

Planning Ref 151795 - 94 Queens Road

Objection from Queens Cross / Harlaw Community Council

We strongly object to this Planning Application on several grounds.

Firstly it will undermine the main reason for people buying property in this area which is to benefit from a quiet residential environment. Approving this application will erode residential amenity and immediately drastically change the area into a busy noisy unpleasant neighbourhood divided in two by a dangerous narrow lane for cars; this is completely at odds with Local Development Plan policy H1. Not only will cars be continuously passing along the back lane to the new offices and car park but also a rat run will open up to any vehicles who want to dodge the often long tail backs on Queens Road. We are surprised that Road Transport Scotland suggest the lane could be used for cars as this lane is too narrow to be classified as a roadway since there is not even enough room for a vehicle to pass a pedestrian walking to the back door of their house. I recommend going for an onsite inspection to see the lane.

We would like clarification as to how the changes to the lane such as removal of the gates which at the moment keep the lane quiet and prevent it being used as a rat run would be paid for. Does the applicant pay for all the changes. As it stand the proposal is at odds with Scottish Planning Policy which directs Local Authorities to support patterns of development that provide safe and convenient opportunities for walking and cycling. The proposal does not do this.

Secondly it appears anomalous for an oil company to alter a prestigious property from an impressive house into another office. At present a number of properties are being marketed within the West End Office Area including: 70 Queens Road, 9 Queens Road and 20 Queens Road which would suit the proposed occupiers requirements. It is evident that there is already enough empty or emptying offices down Queens Road caused by the dramatic oil price drop without adding to the depressing sight of yet another empty office property being advertised with unsightly "for sale" or "to let" signs. Houses continue to sell in our area whereas, as evident from the above, there is huge competition trying to sell office space in and around Aberdeen with little or no demand for new office space. One can't see how adding another office can be sensible when many are actually being emptied and could be used by the occupier. It is contended that the property has not been marketed for a suitable time at a sensible price to justify a change of use from residential to office.

We have heard an argument that an office would be better able to retain the house amenities such as the large interesting windows, however we are minded that the opposite is true and that a building such as this is better retained as a house (even divided into flats).

We on Queens Cross Community Council look forward to the Planning Committee supporting the aims the people of this neighbourhood to retain some of the benefits of the residential area they moved into. Recently we have had to feel the impact of office and commercial interests changing the environment of our previously predominantly residential area. Office and commercial interests such as Chester Hotel are fast changing our neighbourhood to the detriment of many of our residents. We appeal to the Planning Committee to start defending our Queens Cross environment from the onslaught of commercial interests.

We would also recommend a close inspection of the other objections to this planning application as the individuals making various different points can see and understand better a different personal perspective of the impact this planning application will make. As a result of these possible changes their amenity will be diminished and the enjoyment of their property reduced; this is at odds with Local Development Plan policy H1 and also SPP.

Written by Ken Hutcheon, Secretary to Queens Cross / Harlaw Community Council