OLD ABERDEEN HERITAGE SOCIETY

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Aberdeen
AB23 8LH
11th Feb 2016

RECEIVED
15 FEB 2016

Planning Dept
Aberdeen City Council

Dear Sirs,

**7 St Machar Place, Old Aberdeen Conservation Area**
**Proposed external works Ref 160026**
**(including replacement windows and door in UPVC)**

Old Aberdeen Heritage Society wishes to register a firm objection to this planning application.

Although we have no objection to some of the works proposed, others are unacceptable in that they fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

First we would draw attention to the Scottish Goverment Reporter's comments about this cottage, when he was dealing with the appellant's Appeal last year against the installation of UPVC windows at the rear.
He says:-

> ***"I consider that these cottages have been included within the Conservation Area, not simply for their frontages, but as a whole, and the rear elevations make their own contribution to the character of the area"***

The Reporter's ruling in this matter is legally a material consideration in the consideration of this new application for no.7 St Machar Place, and therefore his view as stated in his Decision Notice, is of significant importance in the determination of the current application.

It is our Society's considered view, also, that the rear elevations of these cottages make their own contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, and this character should be safeguarded.

As we noted in our representation on the previous planning application, the very fact that the Scottish Government changed the law in recent years so that one now has to apply for permission for alterations to rear elevations in Conservation Areas, shows the Government's policy intention to extend protection to these areas also. What, indeed, would be the point of introducing such legislation if the Council did not have the complementary freedom to refuse such an application on the grounds of preserving the character of the rear of the property?

It is the Society's view that the proposed UPVC windows and doors at the rear of this house would be detrimental to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area, by way of inappropriate materials especially, but also changes in design (astragal positioning) of the two dormer windows.

The Reporter says in his Report on the last application that:-

> ***"the rear windows make their own valuable contribution to the character of the Cottage.... this also applies to the dormer windows above"***

The dormer windows proposed in this application would have their internal proportions altered, by way of removing and repositioning astragals, which would mean that they no longer reflected the proportions of the panes in the lower windows, and this would spoil the effect of the whole.
Further, the proposal is also to replace the original timber frames on the dormers (and the extension's door and window) with UPVC

It is our view that the proposed replacements fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the advice in SHEP, and SPP, and Policy D5 of the LDP, and fails to give due consideration to its context, contrary to the advice in LDP Policy D1.
The Council's TAN on Windows and Doors is also relevant here, though not carrying so much weight as any of the above. Its overarching principle (p.10) states:-

> ***"For buildings which are located in Conservation Areas .... the Council's preference is for original windows and doors to be repaired and restored whenever possible"***

and on p.11:-

> ***"Repair will always be promoted over replacement"***

There is attached to this TAN a non-definitive chart which was produced "for general guidance purposes only....The charts should only be read in the context of the advice provided within the rest of this TAN".
The chart itself is confusing but the advice given in the rest of the TAN is clear – repair and restoration of original windows and doors is what the Council will promote.

Historic Scotland's guidance on this is also relevant – in their "Windows" guidance for building in the Historic Environment:-

> **"maintenance and appropriate repair is the best means of safeguarding the the historic character of a window, and where it is beyond repair, replacements must match the original design as closely as posible"**

At his site visit to no.7 St Machar Place last year, the Reporter noted that the dormer windows were, in his opinion, capable of repair and restoration, and his view was that this should be undertaken. His view was that the proposal to replace these with UPVC was unacceptable, and detrimental to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

We wholeheartedly agree with this position and are astounded that the applicant should choose to question the decision of a Government Reporter, by submitting an application for the same works to these windows yet again.

We request that this application be refused in accordance with all the considerations detailed above.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Mrs B McPetrie
Planning Secretary