



OLD ABERDEEN HERITAGE SOCIETY

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5th April 2016

Planning Dept,  
Aberdeen City Council,  
Marischal College.

Dear Sirs,

Planning Application No. 160306

Sunnybank Cottage, 26 Sunnybank Road  
(bordering Old Aberdeen Conservation Area)

Retrospective application for subdivision of dwelling house to form two dwellings, and associated alterations; alteration and conversion of garage to rooms; erection of single storey extension to rear; digging out of ground to front of cottage to make basement with two new windows; and building of two lightwells.

The Society wishes to lodge a firm objection to the above application.

With regard to the retrospective application for the extensive works at Sunnybank Cottage (there is as yet no such official address as 16 Sunnyside Terrace), we wish to object on the following grounds:-

① These plans contravene Policy D2 (Design and Amenity) of the adopted Local Development Plan, which states that:-

- (a) *"residential development shall have a public face to a street, and a private face to an enclosed garden or court."*
- (b) *"All residents shall have access to sitting-out areas."*

With regard to (a), the subdivision of this dwelling-house into two separate properties means that the one at the rear does not have a public face to the street, and neither property has a private face to an enclosed garden or court, as required.

With regard to (b), it is evident that as a consequence of the various extensions to the cottage, there is no sitting-out area for residents, to the rear in a private garden, as required by Policy D2.

② The Proposal contravenes Policy H1 (Residential Areas) on several counts:-

- a) This Policy does not permit proposals which would constitute overdevelopment. The creation of a new property from a dug-out basement plus rear extensions which take up the whole of the back garden is clearly over-development. The cramming of 8 bedrooms into what was once a modest cottage is overdevelopment.

- b) Contrary to Policy H1, this development has an unacceptable impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area. The houses in the area which are adjacent and comparable to this one, to the north in Sunnyside Terrace, are all traditional in design, with ample front and back gardens. The current application has an unacceptable impact on the character and amenity of this area by the building over of the entire back garden, and the disproportionate intensification of use of a small cottage.
- c) Also contrary to Policy H1, this development does not comply with Supplementary Guidance on Curtilage Splits (as we detail below).
- d) Lastly, once again in contravention of Policy H1, this development does not comply with Supplementary Guidance on House Extensions, (as we detail below)

**3) The Proposal fails to comply with Supplementary Guidance on Curtilage Splits as follows:-**

- a) The proposed property at "16 Sunnyside Terrace" has no public face to a street, being at basement level on that elevation, and in any case is at present obscured by "lightwells".
- b) Neither of the subdivisions has a "private face to an enclosed garden or court" as required by section 3.6
- c) Neither subdivided flat has access to private sitting out areas, as also required by section 3.6
- d) Section 3.7 of this Supplementary Guidance requires that dwellings up to two storeys in height, such as this, should have a rear garden of at least 9 metres in length.

There is no rear garden at this property for the use of tenants of either proposed flat.

- e) Section 3.7 also requires that garden ground should be "useable for sitting out, and have an acceptable level of privacy and amenity".

There is nowhere private for occupants of either flat to sit out.

- f) Section 5.2 of the SG requires that:-

*"no more than a third of the total site area for each individual curtilage should be built upon"*

The proportion built upon in this application contravenes this; it is well over half the total area.

- g) Section 7.2 requires that:-

*"on-site parking to an appropriate level as stated in the adopted parking standards must be met both for the existing and the new building"*

Clearly, the current application provides no on-site parking whatsoever.

The adopted parking standards in the Guidance on Transport and Accessibility are clear.

The guidelines for a residential dwelling in this, the "Outer City" zone, are 3 parking spaces for a 4-bedroomed dwelling.

Sunnybank Cottage has at present 8 bedrooms, with 4 in the original house, and 4 in the extension. In order to meet the adopted parking guidelines, then, at least 6 parking spaces should be provided. Even for two 3-bedroomed flats, 4 spaces in total would be expected.

The guidelines laid out in the Proposed LDP for this "Outer City" area are little different; in that document, residential dwellings should once again have 3 parking spaces each. A total of 6 for this cottage would be required if it were sub-divided.

Even if this application were being considered primarily in terms of the proposed LDP, and so the new guidelines for HMOs were relevant, there would still be a requirement for 4 parking spaces for the 8 bedrooms.

The current application provides no parking whatsoever (in fact it removes the existing parking space), and therefore fails to meet the requirements of the Supplementary Guidance on Curtilage Splits (as well as Supplementary Guidance on Transport and Accessibility).

**It therefore contravenes Policy H1 of the Local Development Plan**

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**The Proposal fails to comply with the Supplementary Guidance on House Extensions**  
(The Householders Development Guide) as follows:-

It is contrary to General Principles 1, 4 and 5 of the Guide:-

- 1) The alterations both overwhelm and dominate the original form and appearance of the dwelling.
- 4) The built footprint of the dwelling, as extended, far exceeds twice that of the original dwelling.
- 5) Well over 50% of the rear garden is covered by development

**It therefore contravenes Policy H1 of the Local Development Plan**

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**Precedent**

As stated in the Council's Supplementary Guidance on Curtilage Splits or redevelopment, the need to avoid setting a precedent is here a material consideration.

It is the Society's view that to allow a development of such a nature as the one under consideration at Sunnybank Cottage would most definitely create a precedent-

*"whereby it would be difficult to resist similar developments, the cumulative effect of which would have a harmful effect on the amenity of the immediate area or the wider City"*

We have particular concern about the precedent which would be set by allowing the excavating of a front garden to form a new basement with windows; the creation of ugly "lightwells"; and the filling up of the entire back garden with extensions, much to the detriment of the character, appearance and amenity of a traditional cottage.

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**The development contravenes Policy D1 (Architecture and Placemaking)** as it is not "designed with due consideration for its context," nor does it "make a positive contribution to its setting."

The siting, scale and massing of the extensions completely overwhelm the original cottage, and the loss of the whole of the back garden to these extensions is completely out of character with adjacent houses.

Lastly, the building of extensive horizontal "lightwells" of what seems to be clear plastic at the front of Sunnybank Cottage, along with associated perspex or plastic fencing and rails, are, in the Society's view, an ugly intrusion.

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These most certainly do not show "due consideration for context" nor make a positive contribution to the setting of the cottage. In particular, they introduce an element to this residential area which is wholly alien to its character, and fails utterly to respect the local context.

\* \* \*

In summary of the above, we wish to object to this application on the grounds that it contravenes the City Council's Policies and Guidance as follows:-

Policy D1 of the Local Development Plan

Policy D2 of the Local Development Plan

Policy H1 of the Local Development Plan

Supplementary Guidance on Curtilage Splits

Supplementary Guidance in "Householder Development Guide"

Supplementary Guidance on "Transport and Accessibility"

Yours faithfully,



Mrs B McPetrie

Planning Secretary