



Strategic Place Planning

Report of Handling

Site Address:	83 Blenheim Place, Aberdeen, AB25 2DZ.
Application Description:	Erection of 1.5 storey garage with storage space at upper level
Application Reference:	171486/DPP
Application Type	Detailed Planning Permission
Application Date:	18 December 2017
Applicant:	Mr Derek Rettie
Ward:	Hazlehead/Ashley/Queens Cross
Community Council	Queen's Cross And Harlaw
Case Officer:	Sheila Robertson

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Site Description

The application relates to a 1½ storey traditional granite terraced dwelling house, its principal elevation facing north east, located within the Albyn Place/Rubislaw Conservation Area. There is a long narrow rear garden, screened by 1.8m high boundary walls, with access to Blenheim Lane, with a single, pitched roofed garage located within the north-west corner, measuring 3.4m in width, 5.8m in length and 3.7m in height to roof ridge. Finishing materials include corrugated asbestos sheeting. There is a garden shed and area of paving located to the south-east of the garage, accessed from the lane by a set of double timber gates. There is an ornamental Eucalyptus tree, offset and to the rear of the garage, close to the south eastern boundary wall. The section of rear lane, which extends northwards from Blenheim House to Desswood Place, is characterised by a variety of domestic garages, all single storey, of various design, materials and era and mainly longstanding.

Relevant Planning History

None relevant to the determination of this application.

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

Description of Proposal

Detailed planning permission is sought to replace the garage with one of greater dimensions and with storage accommodation above. The garage would extend across the full width of the plot, involving removal of the remaining boundary wall and gates, and be 900mm longer than existing, giving a footprint of 6.7m in width x 6.6m in length. The roof would be dual pitched, with the roof ridge running parallel to the lane and 5m in height. Finishing materials would include horizontal

Siberian larch timber cladding to the front and rear elevations, smooth grey render to the base course, off white wet dash render to the gables and a natural slate roof. The steel roller garage door would be 5m in width, with a window and pass door to the rear (east) elevation, and 2 heritage style roof lights to the lane elevation. The upper floor of the garage would be used for storage. An existing double rear entry gate and remaining section of the rear boundary wall to the lane would be removed.

Following advice from the Planning Service, amended plans were submitted – the overall height of the roof has been reduced by 550mm (with a subsequent drop in the roof pitch) and an external spiral staircase giving access to the upper floor has been removed from the proposal. The original submission proposed that the gable would face the lane however the applicant has since decided to re-orientate the roof, although no reason has been provided to support or explain this amendment, which was neither requested nor welcomed by the Planning Service.

Supporting Documents

All drawings and supporting documents listed below can be viewed on the Council's website at: <https://publicaccess.aberdeencity.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=P0ZYGWBZHX100>

CONSULTATIONS

None required.

REPRESENTATIONS

A letter has been received in support of the proposal.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Legislative Requirements

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.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)
- Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS)

Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) (2017)

- Policy H1 – Residential Areas
- Policy D1 – Quality Placemaking by Design
- Policy D4 – Historic Environment
- Policy NE5 – Trees and Woodlands
- Policy T2 – Managing the Transport Impact of Development

Supplementary Guidance and Technical Advice Notes

- The Householder Development Guide
- Transport and Accessibility

Other Material Planning Considerations

- Aberdeen City Conservation Area Character appraisal and Management Plan - Albyn Place / Rubislaw.

EVALUATION

Principle of Development

Whilst the principle of demolition of the existing garage and provision of a free-standing building within the curtilage of a residential property for purposes incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling is normally acceptable within a residentially-zoned area such as this (under Policy H1: Residential Areas of the ALDP), proposals must also be assessed in terms of factors such as design, appearance and its location, its impact on the character and amenity of the area and effects on residential character and amenity.

Design and Scale

Policy H1 (Residential Areas) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan states householder development must not have an unacceptable impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding residential area. There is also recently adopted guidance relating to the erection of domestic garages contained in Section 3.1.6 "Outbuildings" of the Householder Development Guide, which expects that such ancillary buildings should be subordinate in scale to the dwelling house, and, where highly visible and especially in Conservation Areas (in which the application site is located), should be of a scale that respects the prevalent context of the surrounding area.

Certain elements of the proposal are considered to be acceptable in terms of the Supplementary Guidance. The garage would have a finished footprint of 44.2sq.m in comparison to the existing garage which has a floor area of 20sq.m. This would result in a rise in built site coverage from 41% to 48% which, although high, is considered acceptable within the context of surrounding properties. The rear garden is deemed sufficiently generous to support a structure of such footprint and approximately 74% of the original rear garden would remain undeveloped, which complies with the aforementioned policy requiring at least 50% of the rear garden space to remain undeveloped. The proposed garage would be subservient to the original dwelling house in terms of both floor space and height. The SG supports the principle of providing upper floor accommodation provided it is contained entirely within the roof space, to retain the impression of being single storey in height. This is achieved in this instance and access to the attic space (although not detailed on the submitted plan) will presumably be by means of an internal stair, since an external stair would not be permitted by the guidance, and has already been removed from the submitted plans. The proposed materials would represent an improvement on existing.

Although the dimensions would result in the proposed garage being the largest structure within this section of the lane, in terms of both footprint and height, and it would be of substantially greater dimensions than the original garage and surrounding garages, it could still be considered to be of acceptable domestic scale in terms of its dimensions given modern day standards and expectations for such structures.

The prevalent roof profile within this section of the lane is shallow pitched with the gable facing the lane. Historically, traditional outbuildings within rear gardens generally presented their gable to the lane elevation. Although there is a double garage to the immediate opposite side of the lane, which features a roof orientation as proposed, it is however only single storey with a very shallow pitch of roof, barely visible above the wall head when viewed from street level. It is considered that, in this locale where the garages are of modest scale, the orientation of the roof parallel to the street would exaggerate the increased footprint and height of the proposed garage and increase its visual dominance within the streetscape, resulting in an imposing and overpowering building, out of character with its surroundings, thereby dominating the lane, to the detriment of visual character and residential amenity. A gable end on roof presentation is the preferred roof profile

where it is important to minimise the massing of a structure as is the case in this situation where the proposed garage would be substantially larger in terms of all neighbouring garages. Many of the immediate garages are longstanding, with the likelihood of similar applications for replacement garages in the near future which, if approved, could result in a continuous line of garage roofs lining both sides of the lane, which would result in an oppressive impact and cumulative erosion of the character of the area. It is therefore considered that the proposal fails to consider the context of the surrounding area, does not make a positive contribution to the setting of the house/area and would dominate the streetscape, thereby resulting in an unacceptable impact on the visual character of the area, contrary to the aims of both Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking by Design) and Policy H1 (Residential Areas).

Impact on residential amenity.

The proposed garage would be located sufficiently distant so as not to result in any impact in terms of loss of day light to neighbouring windows, would have no substantial impact in terms of overshadowing, being located a suitable distance from neighbours main areas of useable garden ground and no loss of privacy from either the window or rooflights.

Trees

Policy NE5 – Trees and Woodlands of the ALDP states that there is a presumption against all activities and development that will result in the loss of or damage to, trees and woodlands that contribute to nature conservation, landscape character, local amenity or climate change adaptation and mitigation. The replacement garage would require the removal of an existing mature tree – a non-native Eucalyptus, however given its location, set approximately 7.7m back from the heel of the lane, and that the tree is only publicly visible from the lane, its contribution to the visual amenity of the wider neighbourhood is limited. Removal of this tree would thus not be significantly contrary to Policy NE5 – Trees and Woodlands of the ALDP.

Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Guidance

With regards to the above guidance relating to new or replacement garages, the proposal complies with the minimum criteria set out in the above guidance with regards to internal/external and entry door dimensions. It is therefore considered suitable for its purpose as a double garage and would result in an increase on current off street parking provision.

Impact on character of Conservation Area

The Conservation Area Appraisal for this area has identified the presence of *“Unsympathetic development of large residential garages”* and *“Unsympathetic development that does not reflect or relate to the character of the area”* as being a threat to the character of all Conservation Areas. As described above, the proposal fails to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area, as required by Policy D4 (Historic Environment) of the ALDP as it would erode the character of the Conservation Area by introducing a visually disruptive feature to the streetscape, at odds with the prevailing character and appearance of garages within the lane, and altering the existing balance and character of this part of the Conservation Area, to its detriment.

Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the proposed development is not considered to give rise to any differential impacts on those with protected characteristics. In coming to this assessment the Planning Authority has had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010, to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Summary

The applicant has been advised that the proposed garage would be acceptable were the roof to be reorientated; which would not compromise the amount of accommodation achievable at upper level, and would minimise the massing created by its greater dimensions. The original submission proposed that the gable face the lane, however the applicant changed the roof orientation during assessment of the application but has not given any reason for the change or why he is unwilling to consider reorientation of the roof as requested and wishes the amended application to be determined as submitted. The applicant has cited as a precedent for approval of this application, a recently approved garage at 58 Fountainhall Road (Ref 171462). Although its height and roof profile would be similar to the application under assessment, an application requires to be determined on a site specific basis and in this instance the proposal was considered acceptable in the context of its locale, where its compatibility with a neighbouring garage and the general characteristics of the surrounding area were a material consideration in its approval,

While the proposed garage relates to an existing residential use and is generally compliant with Policy H1 in terms of dimensions, the orientation of the roof exaggerates the massing of the structure within the streetscape, resulting in a garage that would not comply with the guidelines contained in Section 3.1.6 "Outbuildings" of the adopted Supplementary Guidance: Householder Development Guide, which requires that where highly visible and especially in conservation areas, detached garages should be of a scale and design that respects the prevalent context of the surrounding area. The roof orientation would exaggerate the scale of the proposed garage and thereby increase its visual dominance within the streetscape, resulting in an imposing and overpowering building, out of character with its surroundings, thereby dominating the lane, to the detriment of visual character and residential amenity, thereby failing to demonstrate due regard for its context or make a positive contribution to its residential setting, contrary to Policies D1 (Quality Placemaking by Design) and H1 (Residential Areas) of the Aberdeen Local Plan. SPP states proposals for development within conservation areas should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. For the above reasons, the proposed garage has not been designed with due consideration to its context, and would negatively affect the character of the Albyn Place/Rubislaw Conservation Area, thus conflicting with Policy D5, HESPS and SPP. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

The proposed garage fails to comply with the guidelines contained in Section 3.1.6 "Outbuildings" of the Supplementary Guidance: Householder Development Guide, and with Policies H1 (Residential Areas) and D1 (Quality Placemaking by Design) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, by virtue of its roof profile and orientation, which would exacerbate its massing within the streetscape, resulting in a dominant and obtrusive structure out of keeping with the locale, thereby having a detrimental impact on the character and visual amenity of the surrounding residential area. Approval would risk setting an unwelcome precedent for further unsympathetic replacement garages within this part of Conservation Area, contrary to the aims of the Albyn Place/Rubislaw Conservation Area Character Appraisal and which, if replicated, could lead to a significant cumulative erosion of the Conservation Area's character and appearance. Furthermore, it would fail to demonstrate due regard for its context and would have a negative impact on the character of the Albyn Place/Rubislaw Conservation Area, contrary to Policy D4 (Historic Environment) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (HESPS) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). It is considered that the proposal does not accord with the

provisions of the Development Plan and that there are no material planning considerations that would warrant approval of this application.