

6 St Machar Place  
Aberdeen AB24 3SF.

23rd June 2015

Aberdeen City Council Development Management  
Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure  
Business Hub 4, Marischal College  
Broad Street  
ABERDEEN AB10 1AB

Dear Sir,

**No 7 St. Machar Place, Aberdeen : Planning Application No. P150785 (amended)**

I was deeply disappointed to view the planning application for the above property:

St Machar Place is now in the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area and the plans must surely state clearly, and that it be a requirement, that the windows front and back will be timber-framed and not PVCU and that the doors front and back will be of wood and not PVCU to ensure that this very attractive 1930s bungalow retains its distinctive character.

Surely too it is imperative to make every effort to repair the doors and window frames, as I understand is current policy, to preserve and conserve all the original features.

The planned driveway is, in my view, completely unacceptable and contrary to the Aberdeen City Conservation Area Character Appraisal / Strategic Overview and Management Plan of July 2013 which states that:

*"... Parking in all but the largest front gardens, which already have been designed with driveway access in mind, will have a detrimental effect on the setting of buildings in the conservation area, potentially obscuring important features."*



I contend that any vehicle parked in front of this house will obscure a whole front bay window and the front door with their individual features.

Moreover, the integral central path will be lost and thereby the symmetry of the front garden.

This central path up the front garden is a feature of the houses in the circle and the original plan and integrity of the whole circle will also be lost

Is this what having conservation area status is really about ?

And is it really just about what can be seen so that the lovely little very distinctive V-shaped window at the back of the house can, according to these plans, be removed and replaced with an ordinary flat window and a whole chimney stack destroyed as well ... ?

Lastly with this planning application there is the whole issue of parking for what is intended as a change of use from a three-bedroomed family home to a five-bedroomed HMO property . This will require 2.5 parking spaces as per the proposed Supplementary Guidance Topic Area 7 - Transport and Infrastructure to the Local Development Plan. St Machar Place is in the Old Aberdeen CPZ and parking is in any case very limited for those residents in the cul-de-sac without driveways and those living on St Machar Drive.

By reason of all of the above issues I request that the planning application be refused.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Christine Burgess



Planning Dept,  
Aberdeen City Council,  
Marischal College

150785

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

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015

Dear Sirs,

**7, St. Machar Place**  
**Old Aberdeen Conservation Area**  
**formation of driveway, replacement windows and external alteration**

The Society wishes to register a strong objection to the above application.

No. 7 St. Machar Place is a period 1920s house situated in a picturesque cul-de-sac which has recently been added to the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area, in order to afford it the recognition and protection which it merits.

We are therefore seriously concerned at the submission of an application for works to this property which would greatly detract not only from the character and appearance of no.7 but also from the character and appearance of the whole cul-de-sac.

Our objections are under the following headings:-

- 1) The proposed driveway would be contrary to Policy D4 of the Local Development Plan, and to the Conservation Area Management Plan.  
It would also be contrary to two provisions of the "Transport & Accessibility" supplementary guidance in the Local Plan.
- 2) The proposal to replace the original historic windows and door is contrary to City Council Local Plan policies on "Windows and Doors".
- 3) The granting of permission for a driveway in a situation such as this would create an undesirable precedent for Conservation Areas right across the City.

To expand on these:-

1) **The proposed driveway**

Although the proposal satisfies some of the requirements of the supplementary guidance on "Transport and Accessibility", it fails on at least two counts, and further, more significantly, fails to meet the standard set out in the City's Conservation Area Management Plan:-

- a) The 2015 Local Plan Supplementary Guidance on "Transport & Accessibility", a material consideration in the assessment of this application, states (p.181) that:-

*"If there is an impact on road safety and residential amenity, a driveway will not normally be permitted if access is taken from a parking lay-by or a controlled parking zone which is regularly in use."*

St. Machar Place is designated as a Controlled Parking Zone, and is used for parking by various nearby residents. Their residential amenity would be affected as one parking space would permanently, rather than intermittently, be taken out of use.

- b) The current Local Plan Supplementary Guidance on "Transport & Accessibility" on "Parking in Front Gardens", (p.29), states that:-

*"The conversion of front gardens will only be permitted where": ...  
d) "there is no impact on significant street or garden trees"*

The creation of hardstanding required for the proposed driveway right next to one of the protected trees at no.7 would certainly have a detrimental impact. On this issue the current Supplementary Guidance "Landscape Guidelines" is quite clear. In the text accompanying the diagram of a tree, it states:-

*"Parking of heavy vehicles and cars must not be allowed near the root area"*

This is because it causes compaction and consequent suffocation of the tree roots, which endangers the tree.

- c) Most important of all, however, is the fact that the proposed driveway would be contrary to the most recent, up-to-date Guidance on Conservation Areas, as adopted by the City Council in 2013, viz. the

**"Strategic Overview and Management Plan for Conservation Areas"**

As explained on page 5 of this document, its purpose, as a material consideration, is to "complement new Supplementary Guidance".

Further on p.10:-

"This guidance is intended to add more detail, where required to Scottish Planning Policy as set out in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (2011), and to policies within the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012."

The status of this important document is confirmed in Policy D4 (Historic Environment) of the proposed Local Plan (2015) which states:-

*“The Council will protect, preserve and enhance the historic environment in line with Scottish Planning Policy, SHEP, its own Supplementary Guidance and Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plan”*(underlining ours)

The section of the Conservation Area Management Plan which relates to the present application is Section J of the “generic guidance” which, it is stated, “will apply to all conservation areas”:-

**J - “Parking in Front Gardens”**

*“Parking in all but the largest front gardens, which already have been designed with driveway access in mind, will have a detrimental effect on the setting of buildings in the conservation area, potentially obscuring important features.”*

The proposal for a driveway in the front garden of no.7 fails to meet the criteria set out in this guidance.

This is a) a very small front garden  
b) not one designed with a driveway access in mind.

Further, as a result, it is clear that parking in this small front garden would most certainly have a detrimental effect on the setting both of this and other houses in the cul-de-sac, and would obscure important features, such as a bay window and part of the door, of this hitherto unspoilt period home.

An important point to note here is that although there are a couple of other driveways in the cul-de-sac, these are situated in larger front gardens, due to the fan shape of the circle, and therefore the impact is not the same.

We would contend, in any case, however, that any permissions given for driveways prior to the designation of St. Machar Place in the Conservation Area are not relevant to the present application. This should be assessed according to the guidance which is specific to conservation areas, given the Council’s decision to afford it this protection.

**2) Proposed replacement of windows and doors**

It is our understanding that the original historic windows and doors have in no way deteriorated to the extent whereby repair is not possible, and that they simply need some careful restoration. It is not clear whether the applicant has supplied the Planning Department with a professional detailed window condition survey, as required by the Supplementary Guidance, but without this, no adequate assessment can be made.

If, as we believe, the windows and doors can be repaired, restored and retained, then the Council’s guidance in both the current and proposed Local Plans is paramount:-

4.


*"The first principle is one of retention and repair. Original and historic windows and doors will be repaired and restored and this will always be promoted over replacement."*

3) Precedent

The granting of permission for the proposed driveway would create an undesirable precedent for similar development in other small front gardens in Old Aberdeen, to the detriment of the Conservation Area. Not only the obscuring of important features of this house, but also the loss of the traditional garden layout could be replicated elsewhere, the cumulative result of which could have a significantly damaging effect.

In conclusion, we note that this is the first planning application to be submitted for a property in any of the areas which were recently added to the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area, and we would trust that the City Council will endorse that decision to protect, preserve and enhance this area by refusing this application.

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. B. McPetrie  
Planning Secretary

Enclosure:- photograph of 7, St. Machar Place before it was sold



No. 7 St. Machar Place, as it was before it was sold recently

A parked car would obscure much of this attractive frontage