

Sally Wood

From: Christine Burgess [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 July 2014 10:05
To: Sally Wood
Cc: PI
Subject: Planning Application 140681

6 St Machar Place, Aberdeen AB24 3SF.

29 July 2014

Planning Department,
Attn Sally Wood
Aberdeen City Council
Marischal College,
Aberdeen

Dear Sirs,

Planning Application 140681 - installation of illuminated signage

Old Aberdeen Community Council wishes to draw attention to the fact that Crombie Hall of Residence was awarded a **category 'A' listing** by Historic Scotland in 2004 as one of the very best 1950s Modern Movement buildings in Scotland and is not a category C listed building as stated in the application.

Consequently, Old Aberdeen Community Council wishes to OBJECT to the current application to erect a suspended illuminated logodisk and front-lit pin mounted acrylic lettering above the door. To date there is no illuminated signage anywhere within the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area and this would be to create an unacceptable precedent.

We have concerns too that the signage and the replacement door may well alter the appearance and original character of the building, and on all these grounds we request that the application be refused.

Yours faithfully,

Christine Burgess

for and on behalf of Old Aberdeen Community Council

PI

From: webmaster@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2014 13:41
To: PI
Subject: Planning Comment for 140681

Comment for Planning Application 140681

Name : Clive B Fenton (DOCOMOMO Scotland) Address : 19/2 Downfield Place, Edinburgh, EH11 2EJ

Telephone : [REDACTED]

Email : [REDACTED]

type :

Comment : DOCOMOMO Scotland wishes to lodge objections to this application as the work proposed is inappropriate for a category A listed building. Replacement of an original door with one of an unsuitable design and installation of an illuminated sign are unacceptable. Prominent external advertising is also detrimental to the character of a Conservation Area.

Furthermore, we recommend that the applicant withdraw this application until the matter of retrospective consent for work already carried out at Crombie Hall is settled.

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OLD ABERDEEN HERITAGE SOCIETY

COPY

Development Management Team,
Planning Department,
Aberdeen City Council

11 Greenbrae Crescent,
Denmore,
Bridge of Don,
Aberdeen
AB23 8LH

28th June 2014

Dear Sirs,

Crombie Hall of Residence, College Bounds, Old Aberdeen

Application for Consent to Display Adverts

The Society wishes to register a strong objection to the above proposal to display two illuminated disks and pin mounted lettering on the front of this Category 'A' listed building in the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area.

It is our view that the said illuminated signs would be detrimental to the visual amenity both of the building itself and of the surrounding Conservation Area. The picturesque setting of this building is one of mature woodland, with historic buildings beside it. Bright, probably brash, illuminated signs of a kind suited only to City Centre commercial and retail centres, would damage the visual amenity of this tranquil corner of the Conservation Area.

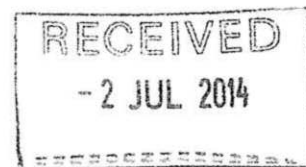
An important concern is also that the approval of illuminated signs in this the centre of the Conservation Area, could set an undesirable precedent which could cause further damage to the visual amenity of Old Aberdeen.

We therefore request that the City Council refuse permission for these signs.

Yours faithfully,

PP (Mrs) B. McPetrie
Planning Secretary

Copies to: Councillors Ramsay Milne, Ross Grant, Jim Noble
Sandy Beattie, Bridget Turnbull, Planning Dept.





OLD ABERDEEN HERITAGE SOCIETY

Planning Reception,
Aberdeen City Council

11 Greenbrae Crescent,
Denmore,
Bridge of Don,
Aberdeen
AB23 8LH

27th July 2014

Dear Sirs,

Application for Listed Building Consent:
Category "A" Listed Building: - Crombie Halls, Old Aberdeen

Application for Installation of signage and refurbishment of café
(though other works are included, too)

Application Reference no. 140681

The Society wishes to register an objection in the strongest terms to the above application.

Crombie Halls are a Category 'A' listed building of both architectural and historic interest, and also of special value because of the rarity of their kind, and their integrity; closeness to the original fabric.

This building is of considerable national importance, and its particular "special character and special interest" is demonstrated by the following excerpts from authoritative sources:-

1) Historic Scotland Listing Page

"Crombie Halls are an excellent and almost unaltered example of the early post-war private practice of Sir Robert Matthew. They are among the very best 1950s "Modern Movement" buildings in Scotland"

"Matthew himself commented that the character of Crombie Hall was influenced by the small-scale informal civic character of the university. Materials and form were influenced by vernacular traditions."

2) Press handout by the architect at time of Opening, (1960)

“The **choice and use of materials** has been influenced by **local domestic tradition...**”

This included red pantiles, white harling, sandstone, and local granite for retaining walls and boundary walls.

3) Guide to Crombie Hall, written by the Hall Warden, early 1960s

“**A large part of (Old Aberdeen’s) charm lies in its informality.** This latter quality has been considered specially desirable in designing the new buildings”

4) ‘Aberdeen: An Illustrated Architectural Guide’ by W.A.Brogden RIAS 1986

“Crombie Hall, **quintessentially 50s Scandinavian,** stands in **wooded grounds between two Georgian houses.**”

The current application for works to this building would have an adverse impact on the special interest of this Category ‘A’ listed building.

Crombie Halls were built in an informal, semi-rural, wooded setting in a style strongly influenced by what Matthews’ biographer, Miles Glendinning, has called the “generally small-scale, intimate, townscape of Old Aberdeen”.

The materials and form were much influenced by local domestic tradition, featuring red pantiles, white harling, sandstone and granite walls.

Other features show what Professor Brogden calls its “quintessentially 50s Scandinavian” character, in the form, for instance, of extensive timber cladding, and clean, simple lines with no fussy detail.

The overall impression is of a modest building sitting unobtrusively in picturesque wooded surroundings, itself incorporating many natural materials and simple, clean lines, which fit it perfectly to its quiet setting.

The current proposal would destroy this special character, by imposing a new, entirely different character on to the very front, main façade of this building.

The proposed changes, we contend, all impart to this building the character of an urban context, a busy commercial centre, which is completely at odds with its true character, as follows:

1) New door

The application contains (on Sheet A-2001), reference to a replacement door. (This was not, regrettably, mentioned in the application itself).

The new double door would be emblazoned across its full width and height with a representation of Starbucks' corporate logo image of a "Siren" figure.

This, needless to say, featuring on the main entrance on the main façade, would immediately destroy the "vernacular" feel of the building, which reflects the local distinctive modest scale and style. Such an entrance would be anything but modest, either in scale or design. It is decidedly brash in style, but most importantly it is decidedly urban in character, belonging not to modest 'village within a town' character, but to the context of a city centre full of brash signs, corporate logos and brand-names.

2) Front-lit Pin-mounted Starbucks 'Logodisk' on roof of entrance porch

The affixing of illuminated stand-alone lettering proclaiming the whereabouts of "STARBUCKS COFFEE" above the entrance porch is another assault on the integrity of this building. This is a dining-room and restaurant which, according to this proposal, is to be converted in to a coffee-shop, but it does not need to shout its presence in such a loud way. The existing, University-run, restaurant, 'Zeste' has only one small (unilluminated) sign, in the window.

Again, it must be stated that this proposed signage is aggressively commercial in character, and indeed characteristic of the sort of signage seen only in the commercial centres of cities.

This kind of sign, along with proposed artwork on the door, can only damage the overall character of Crombie, which is one of a modest building built with simple lines and materials chosen to reflect the modest character of Old Aberdeen.

3) The huge illuminated, suspended disc, proposed to be hung in the front window of the building.

This disc, also, would be emblazoned with Starbucks' corporate logo, but this time fully illuminated.

This, also, is completely at odds with the character of Crombie Hall. This is a building designed to fit in with its quiet, wooded surroundings, and the proposal would destroy that quality by shouting out loud its presence with an illuminated advertising sign.

In summary, this is the main problem with the current application:-

The proposed advertising signage is brash, loud, and of a design suited to a commercial urban context, and not to a quite, wooded setting. Particularly, however, it is not suited to this superb building by the eminent Sir Robert Matthew, who designed it particularly to reflect local vernacular tradition, and to respect the intimate character of Old Aberdeen.

This is at the heart of what makes the special interest of Crombie Halls, as is attested by the sources quoted, and it must not be compromised or damaged in any way.

It is our view that the present proposals do indeed damage the special interest and character of this Category 'A' listed building, and we therefore request that this application be refused.

Yours faithfully,



(Mrs) B. McPetrie,
Planning Secretary

Copies to:-

Historic Scotland
DOCOMOMO Scotland
20th Century Society, London
Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland

Footnotes

The following **errors** in the **application documents** must be noted, as they are fundamentally misleading, and give a wrong impression of both the building, and also of what is proposed:-

- a) The application refers throughout to the building as "Crombie Annex"
The building affected by the proposals is **in no way** an '**annex**', but is the main building and indeed **the main façade at the front of this important building**.

- b) It is not strictly accurate to call the proposed works "replacement signage". There is, at present, virtually no signage at all, and that consists of only one small, unilluminated sign in the window.

- c) Lastly, but most importantly, it is completely false to claim, as the applicants do, that this is a Category 'C' listed building.

Crombie Hall is a Category 'A' listed building:- a building of national importance.