley/Queen's Cross(M  
Greig/J Stewart/R Thomson/J Corall)

Advert : Section 60/65 - Dev  
aff LB/CA  
Advertised on : 07/03/2012  
Committee Date : 18 July 2012  
Community Council : No comments



**RECOMMENDATION: Approve Unconditionally**

## **DESCRIPTION**

The application property comprises the upper floor of a two storey terraced dwellinghouse, of traditional design and build, divided into two flats, located on the north side of Devonshire Road and within the Albyn Place/Rubislaw Conservation Area. An original 2 storey, pitched roofed annexe extends 10 metres from the rear elevation, set 1.3 and 1.7 metres in from the western and eastern boundaries respectively. The first 6.5 metres section of the annexe from the rear elevation is 8.2 metres in height, the roof ridge of the remaining section dropping down by 1 metre. The annexe accommodates the living room and kitchen with an existing metal staircase and plinth on the rear facing gable giving access to the garden from the first floor level. The rear garden is screened by 1.6 m high walls to the eastern and western elevations, the eastern boundary further screened by mature trees approximately 12m in height. There are 2 single garages within the rear garden, abutting a lane and linked by a 2 metre high access gate. The lane services the rear of properties on Devonshire Road and Gladstone Place, its streetscape characterised by a variety of garages, sheds and boundary walls

## **HISTORY**

110490 – An application for a similar proposal was withdrawn by the applicant due to a land ownership issue.

## **PROPOSAL**

Proposed to (a) remove the existing external stair and plinth and replace with a projecting balcony, extending the full width of the gable of the annexe, (b) create a new doorway from an existing window at upper level on the east facing elevation of the annexe and create an external access stairway to the garden, (c) raise the wall head and roof ridge height of the lower section of the annexe by 1 metre, (d) block up a window and increase height of 2 windows on eastern elevation of annexe, (e) block up a window and increase height of window on western elevation of annexe, (f) install 3 rooflights to the eastern roof elevation of the annexe, and 1 to the western elevation, and (g) replace one rooflight and install an additional rooflight to the front elevation of the main house.

The new wallhead would be built up in granite and slates to match the height of the higher section of the annexe. There would be no change to the footprint of the annexe. The apex of the raised gable would be extensively glazed, with glazed bifold doors accessing the new balcony. The balcony would be cantilevered, extend 4 metres across the full width of the gable with a 2.1m projection, formed of mild galvanised steel with a 850mm high balustrade. The design of the balcony has been amended since originally submitted to include the erection of a 1.5 m high opaque glazed screen to the western elevation.

## **REASON FOR REFERRAL TO SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Community Council has objected to the proposal as well as 10 letters of representation having been received, therefore, in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, the application is required to be determined by the Development Management Sub-committee.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

ROADS SECTION –No observations.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH –No observations received.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL – The Community Council has raised concerns including impact to lower flat in terms of overshadowing and general amenity, noise nuisance, loss of privacy to adjoining properties and properties in Gladstone Place, development is out of character and unsympathetic to established character of area, adverse impact on general visual amenity and character of Conservation Area and setting of precedent.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

11 letters of representation have been received, including one from the Community Council. The material planning considerations raised in objection are summarised below and relate mainly to the raised gable and balcony:

- Loss of light to lower flat.
- Loss of privacy to adjacent properties in Devonshire Road and to rear gardens of properties in Gladstone Place.
- Visually intrusive, and out of keeping with the character of the Conservation Area
- Scale of glazing to gable will cause light pollution.
- Noise nuisance from the balcony.
- Enlargement of window to western elevation will cause loss of privacy.

## **PLANNING POLICY**

### **Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2012)**

#### **Policy D1 - Architecture and Placemaking**

To ensure high standards of design, new development must be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting. Factors such as siting, scale, massing, colour, materials, orientation, details, the proportions of building elements, together with the spaces around buildings, including streets, squares, open space, landscaping and boundary treatments, will be considered in assessing that contribution.

#### **Policy H1 - Residential Areas**

Within existing residential areas (H1 on the Proposals Map) and within new residential developments, proposals for new householder development will be approved in principle if it:

1. does not constitute over development;
2. does not have an unacceptable impact on the character or amenity of the surrounding area;
5. complies with Interim Guidance on House Extensions.

#### **Additional Guidance**

Historic Scotland – ‘Scottish Historic Environment Policy’

## **EVALUATION**

The application shall be determined in accordance with development plan policy, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Aberdeen Local Plan 2012 is of specific relevance in determining the application in terms of the associated Interim Supplementary Guidance relating to House Extensions. Consideration should also be given as to whether the design, scale and location of the proposals comply with Policies D1 and H1 of the Aberdeen Local Plan 2012, its impact on the existing character and appearance of the surrounding neighbourhood, residential amenity and impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

General principles contained in the Interim Householder Guidance relating to alterations to dwelling houses expect that they should be architecturally compatible in design and scale with the original house and surrounding area, materials should be complimentary and a proposal should not overwhelm or dominate the original form or appearance of the dwelling.

The proposed raising of the annexe's wallhead and roof introduces an extension of contemporary design and materials to a traditional building. It demonstrates due regard for its context through use of appropriate design, to complement the existing building in terms of scale, height, roof pitch and materials used for the external finishes. The local plan promotes well proportioned and contemporary architecture as an alternative to a poor imitation of existing architecture and the use of extensive glazing serves to present an interesting feature while still respecting the profile of the existing annexe. The proposal is considered not to compromise the symmetry of the rear elevations facing the lane since little symmetry exists at present between the existing rear annexes along the properties located on the northern section of Devonshire Road, being of different lengths and positions, with a variety of designs and additions. The rear elevations of the properties on both sides of the lane present a wide variety of additions to the original buildings, including conservatories, extensions and dormer windows, in addition to a variety of garages on the lane elevations. In particular a 'hanging' conservatory has been added at first floor level to the rear of 17 Gladstone Place. The rear lane is predominantly a service lane and the rear annexe would not be readily visible from any heavily utilised public space. This aspect of the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of scale and design, to introduce a visually unobtrusive element to the streetscape and therefore to comply with the relevant policies and guidance.

The balcony is considered not to be of an overbearing nature, to respect the scale of the building and is considered to have an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, although being of larger dimensions than existing. The balcony would be set 20 metres back from the lane, the rear garden is screened by 2 garages and a garden gate, and would not be readily visible at street level. The rear elevations of the properties on both sides of the lane are highly visible to each other, particularly when viewed from an upper floor. A precedent for a similar staircase exists at the adjacent property, 24/26 Devonshire Road.

Policy requires that any development should not result in a situation where amenity is 'borrowed' from an adjacent property. Significant adverse impact on privacy, daylight and overshadowing will count against a proposal. Objections have been raised by adjoining property owners to loss of daylight and privacy. Several objections have also been received from properties in Devonshire Road regarding loss of privacy.

With regard to the objection to loss of daylight to the lower flat, there is a single window immediately below the existing plinth and staircase. The plinth is 1.5 metres wide and projects 1.2 metres with the staircase exiting westwards. Although the projection of the balcony would be increased by 600mm, the removal of the staircase to another elevation will compensate for the increase in balcony projection, therefore it is considered that the proposal would not result in any additional loss of daylight.

Although the existing plinth and staircase permit direct overlooking of the neighbours garden at 24/26 Devonshire Road, the plans have been amended since original submission to include the erection of a section of 1.5 metre high opaque glazed screening to the western elevation of the balcony. This will be an improvement on the existing situation in terms of privacy. The screen trees to the eastern elevation are considered to be of sufficient density and height to ensure no overlooking or loss of privacy to 16 Devonshire Road from either the balcony or relocated staircase. The objection of loss of privacy from the adjoining property at 22a Devonshire Road relates to the increased size of the window on the western elevation of the annexe. Since the window is already in existence, the objection is unfounded since any increase in the height of the window would not increase overlooking.

The proposed balcony, staircase and additional glazing to the gable of the annexe are considered not to result in any additional overlooking of the rear gardens and elevations of the dwelling houses in Gladstone Place. Numbers 9 and 11 Gladstone Place, which directly face the rear of the application property, have a minimum separation distance between the balcony and their rear extensions of 43 metres, including the rear lane. Clear views of the rear gardens of many properties in Devonshire Road, including those directly to the rear, already exist from the applicant's rear window, plinth and staircase. Similarly, the applicant's property and garden is clearly visible from the rear of properties in Devonshire Road. The proposed balcony is therefore considered not to exacerbate the current situation. A minimum separation distance of 18 metres is generally required between facing windows, if they are on the same plane and height, to ensure no loss of privacy, the separation distance is therefore sufficient to ensure no loss of privacy to any windows directly facing the balcony.

Other matters raised include light pollution from the increased glazing on the raised gable, however since this is a domestic property internally lit with no external lighting proposed, additional light spillage would be negligible and not sufficient to cause nuisance. Increased noise from usage of the balcony is not considered to be relevant in this case, since the property is domestic. Approval of

this application will not necessarily result in a rise in similar applications nor set a precedent for approval of applications of a similar nature since every application is determined on its own merits.

The property lies within the Albyn Place/Rubislaw Conservation Area and Historic Scotland's 'Scottish Historic Environment Policy' (SHEP) must be referred to in determination of the application. SHEP states that the planning authority must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area when determining applications. The proposals to the rear are not readily visible from a public elevation, visible only from a rear service lane, and partially screened to the lane elevation by existing garages and trees within neighbouring gardens. The contemporary design of the gable extension is considered to compliment the character of the existing dwelling house and the scale of the balcony is such that it would not be visually intrusive or detract from the character of the existing building. The proposed roof lights to the front elevation are acceptable in terms of their scale, number and design and would have minimal visual impact to the original design of the property. The window alterations and roof lights to the rear are not readily visible from a public elevation. All proposals are considered not to detract from the appearance or integrity of the original building and to preserve the character of the Conservation Area in compliance with policy.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve Unconditionally**

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The proposals are considered satisfactory in terms of design, scale and appearance and comply with Local Development Plan Policies D1 and H1, and the interim householder supplementary guidance. The balcony and roof extension are not of an overbearing nature, would not compromise existing architectural consistency and have no adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, being located on a relatively non public elevation. The development would not cause any further onerous infringement on the privacy or daylight receipt of neighbouring properties than exists at present and would be acceptable in terms of its impact on the residential character and amenity of the area. The character of the Conservation Area would be preserved in compliance with the guidance contained in Scottish Historic Environment Policy.

**Dr Margaret Bochel**

Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.