

Speaking Notes – Application LA01/2021/1166/F – 30m NW of 32 Quay Road, Ballycastle

- The committee report states that the overall mass of the proposal fails to respect the surrounding context and character of this location. However, the proposal is no higher than the single storey garage to located immediately to the rear of the proposal. There is a clear elevational change to the rear of quay road with development located behind the front properties all sitting higher. The building directly adjacent at no.30 also has ridge height 1.9m above the proposal. The rear box section is against an existing 4.5m High retaining wall with a garage on top. The proposal is built into the landscape ensuring that the massing is respectful of the surrounding area a shown in the submitted site section, clearly showing the proposal respecting the topographical rises of the site. Backland development is very much characteristic of the area with the estate directly behind (silverspring) following this approach along with other properties along the road.
- The proposed materials are most certainly drawing upon the best local traditions. Roughcast render is utilised on all the properties behind the proposed, namely the listed property at silverspring, with smooth render reflecting the treatments along the street. Timber and slate are also commonly used within the area and we feel that the proposal has utilised these materials to provide a modern approach to development of the site, avoiding pastiche and provide a clear identity to the proposal; not to the detriment of the area.
- The existing rear garden of the proposal is all hardstanding with the plot that the proposal is located within being overgrown land that does not technically constitute the rear garden of the property as it is separated by a large retaining wall with access to it from the adjacent laneway. The proposed hardstanding of the completed scheme would actually be less than the existing.
- Criterion B requires features of archaeological and built heritage to be identified and protected. HED require an archaeological survey which will be conditioned and followed by the applicant. The proposal uses materials used in the vicinity with simple detailing, again a feature of the area. The site is heavily screen from public views in all directions and would not interrupt the grain of development or damage the character of the conservation area.
- The planning department have stated that the existing dwelling will be left with 75m2 of private open space, yet the figure is actually 122m2. The proposed dwelling is also located in an area of higher density with a tight urban grain where creating spaces states a separation distance of 15m should be achieved between apartments/terraces and the proposal provides 18m, meeting the desired standards. The amenity space is already bound by a public laneway to the east, with the new access now providing a degree of separation between this and the amenity space of no.32.
- No.30 is screened by the mature vegetation between it and the proposal alleviating overlooking concerns. The fixed louvres and screen terrace also ensure that no.34 is not inappropriately overlooked. The addendum to pps7 states that only the most rural locations can claim they are not overlooked to some degree and that the first 4m from the back of a property should be protected, which our proposal adheres to.

- The proposal respects the conservation area with its muted design and simple materials and emulating the surrounding context, views are extremely limited, being screened from public view apart from the very small gap between no.32 & no.34 where it would be backdropped by the development at Silverspring. The existing plot has already been subdivided by the retaining wall and the fact that the rear has been left unkept would mean any development on this site would improve the characteristic of the site. We do not perceive it as having a negative impact on the conservation area.
- The planning department have stated that the principle of backland development is not acceptable and that the new development along quay road is not comparable. We heavily refute this as there is a clear pattern of backland development along the whole of the Quay Road and the difference between our proposal and the new development is that we are not demolishing the existing property, rather retaining a piece of history and creating much needed housing within the existing development limits.
- The planning department have also stated that there is not enough parking for the proposal yet Transport NI, have no issues with the proposal as it is located in an urban area with sufficient on street parking to accommodate any potential overflow. As a society we are moving towards a less car dependent future and we find it abnormal that the planning department would be seeking more parking than Transport NI.
- We strongly believe that the proposal is acceptable under the provisions of the SPPS and PPS6 & PPS7 and would seek for the committee to recognise this and the benefits the proposal has for the local area.