

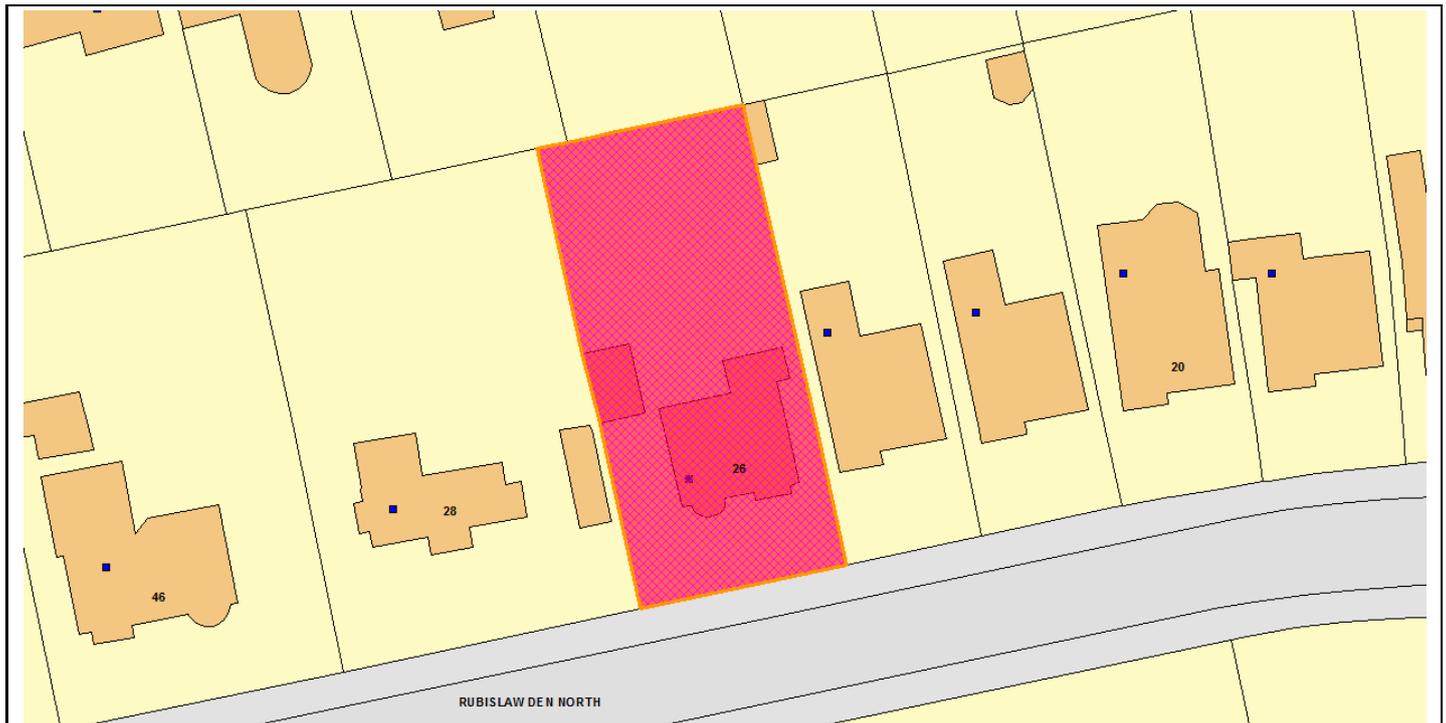


# Planning Development Management Committee

Report by Development Management Manager

**Committee Date: 7 December 2023**

<b>Site Address:</b>	26 Rubislaw Den North, Aberdeen, AB15 4AN
<b>Application Description:</b>	Erection of single storey extension, formation of patio, external steps, window/door replacement to rear; and installation of two new gates to front
<b>Application Ref:</b>	230654/LBC
<b>Application Type</b>	Listed Building Consent
<b>Application Date:</b>	2 June 2023
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr George Stewart
<b>Ward:</b>	Hazlehead/Queen's Cross/Countesswells
<b>Community Council:</b>	Queen's Cross and Harlaw
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Rebecca Kerr



## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Conditionally

## **APPLICATION BACKGROUND**

### **Site Description**

The application site is located to the north west of the city within the established residential neighbourhood of the West End. The application site is located on the north side of the street, approximately 220m east of the junction with Forest Road. The application site lies within the Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Area.

The application site comprises a two-storey detached dwelling which is category 'C' listed and its principal elevation faces south onto Rubislaw Den North. The building is a substantial 3-bay villa, designed by George Sutherland and Clement George in circa 1927. The building is finished in tooled coursed ashlar granite, with contrasting pink granite dressings to margins, eaves course, projecting cills to 1<sup>st</sup> floor, and overhanging eaves detail. The buildings' principal elevation also features, bipartite and tripartite windows to upper floor, 5-light canted window with stylised crenellated parapets to ground floor of bays to left and right, and a symmetrical deeply chamfered central entrance doorway. The building has predominantly white one-over-one traditional timber sash and case windows and square-plan gatepiers and low rough-faced coped granite boundary walls to front, with granite rubble walls to remainder of plot. The building has an existing rear extension/outshoot positioned off the north-east corner of the main house, which is original to the house.

The building is sited in a generous plot totalling c.1021sqm, with an existing single storey, pitched roof, garage to the west, and driveway finished in stone gravel. The site is bound to the front by Rubislaw Den North, and on all other remaining three sides by neighbouring properties – 24 Rubislaw Den North to the east, 28 Rubislaw Den North to the west and the rear curtilage of 29 Morningfield Road to the north.

### **Relevant Planning History**

861164 – Alterations to detached dwelling; Approved 17/08/1986.

101712 – Remove 6 Cypress because they are too large and blocking light. Crown lift 1 Cypress because it is blocking light and to promote health. Remove broken and hung up limbs from 9 Cypress to avoid accidents 1 Cypress to be reduced by a third because it is too large and blocking light. Tidy up lower branches from 1 Cypress to tidy up and promote health; approved 29/11/2010.

170995/TCA – Works to 15 Protected Trees; T1 - T15 - Conifer - Fell as unstable; approved 14/12/2017.

220945/TCA – Works to 3 Protected Trees; T1 - T3 - Cypress - Remove due to safety concerns/interfering with phonelines; approved 10/08/2022.

230655/DPP – Erection of single storey extension, formation of raised patio, external steps, and window replacement to rear; and installation of two new gates to front; currently pending consideration to be determined by Planning Development Management Committee.

## **APPLICATION DESCRIPTION**

### **Description of Proposal**

The application seeks listed building consent for the erection of a single-storey rear extension, to be formed off the existing rear extension/outshoot located on the north-east corner of the dwelling. The proposed extension has an overall footprint of c.76sqm and would provide c.56sqm of additional accommodation for use as a new kitchen. The site of the old kitchen within the existing rear extension/outshoot would provide a utility room on the main ground floor, with redundant boiler fittings removed. Proposed internal alterations include formation of a new door opening within the existing offshoot to the rear, created through the widening and lengthening of an existing window opening, which would in turn provide stepped access to the proposed new kitchen extension. In terms of overall dimensions for the proposed extension, it would project c. 10m from the rear (north) elevation, to a width of 9.5m and overall height of 3.5m to highest point of the roof. Owing to the design of the proposed extension featuring an overhanging canopy roof detail on the north and west elevations, the footprint of the proposed extension would be c. 8.9m projection (length) by 6.4m width and 3.1m height to eaves/overhang.

The extension is of contemporary design and features large frameless glazed windows and a set of double sliding patio doors are proposed on the west and north elevations, with remainder to be granite stone walling. The extension is flat roof design, featuring a corten steel overhanging canopy roof detail, parapet gutter and 'green' roof. The flat roof is also proposed to include a large rooflight. The extension is offset c.1.3m from the nearest mutual boundary which it shares with its nearest neighbour 24 Rubislaw Den North, located to the east. This offset aligns with the positioning of the existing rear outshoot, and the eastern elevation would comprise a granite stone wall and no window openings. The granite stone is proposed to be from local reclaimed sources, comprising predominantly grey colour with pink details to corners/openings, tooled flat face finish, blocks sized at c.330x600mm with three c.100x100mm offcuts in between to reflect 'Aberdeen Bond' coursing as per the existing dwelling, with off-white natural hydraulic lime flush pointed mortar.

Due to the nature and location of the proposed extension and in order to accommodate for the existing site levels, access to the proposed extension would be through a series of steps formed internally within the existing rear outshoot. This would result in the ground floor level of the proposed extension being slightly lower (c.1.0m) than the existing ground floor level of the existing dwelling. Externally there are a series of new stone steps which would allow access down to a paved lower terrace on the west elevation of the proposed extension. Finishing materials are ashlar grey and pink granite walling, frameless glass, corten steel (copper tone colour) and dark grey membrane roofing materials.

The application proposes installation of new gates to the driveway and a repositioned pedestrian gate. The pedestrian gate would be centrally aligned in the existing low granite boundary wall to the principal elevation (south), formed through means of a new opening. Granite from the new opening would be reused to block up the original pedestrian opening located in the south-east corner of the plot. The driveway gates are proposed to be widened to meet the needs of modern vehicles, and include proposed removal of a c.450mm section of granite wall.

The application includes proposed replacement of existing patio doors and a new centre-hung aluminium-clad timber rooflight (c. 550 x 780 mm, dark grey), and new aluminium-clad sliding patio doors (c. 1.8 m width by 2.0 m, dark grey), both located on the west elevation of the existing rear outshoot. Finally, the application also includes alterations to two fireplaces on the ground floor of the existing house to accommodate wood burners, and redecoration of the property.

## Amendments

Plans have been amended since original submission to include the following:

- The overall scale of the proposed extension has reduced, from c.11.2m to 10.0m in length (including c.1.2m projecting canopy).
- The proposed material finish on the east elevation of the extension was amended from render to ashlar granite, however this was not at the request of the Planning Service. The intention is to use granite from reclaimed sources.
- A series of biodiversity enhancements were added to the rear garden, including specification of pollinator planting.
- Granite reuse was requested for the blocking up of the original pedestrian gate opening alongside clarification the new opening would not affect the overall structural integrity of the granite boundary wall.

## 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=RV9TPXBZJYC00>

- Window Condition Survey (*June 2023*)
- Design Statement (*May 2023*)
- Visualisations (*November 2023*)

## Reason for Referral to Committee

The application has been referred to the Planning Development Management Committee because it is recommended for approval and has received more than 6 timeous letters of objection, therefore in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation the application requires determination at Planning Development Management Committee.

## CONSULTATIONS

**Queen's Cross and Harlaw Community Council** – No comments received in response to this application, however have objected to the corresponding 230655/DPP application.

## REPRESENTATIONS

A total of 11 representations have been received, 7 objecting to the proposed development and 4 in support. The matters raised are summarised below:

### Object

#### Site conditions, boundary wall, trees and landscaping

- Mutual boundary wall between No. 24 and No. 26 is around 1.5m high, however because of the topography the wall effectively acts as a retaining wall and the ground level at No. 26 is about 1.0m above the ground level at No. 24 in some areas. Significant ground work will be required to raise the ground levels, which in turn will affect the loading on the boundary wall and risk its collapse.
- Additional trees were felled in 2022 in relation to application 220945/TCA and the applicant has erected an unauthorised close-boarded fence above the existing stone wall, in excess of 2.5m high as viewed from No. 24 neighbouring property.

- Potential impact on roots of tree adjacent to proposed raised patio, indicating this tree will be felled.
- Drainage pipes lie under the footprint of the proposed extension which continues through neighbouring gardens to ultimately lead to the Den Burn, and there is risk of damage to integrity of the burn from the development, however no indication has been provided of how adequate drainage will be preserved.
- Some of the submitted drawings are insufficiently detailed, contain inaccuracies and lack dimensions which is misleading, in relation to site levels in particular and the alignment of where the extension meets with the existing house.

#### Design, scale, materials and impact on the historic environment

- Excessive size, scale and height of extension in relation to the property, exceeding one storey in height, would extend 11m in length beyond the established building line along this section of the street, and, would enlarge the footprint of the house by over 50%.
- Unwelcome precedent for similar developments to the rear of listed buildings and threaten the integrity of the Council's Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plan.
- Adverse impact on surrounding listed buildings and their curtilages. Proposal is out of character and would harm the general amenity of the conservation area, particularly the starkness of the floor-to-ceiling windows and extending flat roof.
- Aesthetics of the proposed extension are alien and unsympathetic to the characteristic styles of the listed buildings on the street.
- Proposed extension does not utilise the topography of the garden, drawings are misleading and show the extension as sunken into the garden but this is not the case and it will dominate the rear of the building and the garden.
- Large flat roof and overhanging sections does not suit the character of the original dwelling.
- The proposed materials and finishes are inappropriate for the character of the area and out of keeping with the granite building, in particular the rendered eastern wall.
- Remodelling the interior of the property has already begun without grant of listed building consent.
- Benefits of solar gain are overstated given the extension faces west and is predominantly overshadowed by the original house for most of the day.

#### Residential Amenity

- East elevation of the extension in excess of 4m above garden level at No. 24 and would dominate outlook given its proximity to the mutual boundary wall.
- The site of the proposed extension is clearly visible from and adversely impacts on general visual amenity of surrounding properties to the north.
- Loss of privacy to property to north in Morningfield Road, kitchens are usually the busiest room in houses and there will be continual loss of privacy, exacerbated by floor to ceiling glazing.
- No opportunity for screening to the north due to level differences between gardens, magnified by the previous felling of trees.

#### Other

- The applicant has a history of property development and the proposed creation of a multi-generational home is questionable.
- Request that the Committee conducts a site visit prior to any decision being made.
- Planning department should perform a site visit and have drawings corrected to reflect the scale of development.

## Support

### Design, scale and impact on the historic environment

- House was built for the Esslemont family who were responsible for bringing new trends here during the era of the department store and had a bold approach to merchandising. The form and detailing of the house they built is reflective of this approach, with more refined and simpler features than most Victorian mansions, perhaps because it was built much later. The proposed design embraces this thinking and is completely in character with the house and conservation ethos.
- Impressed by the way the proposal fuses the original house with more modern appearance of extension and use of bay windows and it's a desirable contemporary addition in line with the changing direction of housing which occurred in the 20s/30s as well as today.
- The interior is quite simple, modern and Art Deco-ish so the proposed extension fits well with this style and hope this gets approval.
- There are many Victorian houses in this conservation area and different styles on Rubislaw Den North which have had extensions build in a modern style.
- There is a large garden to accommodate the size and it would allow for better interaction and aspect to the rear.
- Extension has been well designed in terms of quality, scale and sustainable materials, which will blend with the surrounding houses.
- Conservation areas should preserve heritage but also allow for an expression of current architectural design when being extended, conservation should not exclude development.

## MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Legislative Requirements

Where a proposal affects a listed building, sections 14(2) and 59(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 places a duty on planning authorities in determining an application for Listed Building Consent to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This is the primary consideration in the determination of applications for Listed Building Consent.

Section 64 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 requires the planning authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

### Development Plan

#### National Planning Framework 4

- Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places)
- Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place)
- Policy 16 (Quality Homes)

#### Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023

- Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking)
- Policy D6 (Historic Environment)
- Policy D7 (Our Granite Heritage)
- Policy D8 (Windows and Doors)

### Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG)

- Householder Development Guide
- Materials

### **Other National Policy and Guidance**

- Historic Environment Policy Scotland
- Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance
  - Extensions
  - Windows
  - Boundaries
  - Interiors
  - Setting

### **Other Material Considerations**

- Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Area Character Appraisal (July 2013)

## **EVALUATION**

### **Principle of Development and National Planning Framework 4**

The proposed development is contained within the curtilage of the existing dwelling, which is in private residential use. All development is related to householder development to extend, alter and renovate the existing dwelling and is therefore acceptable in principle, subject to according with relevant planning policy and guidance. The application site comprises a category 'C' listed building and within the Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Area and therefore must be considered against, Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking) and Policy D6 (Historic Environment) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP), National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places) and Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS), which all serve to protect, preserve, and enhance the historic environment.

Policy D6 (Historic Environment) of the ALDP and NPF4 Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places) advise that the historic environment shall be protected, preserved and enhanced. In addition, NPF4 Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places) further advises that; (a) proposals should be informed by national policy and guidance on managing change in the historic environment; (c) proposals for the alteration or extension of a listed building will only be supported where they will preserve its character, special architectural or historic interest and setting; (d) proposals in conservation areas will only be supported where the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting is preserved or enhanced and (e) proposals in conservation areas will ensure that existing natural and built features which contribute to the character of the conservation area and its setting, including boundary walls and trees are retained. HEPS outlines the key policy considerations for making decisions about works that affect listed buildings, notably HEP2 and HEP4. The former seeks to ensure that the historic environment is secured for present and future generations, while the latter requires that any changes to assets and their context should be managed in a way that protects the historic environment. Furthermore, the Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance on 'Setting' highlights that setting of historic features often extends beyond the individual property's curtilage into a broader townscape and heritage context. Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking) of the ALDP is also required to determine the effect the proposal and its design has on respecting the special interest of the listed building, which stipulates that all development must ensure high standards of design, detail, architecture, craftsmanship and materials that contribute towards successful placemaking and an attractive built environment. The above issues are the principle matters to be assessed in the evaluation of this application.

## Impact on the Historic Environment

The application dwelling is located at the north-western extent of the Albyn Place and Rubislaw conservation area, within character area 'D – Rubislaw Den', as outlined in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. This area is characterised by large and substantial, ornate detached houses, typically set within large plots. The houses in this area are late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and were developed by prominent architects of the time, who were often employed to produce daring and unique designed to reflect the prosperity and personality of clients. Common features include the use of bay windows, wide doorways and low granite boundary walls. In terms of weaknesses and threats identified in the Appraisal of relevance to consider in the assessment of this application, it notes the following:

- *Loss of vegetation in the front courtyard and rear gardens due to car parking and extensions*
- *Loss of the original pattern of development and boundary walls of back land development due to car parking and extensions*
- *Unsympathetic development that does not reflect or relate to the character of the character area*
- *Removal of boundary walls*

### Proposed Extension

The proposed extension would solely be contained to the rear, which ensures its massing is well recessed into the plot as a whole and it would not be visible from any public vantage points – thus preserving the streetscape setting and special interest of the listed building and the wider character of the conservation area. With regard to the overall size and scale of the proposed extension, it is acknowledged that a number of other properties in the Rubislaw Den part of the conservation area have been extended to the rear, some of which are of substantial scale. In addition, owing to the historical development of this part of the conservation area, it also exhibits a variety of architectural styles and there is not considered to be an obviously defined or consistent building line – due to the variety and bespoke nature of detached houses and villas set within large plots. The overall massing and form of the extension has been designed and orientated so that the additional living accommodation is situated on as low a level as practically possible. The justification for this is that the existing kitchen and utility facilities are inadequate for the applicants use and relocating the kitchen to the proposed extension is designed to maximise connection to the garden and better reflect modern living requirements. Whilst it could be argued that the internal layout of the existing dwelling could be remodelled to enhance the size of the kitchen facilities without extending the listed building, the application must be assessed on its own merits in terms of its impact on the special interest of the listed building and character of the conservation area.

In terms of overall design, the proposed extension is considered to have been designed to a high standard, being a bespoke, contemporary and site-specific design which has taken due consideration of its context within the conservation area and the special interest of the listed building. In line with the guidance on extensions, the proposal offers a successful 'deferential contrast' approach to extending the existing dwelling. Whilst the proposed extension is fairly large in its footprint, it is nevertheless considered to read as a new element and has a clear distinction between the historic and modern – created primarily by the use of large sheet glazing and 'green' roof. This ensures that the extension does not try to compete with the main house, and in this specific case the extension remains ancillary to it, retaining both primacy, visual dominance and the special interest of the listed building. Contemporary elements are considered sympathetic to extending listed buildings and for new development in conservation areas, where they are appropriately detailed and considered, such as the use of reflective large sheet glazing and 'green' roofs, emphasising the contrast between old and new, and reflecting changes in modern living and architectural styles. As such the proposed extension is considered to have a positive contribution

to the setting and character of the listed building, and due to its location to the rear is not considered to adversely impact on the character of appearance of the conservation area.

Furthermore, the ground floor level of the proposed extension would sit slightly lower than that of the main dwelling, by c.1.0m, which is considered to emphasise the break between the modern extension and the traditional dwelling, as well as enhancing connection between the house and garden. It is accepted that the level difference between the rear of the dwelling and the majority of the rear garden ground would make more conventional extensions problematic. In order to take account of the site levels and to position the proposed extension as low down in the plot as possible, a series of steps are required to gain access to the kitchen extension. Externally these steps are formed immediately alongside the extension and are considered acceptable in terms of their design and siting. Both the design and positioning of the proposed extension has taken due consideration of the existing site levels, general topography of the garden and relationship to the listed building. The proposed extension is considered to be single storey in volume which respects the scale of the main dwelling and the proposed height of the extension (c. 3.4m) is not considered to be excessive. Amendments were sought during assessment of the application to seek to reduce the overall scale of the extension slightly and this has been done through a c.1.2m reduction in the projection. Whilst it is recognised that the proposed extension is of a substantial size and scale, which projects to c.9.0m, the extension sits comfortably in the rear curtilage, respecting the setting and special interest of the listed building and its conservation area context.

In terms of finishing materials, the utilisation of a 'flat' low pitch 'green roof' and the use of natural granite has been chosen to respect the special character of the listed building. The 'green' roof helps to reduce the height, scale and massing of the extension, softens the overall appearance to minimise visual impact, allowing it to blend with the surrounding garden setting and respect the character of the conservation area. Large sheet glazing and contemporary roof designs such as those proposed are considered to be consistent with modern materials for extensions. Therefore, all of the proposed finishing materials are considered to be acceptable to ensure the works would suitably complement the listed building, preserve its special interest and setting, and are both consistent with the 'Materials' APG and suitable for use in conservation areas. It should be noted that the specific use of granite on the east elevation was as a result of an amendment to the proposal.

Overall, the proposed extension is considered to be of suitable scale, design and detailing to preserve the character, special architectural interest and setting of the listed building, and protects the character and appearance of the conservation area – in accordance with the aims of Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places) of NPF4, HEPS, associated Managing Change guidance, and with, Policies D1 (Quality Placemaking) and D6 (Historic Environment) of the ALDP.

#### Proposed Front Boundary Wall Alterations

The application also proposes installation of new gates to the driveway and a repositioned pedestrian gate. The pedestrian gate would be centrally aligned in the existing low granite boundary wall to the principal elevation (south), formed through means of a new opening. Granite from the new opening would be reused in order to block up the original pedestrian opening located in the south-east corner of the plot. The driveway gates are proposed to be widened to meet the needs of modern vehicles, through removal of a small section (c.450mm) of boundary wall to the west of the driveway opening. Policy D7 (Our Granite Heritage) of the ALDP seeks the retention and appropriate re-use of all granite features, including boundary walls. The Managing Change Guidance on 'Boundaries' states that walls are important element in defining the character of historic buildings, conservation areas, often using local building materials and their key characteristics should be understood and protected during any proposed works. The formation of new openings needs to be considered in light of the overall composition of the wall and removal of historic fabric kept to a minimum, with detailing of the new opening to match the existing. Granite boundary walls are considered to contribute towards the historic character and key characteristics

of the Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Areas and threats to and loss of boundary walls in the creation of car parking and extensions are to be resisted to avoid unnecessary harm to the historic environment.

In evaluating this proposal and the potential acceptability of the wall alterations, the precise location of where the opening is to be formed and the extent of the opening must be considered. In this particular scenario, the desire to centrally locate the pedestrian access gate so that it aligns with the main entrance door behind is understood, and could be argued as logical given the off-set nature of the existing pedestrian gate to the eastern end of the low front boundary wall, particularly in relation to the existing entrance door. This central and logical positioning also reflects with the simplicity of the architectural ethos expressed in the listed building. In addition, the widened driveway entrance and removal of c.450mm of granite walling is to provide vehicular access for modern cars, which is considered to be reasonable given both the size of the existing driveway opening and comparing this with the width of other driveway openings on the street, many of which are wider. The new wall opening and widened driveway opening are located in the front wall, and thus will be prominent in the context of the street and thus the conservation area. However, the relative width and size of the new and widened openings are considered to be minimal with regard to any loss of historic fabric and would not harm the special interest of the listed building nor the appearance of the conservation area. Whilst the loss of a small portion of boundary wall has been suitably justified, it is also required to ensure that all granite duntakings are suitably reused on site to be considered to fully comply with Policy D7. Given that the duntakings of granite from the new opening will be reused to block up the existing pedestrian entry, this is not considered to adversely affect the special interest of the listed building. Submitted plans indicate that the wall opening and blocking up will be formed and finished in materials to match that of the existing wall, to ensure its integrity is maintained and that the development suitably complies with the expectations of Policy D7.

In conclusion, the proposed wall alterations and new access gates preserve the special interest of the listed building, maintains the character and appearance of the conservation area, and appropriately reuses granite duntakings on site, in accordance with NPF4 Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places), Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking), D6 (Historic Environment), and D7 (Our Granite Heritage) of the ALDP, and with associated HES guidance. A suitable condition will also be applied to this consent for submission of design details for the new gates.

#### Proposed New Windows and Patio Doors

The proposed development includes installation of replacement patio doors and one rooflight located on the west elevation of the existing rear outshoot. Policy D8 (Windows and Doors) of the ALDP, HES Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance, and the considerations of the 'Repair and Replacement of Windows and Doors' APG all outline the preference for repair of historic and original windows over replacement. With regard to the principle of replacing the windows and door under consideration for this specific application, assessment is based on a tiered approach, which begins with the presumption for repair and refurbishment over replacement, in circumstances where such windows/doors are considered to be original and/or of historic interest. If not, their replacement with an appropriate design and material is deemed acceptable. In this case, supporting information and a site visit to the property to assess the proposal, confirms that the existing timber patio doors and rooflight are not considered to be original, and thus not considered to contribute to the special interest of the listed building. Taking this into consideration, determines that the principle of replacements is acceptable in this instance. In terms of design, both the proposed replacement designs are considered to be acceptable. The proposed replacement rooflight is to match the dimensions and colour (dark grey) of the existing, comprising an aluminium-clad timber window. The patio doors are also proposed to be aluminium-clad timber, with the size of the opening to remain the same. Both replacements are also contained solely to the rear and not publicly visible from the conservation area.

Overall, the proposed new windows and doors are considered to have been suitably designed, detailed, and justified to preserve the setting and special interest of the listed building and the wider character and appearance of the conservation area – in accordance with NPF4 Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places), the aims of HEPS, Managing Change guidance on ‘Windows’, Policies D1 (Quality Placemaking), D6 (Historic Environment), and D8 (Window and Doors) of the ALDP, and the ‘Repair and Replacement of Windows and Doors’ APG.

### Proposed Internal Alterations

Historic Environment Scotland Managing Change Guidance on ‘Interiors’ states that proposals for interior alteration should always seek to protect the character of the building and when planning new openings it is important to take account of the historic layout and design. In terms of internal alterations, the proposal includes installation a new utility room, alongside a new c.1.5m wide wall opening to the rear for access to the proposed new kitchen extension, and minor alterations/upgrades to two ground floor fireplaces. In context of the overall development, the proposed internal alterations are considered to be small in scale, which would allow for renovations to the existing property and provide access to the proposed new rear extension on an appropriate and justified basis.

The fireplace alterations are considered to be on a repair and upgrade basis, allowing replacement tiles, hearths, and reinstating wood burner functionality. The proposed internal alterations represent an appropriate balance between renovating and adapting an existing listed building without any significant adverse impacts to the historic fabric. In fact, seeking to reconfigure the existing internal layout to accommodate an enlarged kitchen would have the potential to more extensively alter the internal layout, and therefore it is considered that the proposal has been designed to suitably respect the special character of the listed building and keep alterations to a minimum. The location of the proposed rear wall opening comprises an area which is largely occupied by an existing rear window, with the upper lintel level to remain unaltered and as such the proposed removal of granite stone is considered to be minimal and acceptable in this instance. A suitable condition is proposed to ensure any granite duntakings are suitably reused on site, as per the case for the boundary wall alterations, which is anticipated to be used in the construction of the proposed extension.

As a result of development, the overall room proportions and the original plan form of the listed building would remain unaltered and would therefore preserve the special character of the listed building. In summary, the proposed renovations would allow for the continued use of the property as residential, whilst at the same time being designed to meet modern day living standards, which would suitably secure the future of the listed building and its adaptability, and protect the special character of the listed building and is consistent with HES Managing Change Guidance on ‘Interiors’ and in accordance with NPF4 Policy 7 (Historic Assets and Places), the aims of HEPS and Policy D6 (Historic Environment) of the ALDP.

### **Matters Raised in Representations**

It is considered that the majority of the matters raised in representations have been assessed and considered under the corresponding planning application (230655/DPP). Only the matters which are considered to be material to the assessment of the listed building consent application will be discussed below. The comments in support of the proposed development are noted.

### Site conditions, boundary wall, trees and landscaping

- *Mutual boundary wall between No. 24 and No. 26 is around 1.5m high, however because of the topography the wall effectively acts as a retaining wall and the ground level at No. 26 is about 1.0m above the ground level at No. 24 in some areas. Significant ground work will be required to raise the ground levels, which in turn will affect the loading on the boundary wall*

*and risk its collapse.*

Following receipt of revised plans, the site level difference between the two properties is considered to be accurately represented and additional cross-sectional drawings were requested to aid assessment of the proposal in this regard. Minimal groundwork is proposed to accommodate the proposed extension, and the applicant has confirmed that the structural integrity of the boundary wall will be maintained. Furthermore, technical considerations in the specific regard would be subject to subsequent assessment by Building Standards.

*Design, scale, materials and impact on the historic environment*

- *Excessive size, scale and height of extension in relation to the property, exceeding one storey in height, would extend 11m in length beyond the established building line along this section of the street, and, would enlarge the footprint of the house by over 50%.*
- *Unwelcome precedent for similar developments to the rear of listed buildings and threaten the integrity of the Council's Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plan.*
- *Adverse impact on surrounding listed buildings and their curtilages. Proposal is out of character and would harm the general amenity of the conservation area, particularly the starkness of the floor-to-ceiling windows and extending flat roof.*
- *Aesthetics of the proposed extension are alien and unsympathetic to the characteristic styles of the listed buildings on the street.*
- *Proposed extension does not utilise the topography of the garden, drawings are misleading and show extension as sunken into the garden but this is not the case and it will dominate the rear of the building and the garden.*
- *Large flat roof and overhanging sections does not suit the character of the original dwelling.*
- *The proposed materials and finishes are inappropriate for the character of the area and out of keeping with the granite building, in particular the rendered eastern wall.*
- *Remodelling the interior of the property has already begun without grant of listed building consent.*

It is considered that the above comments have been suitably addressed in the above evaluation. At the time of the site visit, whilst it was evident that some interior alterations had begun, this was not considered to extend beyond redecoration and removal of old boiler/bathroom fittings. Furthermore, the proposed material finish for the eastern wall has been amended to ashlar granite, in colour, coursing and block size to match the existing house. The overall material palette is considered to have been designed to be both complementary and offer a positive differential contrast with the original building, with high quality modern materials suitable for their conservation area and listed building context.

*Other*

- *Request that the Committee conducts a site visit prior to any decision being made.*
- *Planning department should perform a site visit and have drawings corrected to reflect the scale of development.*

Comments noted. A full site visit by the Planning Officer was conducted on 26 June 2023 and as discussed above, certain additional drawings and surveys were submitted to aid assessment of the proposal.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Conditionally

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed development is considered to be architecturally compatible with the listed building in terms of design, siting, scale, form, height and use of complementary materials – which complies with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policies 14 (Design, Quality and Place); with Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP); and with associated 'Householder Development Guide', and 'Materials' Aberdeen Planning Guidance (APG). The proposed development has taken due regard for its impact on the special interest and architectural character of the listed building, and the character, appearance and general visual amenity of the Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Area, in relation to both the original dwelling, its plot, and the setting of the listed building – in compliance with NPF4 Policies 7 (Historic Assets and Places) and 14 (Design, Quality and Place); Historic Environment Policy Scotland (HEPS); the associated Historic Environment Scotland Managing Change guidance; Policies D6 (Historic Environment); D7 (Our Granite Heritage); and D8 (Windows and Doors) of the ALDP; the 'Repair and Replacement of Windows and Doors' APG; and finally the Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Area Character Appraisal (July 2013).

Furthermore, the proposed development has taken due cognisance of adapting the existing listed building for future use through principles of sustainable and 'differential contrast' design in accordance with the aforementioned policies, with specific regard to Historic Environment Scotland Managing Change guidance on 'Extensions'.

## **CONDITIONS**

**It is recommended that approval is given subject to the following conditions: -**

### **(01) MATERIALS**

No works in connection with the development hereby approved shall commence unless a sample and details of the specification and colour of all the wall and roof materials, to be used in the external finish for the approved development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The extension shall not be brought into use unless the external finish has been applied in accordance with the approved details.

Reason – In order to safeguard the special architectural character and historic interest of this listed building and in the interests of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

### **(02) GATE DETAIL**

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved an elevation detail drawing of the proposed gates to be located on the south elevation, as indicated on Drawing No. 315P - 301B, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. Thereafter, the gates shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason – In order to maintain the character and amenity of the surrounding residential area, safeguard the special architectural character and historic interest of this listed building and in the interests of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

**(03) GRANITE REUSE**

No development shall take unless details of and a methodology statement for the reuse of the granite duntakings in the construction/ finishing of the new development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. Thereafter prior to the development hereby approved being brought into use, the details as agreed shall be implemented in full.

Reason – In the interests of retaining historic granite on the site and ensuring compliance with Policy D7 (Our Granite Heritage) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 and in the interest of preserving the special character and setting of the Albyn Place and Rubislaw Conservation Area.