160501: Proposed single storey extension, and replacement window to rear of dwelling house at 100 Fountainhall Road, Aberdeen, AB15 4EG

For: Mr and Mrs D C and C M Morton

| Application Date: | 28 April 2016 |
| Officer: | Sheila Robertson |
| Ward: | Hazlehead/Ashley/Queens Cross |
| Community Council: | Rosemount And Mile End |
| Advertisement: | N/A |
| Advertised Date: | N/A |

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

SITE DESCRIPTION
The application property is located on the east side of Fountainhall Road, close to the junction with Beechgrove Terrace, and situated within the Albyn Place / Rubislaw Conservation Area. The site comprises a 2.5-storey traditional granite semi-detached dwelling house with an annexe to the rear, 5m in width and projecting 10m along the northern boundary. The first section of the annexe is 2 storeys, mirroring that of the adjoining property. Thereafter the annexe reduces to single storey, containing a kitchen, with a lean to roof, hipped to the eastern elevation, 4.4m in height. The rear building line matches that of the extension to the adjoining property whose roof sits some 1.3m higher. The northern and southern garden walls are delineated by 1.4m high stone walls. Current built site coverage is 24%.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL
Planning permission is sought to erect a single storey extension, involving demolition of the existing single storey section of the rear annexe, to provide an enlarged kitchen. The new extension will extend a further 3.65m along the northern boundary, giving a total length of 8.4m from the 2 storey section of annexe; its roof will be lean to, approximately 200mm higher than existing and will terminate in a straight gable. The width will match existing however a centrally located entrance porch will be located to the southern elevation, 3m in width and with a 1m projection. Its roof will be pitched, running at right angles to the extension, and sitting 1.2m lower. A 3.15m high section of the northern wall will be visible above the mutual boundary wall. Finishing materials will include salvaged granite to the northern elevation, the remaining walls to be rendered, and slates to match existing. The south facing elevation, including the porch, will be extensively glazed as would the northern gable. All windows and doors to be framed with white PVCu.
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It is also proposed to replace an existing timber sash and case window to the rear facing elevation of the 2 storey annexe with one of identical style and dimensions but in white PVCu.

RELEVANT HISTORY
None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS
All drawings and supporting documents listed below can be viewed on the Council’s website at www.publicaccess.aberdeencity.gov.uk.

CONSULTATIONS
Masterplan, Design and Conservation – Comments received expressing concerns regarding the proposed design.

REPRESENTATIONS
None

PLANNING POLICY
National Policy and Guidance
• Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)
• Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS)

Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP)
• Policy H1 Residential Areas
• Policy D1 Architecture and Placemaking
• Policy D5 Built Heritage

Supplementary Guidance (SG)
• Householder Development Guide

Other Relevant Material Considerations
• Technical Advice Note (TAN): The Repair and Replacement of Windows and Doors.
• Proposed Aberdeen Development Local Plan.
• Albyn Place / Rubislaw Conservation Area Appraisal.
• Aberdeen City Conservation Area Character appraisal and Management Plan.

EVALUATION
Sections 25 and 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require that where, in making any determination under the planning acts, regard is to be had to the provisions of the Development Plan and that determination shall be made in accordance with the plan, so far as material to the application unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 places a duty on planning authorities to preserve and enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas.
**Extension**

**Design, Scale and Massing**

The overall objective of the current Supplementary Guidance contained in the Householder Development Guide is to ensure that all extensions and alterations to residential properties should be well designed, with due regard for both their context and the design of the parent building. Such extensions and alterations should make a positive contribution to the design and appearance of a building and maintain the quality and character of the surrounding area.

Several elements of the proposed extension are considered acceptable in terms of the householder development guidance; there will be a net gain in ground floor footprint of approximately 20 sq.m, representing a 3.5% increase in site coverage, which will maintain a low level of site coverage, acceptable within the context of surrounding properties and more than adequate useable rear garden space will be retained after development. The extension will be subservient to the original dwelling house in terms of footprint and height and its scale, mass and proportions are considered acceptable in relation to both the existing dwelling house and plot size.

The householder guidance relating to extensions to semi-detached dwelling houses limits their projection along a mutual boundary separating a pair of semis to 4m, when measured from the rearmost original part of the main building, excluding any store or outhouse which did not originally contain any internal living accommodation. The existing kitchen is housed in a section of the annexe that would have originally been an outhouse therefore the projection of the extension, some 8.4m from the rear of the main house, does not comply with the guidance. Although calculations indicate the additional projection to be acceptable in terms of residential amenity, since there would be minimum additional impact to all neighbouring properties in terms of light receipt, the additional projection is only acceptable if it also results in an extension of sufficiently high quality design that sits well with and complements the existing dwelling house and preserves or enhances the character of the surrounding Conservation Area.

**Impact to Character of Conservation Area**

Additions to historic buildings in conservation areas need to be of good quality design and quality materials and should make a positive contribution to the original building. This applies to all buildings in conservation areas not just the buildings visible from a public viewpoint. Good quality contemporary design that makes a positive contribution to the conservation area is encouraged. The appraisal document for this conservation area includes unsympathetic development that does not reflect or relate to the character of the conservation area as a threat to its special historic character. While the footprint of the extension could potentially be considered acceptable, its design is considered not to be of sufficient quality to make a positive contribution to the special character and setting of the existing historic building and therefore fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area, for the following reasons:

- The form of the proposed new extension is that of a standard domestic extension that would be found on an average modern house. There is little attempt to make it in keeping with or complementary to the existing historic
building. The porch detail is inconsistent with the form of the existing historic building and makes the extension completely incongruous with the existing building. A simplified mono-pitch (i.e. removal of the porch) or gable form

- The pattern of glazing to the eastern elevation is not of the standard of design required in a Conservation Area. A simplified approach, possibly concentrating the majority of glazing to the southern elevation and restricting any glazing to the gable to a narrow section extending from floor to ceiling would be more appropriate.

- The northern elevation of the extension presents a blank wall rising some 3.15m above the existing boundary wall, and is clearly visible from Beechgrove Terrace. Finishing materials for this elevation have been changed from render to salvaged granite, which will partially help blend the extension with surrounding properties. However, notwithstanding, this elevation is still considered to be visually intrusive by virtue of its overall height, particularly when viewed juxtaposed to the unsympathetic extension to the adjoining dwelling house, and which will lead to further incremental erosion of the character of the Conservation Area.

- A number of the specified materials are not of the quality expected for an extension in a conservation area. The use of dry dash render should be avoided if possible and higher quality, contemporary materials such as timber or zinc cladding are welcomed as a contrast where exact reproduction of existing materials is not possible. Timber or powder coated aluminium should be used for the doors rather than PVCu. The wallhead details (fascias and soffits) should be substantially reduced or removed, and formed in timber.

The proposed extension generally follows the established pattern of development in the surrounding area, one of long extensions down one side of the feu however the design and materials do not respect the existing character of the dwelling house and annexe, which when combined with the proposed length, serves to overwhelm and detract from the traditional character of the parent building. Several small adjustments have been made to the plans since originally submitted, however they have failed to adequately address the basic issue of unsympathetic design which results in an extension that fails to take its cue from the parent dwelling house and has not been designed with due consideration for the context and character of the surrounding Conservation Area. The areas of concern which have been identified with regard to the proposed design, will cumulatively impact detrimentally on the character of both the dwelling house and the Conservation Area. As such the application would not accord with the objectives of SPP and HESPS with regard to the historic environment and would therefore conflict with local plan policy D5. The proposal would not make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area contrary to the guidance set out in the Aberdeen City Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan or the Albyn Place/Rubislaw Conservation Area Appraisal.

Replacement Window
The Supplementary Guidance contained in the Technical Advice Note for replacement windows within a conservation area states that the introduction of PVCu as a replacement material is not acceptable on a public elevation, however the window to be replaced is on a secondary elevation, not directly facing any public viewpoint and partially obscured by the neighbour’s extension, and given its distance from Beechgrove Terrace and orientation, the use of PVCu would not be readily noticeable and have minimal impact on the character of the Conservation Area. The
exiting window pattern and opening mechanism would be replicated and the proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of policy.

**Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan**
The Proposed ALDP was approved for submission for Examination by Scottish Ministers at the meeting of the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee of 27 October 2015 and the Reporter has now reported back. The proposed plan constitutes the Council’s settled view as to what should be the content of the final adopted ALDP and is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, along with the adopted ALDP. The exact weight to be given to matters contained in the Proposed ALDP (including individual policies) in relation to specific applications will depend on whether:

- these matters have been subject to comment by the Reporter; and
- the relevance of these matters to the application under consideration.

The Reporters response does not affect policies in a manner that is relevant to this application. In relation to this particular application proposal policies in the Proposed LDP are not materially different from those in the adopted LDP. Approval to adopt the LDP will be sought at the Full Council meeting of 14 December 2016. The actual adoption date is likely to be around the third week in January 2017.

**RECOMMENDATION: Refuse**

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**
The proposal fails to comply with the relevant policies of Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012, namely Policies D1 (Architecture and Placemaking) and H1 (Residential Areas), the Council’s Supplementary Guidance: Householder Development Guide and with the relevant corresponding policies in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Plan, in that the proposed design respects neither the character and architecture of the existing dwelling house nor of the surrounding area. Approval of the application would be detrimental to and thus neither preserve nor enhance the character of Conservation Area 4 (Albyn Place/ Rubislaw) contrary to the provisions of Scottish Planning Policy, Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement and thereby with Policy D5 of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. On the basis of the above, and following on from the evaluation under policy and guidance, it is considered that there are no material planning considerations that would warrant approval of the application.