

From: webadmin@oldaberdeen.org.uk
Sent: 27 Jul 2016 13:31:33 +0100
To: Alexander Ferguson
Cc: PI
Subject: Applications 160727 Detailed Planning Permission and 160728 - former public toilet

Dear Sir

Planning Conservation Area Consent – Former lavatory block on High Street – change of use and alterations to form a café

The Old Aberdeen Community Council is pleased to see a new use being created for this long term eyesore and congratulate the new owner for developing an appropriate solution for a difficult site in the heart of the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area. We comment as follows:

- We are content with the proposed reconfiguration as a café (subject to formal Council approval, etc. which we would expect to disallow hot fat frying and similar odour creating processes).
- We are content with the demolition of all but the front, granite walls
- We are content that the redevelopment should include contemporary elements and not seek to be a pastiche of Georgian Old Aberdeen
- We are content, in principle, with the two level, gable end to street configuration that does, to some extent, echo the medieval configuration of the High Street.

However, we feel we must OBJECT to the current proposal for the following two reasons:

1/ We are concerned with the actual visual presentation of the new structure, which appears to be grey granite chip dry dash below upper walls and roof of sheet metal in an unidentified shade of grey, grey aluminium windows and doors, sheet rolled grey guttering and grey downpipes. The iconic Old Aberdeen Town House is a major element of the tourist experience in Aberdeen and it is critical that this development, which is immediately to the side of the Town House, should appropriately complement the immediate area. We note:-

- That dry pebble dash is simply not part of the Old Aberdeen architecture palette, harling is more common.
- that there is just too much grey metal – a completely alien material for walls and roofs within our conservation area. We are particularly concerned that the use of this material in this location will create a precedent for its use elsewhere as it may well be (we suspect) the cheap solution.
- Doors and windows made of metal will be too clinical and contrary to Aberdeen City Council Technical Advice Note 'The Repair and Replacement of Windows and Doors April 2016'. This document expects windows and doors in a conservation area to be sympathetically manufactured in wood.
- Pan-tiles or (genuine) slate are what might reasonably be expected as roofing.

2/ We are also objecting to this application as we wish the decision to be made by the Planning Committee, not by a delegated officer. While the building is very small, its impact on the location will be felt for many years to come.

The following point is not an objection, but a point of concern that we ask the Planning Officer to fully evaluate. This is the impact on the daylight available to the existing properties in Market Lane. We believe the two west most properties fall within the 25 degree rule and that daylight is indeed compromised to the lower floor (though not a main living room), but also that the upper floors in Market Lane may also be impacted. We suggest that it would be appropriate to request a daylight study.

Finally, we would ask that any eventual approval of a planning application for this sensitive site should clearly identify restrictions on signage, referring to the relevant portions of ACC Supplementary Guidance 'Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guidelines, March 2012'.

Yours sincerely

Dewi Morgan
Planning officer and webadmin
On behalf of Old Aberdeen Community Council,
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