

# OLD ABERDEEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning Liaison  
2 Harrow Road  
ABERDEEN  
AB24 1UN

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

27<sup>th</sup> August 2015

Dear Sir,

**Application No. P.151058 – 39 Kings Crescent, Aberdeen**

Old Aberdeen Community Council wishes to lodge an objection to the above application on the grounds that the design is unsympathetic to the frontal elevation of a prominent granite building within Old Aberdeen Conservation Area

**Justification: -**

**Conservation Area Management Plan “Ensure the appropriate use of materials”.**

The property was built as private dwelling house in 1879 on a site rising steeply from Kings Crescent and currently presents an imposing view from Kings Crescent. The symmetrical front elevation is in grey granite and is currently true to the original design.


As no application has been made to split the house into flats and the proposed structure does not lead to a doorway, it has no reasonable purpose.

At some time a granite bridge did exist, linking this building to the ecclesiastical buildings on its north, most likely when the dwelling was the Episcopal diocese offices and to allow access to the chapel. As this intrusion was later removed and the building restored to its original design, this is not a precedent and has no relevance to this application.

The proposed “bridge” will be in full view from Kings Crescent and is specified as galvanised structural steel with unspecified handrail infills. Both the design and the materials are totally unsuitable for the prominent elevation of a granite house in a conservation area.

For this reason we ask that the application be refused.

Yours sincerely,

  
George A. Wood  
Planning Liaison.  
For and on behalf of Old Aberdeen Community Council.

28 AUG 2015

OTH



# OLD ABERDEEN HERITAGE SOCIETY

151058 - JTH

Planning Dept,  
Aberdeen City Council,  
Marischal College,  
Aberdeen

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Aberdeen  
[REDACTED]

11<sup>th</sup> August 2015

**39, King's Crescent, Old Aberdeen Conservation Area**  
**Proposal to construct new wall buttress, and link bridge of steel**  
(Application no 151058)

Dear Sirs,

The Society wishes to register a firm objection to the above proposal, for the following reasons:-

- 1) It is misleading to describe the proposed work (as described on the plans) as some sort of "reinstatement" of a walkway.

This is misleading because:-

- a) The house as originally built had no such walkway. This handsome house was built in 1879 for Rev. John Comper, the renowned priest and local missionary, as a family home. It has further historical significance as the childhood home of his son, the famous architect Sir Ninian Comper, and it had then no additions, such as are now proposed, to mar its appearance.
- b) The previous 'walkway' was evidently not part of the original design because there would have been nowhere for such a walkway to lead to. The Chapel on the adjoining land had not been built, and in any case it would clearly not have been appropriate for a private family home to be thus connected to another property, particularly at the first floor, or bedroom, level.
- c) When, eventually, a walkway was built, probably around the 1940s, it was a walkway connecting no 39 (or "St. Margaret's Brae" as it came to be called) to the Convent and Chapel which were now established on the adjacent feu. We believe that it was constructed to allow the Sisters of the Convent to walk more easily from the Convent to no.39, which by now had been bequeathed to the Convent, and was being run by the Sisters as an Eventide Home for elderly ladies.

When both no.39 and the Convent buildings were sold by the Episcopal Diocese in the early 1990s, there was clearly no justification for such a bridge (particularly as these two properties were now in separate ownership), and the redundant walkway was demolished and the entrance to the Convent grounds closed off by the reinstatement of the boundary wall.

- d) The current application, although proposed to occupy some of the same area as the previous addition, is not a "reinstatement", because it would lead simply to a blank wall. The additional work for which permission is applied is to join this "non-walkway" to a new path and flight of steps to be constructed down the north boundary of the feu of no.39. It is to be regretted that - as far as we understand - much of this work has already been undertaken, in advance of consideration by the City Council of the application for permission for such alterations.
- e) The proposed "walkway" would not in any way replicate the previous one. The previous addition, although ugly and inappropriate on the gable of such a fine building, was at least built in granite. The structure now proposed would be constructed of "plain steel members, grey colour, with matching small diameter tubular handrails".
- 2) It should be noted that the architect's drawings which have been submitted are wrongly titled. They are described as "works at 39, King's Crescent and St. Margaret's Convent". This is not the case. The proposed works pertain only to the property at no.39 King's Crescent, and have no connection whatever to the adjacent privately-owned property (formerly the Convent).
- 3) The application does not include the necessary drawings showing the east elevation of the house with the proposed link bridge to the north. Without such a drawing, it is not possible to make a complete assessment of the impact such a bridge would have on the character and appearance of this handsome house, not of its impact on the character and appearance of the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area.
- 4) It should further be noted that the proposed walkway connects a window on the north gable to a blank boundary wall. As such it serves no purpose, and would have no function. In order for it to function as a "link bridge", planning permission would have to be granted to change this window into a door. No such permission exists, nor has it been applied for.
- 5) The proposal is contrary to Policy D1 of the Local Development Plan. It is not designed "with due consideration for its context" nor does it "make a positive contribution to its setting". The siting of such a bridge and a new buttress would be an unsightly addition to the house, visible from the front. The materials would be completely out of context with this fine granite dwelling house. Steel bridges do not complement a granite building. Furthermore such a structure would be out of context with the surrounding granite buildings in King's Crescent and the Spital. Lastly, the proposal does not respect the integrity of the building in terms of the space surrounding it. It rather adds an unnecessary and unsympathetic adjunct to the side.
- 6) The proposal is contrary to Policy D5 of the current Local Plan as referring to Scottish Planning Policy, which requires that any development in a Conservation Area should not be detrimental to the amenity of the Conservation Area. The proposed link bridge would have an adverse effect on such amenity in terms of design, material, siting and scale.

- 7) The proposal is contrary to Policy H1 of the Local Plan, in that it would have an unacceptable impact upon the character of the surrounding area, by way of introducing a modern steel structure into a row of stone-built historic buildings. It would also be likely to be detrimental in particular to the amenity of the neighbouring ground and property at the former Convent.
- 8) The proposal is contrary to the Council's Supplementary Guidance "Householder Development Guide." This document states, on page 5, as a principle that will be applied to all applications for householder development:-

**"Proposals for ... alterations should be architecturally compatible in design and scale with the original house and its surrounding area. Materials used should be complementary to the original building."**

It is clear, as we have indicated earlier in this letter, that the current application for a steel bridge is not architecturally compatible in design with the original house or the area, nor are the materials used complementary to the original building.

- 9) Last, on a separate but important issue, we note that no application has been submitted for Listed Building Consent for the proposed development. As it would clearly have an impact on the setting of a Category "A" listed building (the former St. Margaret's Chapel), as viewed from various angles, such an application is necessary, and planning permission, even if granted, would not be sufficient.

Not required  
1/9.  
(as) no impact  
Consent

\* \* \* \* \*

In conclusion, and on all the grounds outlined above, the Society would request that the Planning Committee refuse this application in view of its non-compliance with Council Policy, but particularly in view of the detrimental impact it would have on the character and appearance of this handsome and historically significant dwelling-house, and also of this part of the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area.

Yours sincerely,



(Mrs) B. McPetrie  
Planning Secretary

**PI**

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**From:** webmaster@aberdeencity.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 07 August 2015 13:26  
**To:** PI  
**Subject:** Planning Comment for 151058

Comment for Planning Application 151058

Name : Richard Harwood  
Address : 37 Kings Crescent  
Old Aberdeen  
Aberdeen  
AB24 3HP

Telephone : [REDACTED]

Email : [REDACTED]

type :

Comment : This structure would be visible from Kings Crescent by the public and is not in keeping with the Old Aberdeen area.

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PI

P151058 - JTH

**From:** webmaster@aberdeencity.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 16 August 2015 21:10  
**To:** PI  
**Subject:** Planning Comment for 151058

Comment for Planning Application 151058

Name : Teresa Harwood  
Address : 37 Kings Crescent  
Aberdeen

Telephone : [REDACTED]

Email : [REDACTED]

type :

Comment : Dear Sirs

I wish to object on the grounds that the bridge which doesn't seem to have a purpose will be visible from the road and will be unsightly and will further detract from the conservation area of Old Aberdeen and from the aesthetic of the building not least by the materials proposed.

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P151058 - JTH

PI

**From:** webmaster@aberdeencity.gov.uk  
**Sent:** 24 August 2015 17:34  
**To:** PI  
**Subject:** Planning Comment for 151058

Comment for Planning Application 151058

Name : Patrick and Jacinta Birchley

Address : 24 Spital

Aberdeen

AB24 3HS

Telephone :

Email : [REDACTED]

type :

Comment : Having been a long term resident I am aware this connecting ramp existed when the house at (39 Kings Cres) was in the ownership of The Episcopalian Dioceses. As they also owned the adjoining Cat A listed St Margaret's Chapel and Convent the ramp made sense. As these two sites are no longer in sole ownership I do not understand why it should be reinstated. The ramp would connect a first floor window to a property not in the ownership of the applicant!

The uncluttered vista of the setting of this magnificent house should be preserved. Therefore I urge Aberdeen City Council to refuse the application.

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10 Rubislaw Den North  
Aberdeen  
AB15 4AN

27<sup>th</sup> August 2015

Dear Sirs,

Re: Planning Application 151058 - Reconstruct masonry wall buttress for structural purposes, clad in granite to match the adjacent walls. Construct small link bridge from retained soil bank to gable of adjacent house (No.39) in plain steel members, grey colour, with matching small diameter tubular handrails 1100mm high. Complete works by adding small diameter steel handrail at top of adjacent retaining wall for safety reasons, 900mm high.

We wish to **OBJECT** to the above planning application submitted 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015, by our neighbour at 39 King's Crescent. We object on the following grounds:

- 1) We are the owners of the adjacent property St Margaret's Chapel and Convent, and we have not been consulted about this structure which will be attached to our shared retaining boundary wall.
- 2) The St Margaret's Chapel and Boundary wall are both Category A listed, the proposed structure will be in full view from the Chapel and will encroach on our privacy.
- 3) The proposed structure is out of keeping with the conservation area.
- 4) We do not wish to have our property connected by this structure.
- 5) The plans submitted have project title 'Works at 39 Kings Crescent and St Margaret's Convent', but I stress to emphasise that this has nothing to do with St Margaret's Convent, these properties are separate properties.
- 6) The proposed structure has no purpose and is not required.
- 7) The application says reinstatement; the previous structure referred to is not an original structure but we believe was built for wheel chair access from King's Crescent to St Margaret's Chapel for patients and nuns.
- 8) There is an unresolved issue regarding the reconstruction of the category A listed boundary wall that collapsed in Dec '12, and was rebuilt without our permission.
- 9) There are already a number of unsightly and unauthorised structures at 39 Kings Crescent, the proposed structure will add to these.
- 10) This is the 6<sup>th</sup> planning application in 5 years with none of the previous applications completed.
- 11) There is a clear history and pattern of poor standard and unauthorised building works at the property with retrospective planning applications.
- 12) An unsightly structure has appeared in recent months and has been built directly attached on to the Category A listed wall.
- 13) To date the building materials and techniques used at 39 Kings Crescent are inadequate and not to the standard required for the conservation area.
- 14) Our vision for St Margaret's Category A listed Chapel and former Convent wing, built by the nationally renowned architect Sir J Ninian Comper as his first major commission, is to restore it correctly in partnership with the Planning Department and Historic Scotland. However our vision is already severely compromised by the various eyesores already in full view, therefore another hideous addition will terminate our vision completely.

Yours Faithfully,

  
Jaskamal & Breidge Sall

Owners of St Margaret's Category A listed Chapel and former Convent wing and 15-17 Spital  
