



Strategic Place Planning

Report of Handling

Site Address:	9 Marine Terrace, Aberdeen, AB11 7SF
Application Description:	Partial conversion of an existing coach-house to domestic garage including erection of single storey extension; installation of replacement door; formation of garage door and installation of electric vehicle charging point to rear
Application Ref:	210677/DPP
Application Type:	Detailed Planning Permission
Application Date:	14 May 2021
Applicant:	Mr John Morrison
Ward:	Torry/Ferryhill
Community Council:	Ferryhill and Ruthrieston
Case Officer:	Jemma Tasker

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse.

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Site Description

The application site relates to a one-and-a-half storey plus basement, mid-terraced dwellinghouse designed by Archibald Simpson and built in 1837, and its associated front and rear curtilage. This dwelling – and the entire terrace – is Category B Listed and is located within the Marine Terrace Conservation Area. To the rear of the property, there is a large garden spanning approximately 537sqm. At the far end of the plot, to the west, is a mews coach house, to which this application relates, accessed via Marine Lane. The building spans the entire width of the plot, measuring c.13m in width, 5.5m in length and 6m in height. The coach house was possibly originally used as stables and hayloft, ancillary to the main dwellinghouse. Previously, it has been used as ancillary residential accommodation, which saw the most recent alterations carried out to the building. Currently, the coach house is used for storage purposes.

Relevant Planning History

Application Number	Proposal	Decision Date
210678/LBC	Partial conversion of an existing coach-house to domestic garage including erection of single storey extension; installation of replacement door; formation of garage door and installation of electric vehicle charging point to rear	Status: Pending Consideration.
171515/LBC	Alterations to existing coach house to provide garaging for 2 cars, erection of single storey extension to rear and removal of existing access door and replacement with garage door	Status: Withdrawn by Applicant.

171513/DPP	Provision of garaging for 2 cars within existing coach house involving erection of single storey extension to rear, and removal of access door and replacement with garage door	Status: Withdrawn by Applicant.
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APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

Description of Proposal

Detailed Planning Permission (DPP) is sought for the partial conversion of the existing coach house to a domestic garage including the erection of a single storey extension; the installation of a replacement door; the formation of a garage door and the installation of an electric vehicle charging point to the rear.

While it is proposed to convert part of the existing coach house to a domestic garage, the remainder of the building would be retained for storage purposes. In order to accommodate the garage, it is proposed to erect a single storey extension on the east elevation of the coach house. This flat roofed extension would measure 1.3m in length and 6.9m in width, with a height of 2.5m and would be finished with timber cladding. On this elevation, it is also proposed to replace the existing aluminium sliding doors with timber framed double doors. On the west elevation it is proposed to remove the existing timber doors and create a further c.3.8m wide opening to allow for the installation of a 5m wide horizontal sliding sectional timber garage door. Additionally, the existing timber slats and hayloft door would be refurbished.

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=QT3FVXBZJP700>

Planning Statement by Aurora Planning – provides background to the site; a brief description of the works proposed as part of the application; policy context; and an assessment against such policy.

Report and Design Statement (Revision A) by James Roy Associates – provides background to the site; a description of the coach house internally, externally, as well as previous alterations which have taken place; and details the proposed alterations and the desire to have an electric car in order to meet government aspirations.

CONSULTATIONS

ACC - Roads Development Management Team – No objection.

Ferryhill and Ruthrieston Community Council – No comments received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None.

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.

Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability or preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) was approved on 18 December 2020. In February 2021, a Judicial Review of the decision of the Scottish Ministers on 18 December 2020 to amend Scottish Planning Policy (2014) as set out in 'Scottish Planning Policy Finalised Documents' and to publish 'Planning Advice Note 1/2020' was lodged with the Court of Session. As it stands, SPP2020 remains in place and is a relevant consideration in the determination of all planning applications.

Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)

Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2017) (ALDP)

Policy D1 – Quality Placemaking by Design

Policy D4 – Historic Environment

Policy D5 – Our Granite Heritage

Policy H1 – Residential Areas

Policy T3 – Sustainable and Active Travel

Supplementary Guidance (SG)

The Householder Development Guide (HDG)

Transport and Accessibility

Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2020) (PALDP)

The Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (Proposed ALDP) was approved at the Council meeting of 2 March 2020. A period of representation in public was undertaken from May to August 2020. The Proposed ALDP constitutes the Council's settled view as to what the final content of the next adopted ALDP should be and is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017 will continue to be the primary document against which applications are considered. 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 –

- such matters have or have not received representations as a result of the period of representations in public for the Proposed ALDP;
- the level of representations received in relation to relevant components of the Proposed ALDP and their relevance of these matters to the application under consideration.

The foregoing can only be assessed on a case by case basis. Policies of relevance include:

Policy D1 – Quality Placemaking

Policy D2 – Amenity

Policy D6 – Historic Environment

Policy D7 – Our Granite Heritage

Policy H1 – Residential Areas

Other Material Considerations

Marine Terrace Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (July, 2013)

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Doorways and Extensions

EVALUATION

Principle of Development

The application site is located within a residential area under Policy H1 of the ALDP. The proposal would comply with this policy, in principle, if it does not constitute overdevelopment; does not adversely affect the character and amenity of the surrounding area; would not result in the loss of open space; and it complies with the associated Supplementary Guidance. Additionally, Policy D4 (Historic Environment) of the ALDP states that the Council should protect, preserve and enhance the historic environment in line with Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and other national guidance. It sets out that there will be a presumption in favour of the retention and reuse of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas that contribute to their character. Policy D4 also indicates that high quality design that respects the character, appearance and setting of the historic environment and protects the special architectural or historic interest of its listed buildings, and conservation areas, will be supported.

Although the building has been previously altered as detailed within the Report and Design Statement, it retains a strong traditional character and appears to be a rare surviving example of a mews development. While doors have been blocked up, openings have been created and unsympathetic patio doors have been installed, breaking down the building into individual features undermines the contribution the building makes to the main listed building. Furthermore, it is considered that many of these alterations to the building are reversible. An objective analysis of the building, when considered as a whole, demonstrates that it still retains special character and thus, has value which contributes to the character of the building and that of the wider Marine Terrace Conservation Area.

Each aspect of the proposal will be individually assessed below and against the relevant policy and guidance. However, to determine the effect the proposal will have on the character of the area it is also considered necessary to assess it in the context of Policy D1 of the ALDP. This policy states that all development must ensure high standards of design and have a strong and distinctive sense of place, which is a result of: context appraisal, detailed planning, quality architecture, craftsmanship and materials.

In relation to the loss of open space criteria outlined in Policy H1 above, this is not considered relevant as the site is wholly residential and therefore would not result in the loss of any open space.

Single Storey Extension

A 5.9m wide opening is proposed on the east elevation of the coach house to facilitate the construction of an extension to that side of the building, to accommodate a garage which would measure 6.1m in overall length. At 8sqm in area, the extension would result in a minor rise in site coverage, retaining a low level of development which is comparable to neighbouring properties, and in excess of 50% of usable garden space would be retained. Therefore, the extension would not constitute overdevelopment of the garden.

No development should result in a situation where amenity is "borrowed" from an adjacent property, or there is an impingement on the amenity enjoyed by others. Given the limited projection of the extension in comparison to the extensive length of the garden ground and the distance from neighbouring properties, there would be no significant adverse impact on neighbouring daylight levels, privacy or any adverse increase in overshadowing as a result of this aspect of the proposal. Therefore, the extension would not result in overdevelopment and current levels of residential amenity would be retained.

However, the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Managing Change guidance: 'Extensions' sets out that small structures, such as garden buildings not intended for permanent occupation, will

seldom be capable of extension. A proven need for additional accommodation might instead be met by a new free-standing suitably scaled and designed structure, nearby or elsewhere. While, in isolation, the proposed extension would generally accord with the general principles sets out in this guidance and that of the HDG, in that it would not dominate the original building as a result of its scale, materials or location, and would be located on a secondary elevation, it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the existing building could not be adapted for use as a garage whilst still retaining more of the existing form and fabric of the building which contributes towards to character of the conservation area.

The creation of the opening to accommodate the proposed extension would result in the loss of three existing openings and the surrounding walls. While it has been stated that these have been previously altered, with evidence suggesting that two original door openings have previously been infilled, the removal of this and a much larger section of the east elevation would still undoubtedly result in a substantial loss of historic fabric, to the detriment of the conservation area. HEP4 of the HEPS advises that *“if detrimental impact on the historic environment is unavoidable, it should be minimised. Steps should be taken to demonstrate that alternatives have been explored, and mitigation measures should be put in place”*. It is understood that the garage as existing is of insufficient depth to accommodate a family sized parked car; however, it is not clear as to why such a wide extension is required on this elevation and, if it is *‘unavoidable’* to create adequate depth for a car, why this cannot be the standard 3m width required for new single garages as set out in the SG: ‘Transport and Accessibility’ – to minimise impact on the historic environment as noted above. Nevertheless, the creation of an extension to this elevation creates significant concern given the contribution the traditional building, as existing, makes to the character of the conservation area.

Garage Door Opening

It is proposed to remove the existing timber door on the west elevation and create an opening which would total 5m in width. On the existing elevations submitted as part of the application, a 3.5m wide opening is outlined which is thought to be a historic carriage opening below the existing former hayloft door, which has since been infilled, but still reversible. The creation of the 5m wide opening would subsume the existing traditional double leaf timber lined door with fanlight above, resulting in a loss of historic fabric, which would significantly and irreversibly alter this elevation of the coach house. A turning sketch submitted as part of the application shows a car manoeuvring into the garage. It is stated that this could possibly still work if the opening is reduced to 4m. Again, in relation to HEP4 if impact is unavoidable, then this should be minimised with alternative options explored and mitigation proposed. In light of the above, it appears that an acceptably sized opening may be achieved through creating a 4m wide opening on this elevation, which could be formed by reinstating the 3.5m carriage opening with a further extension of 0.5m created to the south of this. It is considered that this approach would retain the double leaf entrance door and fanlight, thereby minimising the negative impact.

It is considered that the 5m wide opening on the west elevation, coupled with the single storey extension on the east elevation, would result in a substantial loss of historic fabric. This includes the removal of granite from both east and west elevations. Policy D5 of the ALDP sets out that proposals to demolish any granite building, structure or feature, partially or completely, that is listed or within a Conservation Area will not be granted Planning Permission, Conservation Area Consent and Listed Building Consent unless the Local Authority is satisfied that the proposal to demolish meets Historic Environment Scotland’s test for demolition. It further states that where the retention and re-use of a granite feature, building or structure, in whole or part, is unviable then the visible re-use of as much of the original granite as is practically possible as a building material within the development site is required. Neither specific details regarding the volume of granite to be removed (although it is apparent from the drawings that a significant amount of the granite walls would be lost), nor its potential retention and reuse, has been referred to within the application. This loss of the granite is contrary to Policy D5 of the ALDP and would harm the

special interest of the existing building and that of the character of the wider conservation area. Overall, the interventions noted above do not reflect the fundamental principles of conservation, which consist of minimum interventions, minimum loss of fabric and reversibility.

The applicant has attempted to justify the proposed changes for two main reasons, the building has already been significantly altered and that further alterations are required to adapt it for modern living, to help meet Government and Council car electrification targets. As discussed above, although the building has been previously altered, it still retains its strong traditional form and character and many of the alterations carried out are considered to be reversible. While historic features may have been removed and altered, this is not considered an adequate justification to allow for further erosion of the historic fabric and character. Throughout the application, the applicant refers to a 'family sized car'. Consideration of a smaller, electric car has not been discussed. Had this option been explored, it may have reduced the need for the extension on the east elevation and reduced the width of the opening required on the west elevation. Impact on the historic fabric therefore may have been reduced while meeting the applicant's stated desire to contribute towards reducing carbon emissions. However, this has not been detailed within the application and thus, gives the impression that the proposal has possibly been designed around a specific model of car. Nevertheless, the Planning Authority has no control over, nor can it take into consideration, the type of vehicle to be stored in the garage. Consideration is solely limited to the physical alterations to the coach house and the consequences of such alterations. Furthermore, alternative options for the use of the coach house have not been provided, with consideration only given to the use of the building as a garage. Details have not been provided as to why the coach house could not be more sensitively upgraded to be used as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling or any other suitable use.

The justification in the Report and Design Statement is therefore not adequate to demonstrate that the alterations to the coach house are absolutely necessary. In this instance, the long term future of the building is not considered to be at risk and an immediate adaptation for, essentially, a two car garage with an onsite charging point is not required to ensure the continued use of the building.

Replacement Doors

Aluminium sliding doors were previously installed as part of alterations to the building in the 1990s to form a granny flat/guest accommodation. The proposal to replace these with timber framed double doors would see the re-introduction of a more sympathetic framing material which would result in an improvement on the existing situation, enhancing the character of the conservation area and in accordance with guidance contained within HES's Managing Change document: 'Doorways'.

Timber Slats and Hayloft Door

The proposal includes the refurbishment of the timber slats and hayloft door, in keeping with the spirit of retain and repair. This element of the proposal would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and is therefore acceptable.

Transportation Matters

The applicant has stated their intention to install a charging point in the coach house. Given that this would be situated internally, this element does not require planning permission and thus, will not be further assessed as part of this application.

The proposal would meet the required minimal internal dimensions for a double garage (5.7m x 5.7m) – in accordance with the SG: 'Transport and Accessibility – and colleagues in Roads Development Management have no objection to the proposal.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while there are merits to the proposal including: the replacement of the existing aluminium doors and the refurbishment of the timber slats and hayloft door, it is considered that the works would detract from the overall character of the coach house – which is a rare surviving example on this terrace – by reason of the excessive removal of historic fabric, which contributes to the character and appearance of the Marine Terrace Conservation Area. The Marine Terrace Conservation Area appraisal recognises that the '*Marine Terrace Conservation Area has an affluent and well-maintained character and was one of Aberdeen's first conservation areas*'. This rare surviving example of traditional character must be further protected. It is not considered that consenting this development will be the only means of preventing the loss of the asset and securing its long-term future. The proposal therefore fails to accord with the statutory duty to have regard to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area and would conflict with Policies D1 (Quality Placemaking by Design), D4 (Historic Environment), Policy D5 (Our Granite Heritage) and H1 (Residential Areas) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017, and with Scottish Planning Policy and Historic Environment Policy for Scotland. No overriding justification for approval of the works is considered to exist. It is considered that an alternative use for the building, which would require less intrusive alterations, is explored by the applicant.

Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2020) (PALDP)

In relation to this particular application, the Policies D1, D2, D6, D7 and H1 in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2020 substantively reiterate those in the Adopted Local Development Plan and the proposal is not acceptable in terms of both Plans for the reasons previously given.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

The proposed works would detract from the character of the coach house which contributes significantly to the special historic and architectural interest of the listed building and the rear lane of the terrace – by reason of the excessive removal of historic fabric, including granite, and alteration of the form of the building. Thus, the proposal fails to accord with the statutory duty to have regard to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the Marine Terrace Conservation Area and would conflict with Policies D1 – Quality Placemaking by Design, D4 – Historic Environment, D5 – Our Granite Heritage and H1 – Residential Areas of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2017, and with Scottish Planning Policy and Historic Environment Policy for Scotland, notably HEP4 in which detrimental impact has not been demonstrated to be minimal.