



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL06F.246820

Development	An attic extension consisting of an additional bedroom, ensuite bathroom and ancillary storage to the one bedroom apartment previously permitted under F15A/0165 at 15 Strand Street, Malahide, Co. Dublin
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	F16A/0149
Applicant(s)	Joanne Champ
Type of Appeal	First
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Appellant(s)	1. Joanne Champ
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	13 September 2016
Inspector	Una Crosse

1.0 **Site Location and Description**

1.1. The site comprises the upper floor of an existing property which addresses Strand Street in Malahide. The ground floor of the property accommodates a medical practice with access to the first floor from a doorway on the front elevation. The upper floor comprises a one-bed apartment. The site is adjoined to the east by a storey and a half commercial property with a mansard roof. To the west the site is adjoined by a single and two storey property currently being redeveloped which also addresses Old Street. To the rear of the site, the proposal adjoins a car park over two levels.

2.0 **Proposed Development**

2.1. Proposal is for an attic extension of c.48.6m² consisting of an additional bedroom, en-suite bathroom and ancillary storage to the one-bedroom apartment permitted under Ref. F15A/0165;

2.2. Alterations are proposed to the roof profile to the rear of the dwelling projecting the ridge of the roof to the back wall creating a flat roofed block with a new gable with the proposal creating a new floor across the back half of the property. Additional rooflights are proposed;

2.3. Separate access to the 1st floor is achieved from a separate door on the front of the building and is not available from the ground floor surgery.

3.0 **Planning Authority Decision**

3.1. **Decision**

The Planning Authority refused permission for the proposal due to the scale and massing of the proposal and single storey nature of development adjoining the site to the west with the proposed dormer extension visually intrusive and incongruous in the streetscape detracting from the traditional two-storey design of the site and

resulting in an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area which forms part of the ACA for Malahide Historic Core.

3.2. **Planning Authority Reports**

The report of the area planner can be summarised as follows:

It is stated that the extension has been constructed to be flush with the property to the east but shown stepped in from the boundary in the previous application and the gap proposed in the previous application between the site and the car park does not exist with the extension adjoining the boundary. The proposal is considered acceptable in principle in terms of the Development Plan.

The approved development comprises a traditional two-storey design. Reference is made to the concerns raised by the Conservation Officer regarding the visual impact of the proposal. The proposal would create a very deep gable significantly increasing the massing of the building. The roof slope would be highly visible and incongruous when viewed from the single storey building to the west.

Noted that a two-storey extension permitted to the rear of the property to the west (Ref. F14A/0079) with a visual break provided minimising impact on the streetscape with the proposed former extension highly visible and incongruous.

No issues arise in respect of residential amenity.

3.3. **Other Technical Reports**

Conservation Officer – proposal not acceptable as it creates a very deep gable with the alteration of the roof profile to the rear. The flat roofed block of the attic extension increases the massing of the new building impacting negatively on Strand Street as the gable and rear roof slope is visible given single storey nature of adjoining building.

Irish Water – no objection subject to conditions

Water Services – no objection subject to conditions relating to surface water.

Transportation – no objection.

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

No submissions received.

4.0 **Planning History**

- 4.1. **Reg. Ref. F15A/0165** – permission granted for demolition of existing single storey building and construction of a new two-storey building comprising a medical clinic with 3 consulting rooms and associated accommodation (c.100m²) at ground floor and a one-bed apartment (86.5m²) at first floor level with terrace at rear.
- 4.2. **Ref. Ref. F05A/0663** – permission granted for demolition of existing single storey building with two retail units, and construction of two-storey building with 2 retail units at ground floor and a 2-bed apartment at first floor.
- 4.3. **Reg. Ref. F00A/0550** – permission refused for extension to rear and alteration to include new shop fronts and 2 no. apartments at first floor – mansard roof out of character with prevailing character of the area with development considered to be visually intrusive and seriously injurious to amenities; proposed two-storey apartment dwellings would constitute over development of the site with insufficient open space or off-street parking facilities. Undesirable precedent for unacceptable overdevelopment.
- 4.4. **Reg. Ref. F14A/0079 - Corner of Old Street and Strand Street** – permission granted for repair and conservation of the building and removal of the existing extensions to the rear and addition of a cellar, 2-storey extension and change of use to a restaurant.

5.0 **Development Plan**

5.1. Fingal County Development Plan 2011-2017

Site is located within Objective TC – *‘protect and enhance the special physical and social character of town and district centres and provide and/or improve urban facilities’*. The site is also located with the boundaries of the Malahide Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area.

5.2. Malahide Architectural Conservation Area – Statement of Character – Sept 2009

Section 6.1.13 refers to Strand Street and notes the following: *‘the south side of The Strand and The Green have undergone much recent development which has detracted from its character. From the junction with Old Street, there is a significant view from the ACA of the attractive, single arch rail bridge with panelled guard rail. At the western end of Strand Street there are two single-storey cottages set between taller slate-roofed houses standing as a reminder of the former character of despite their modern renders, tiled roofs and altered window openings’*.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The grounds of appeal are accompanied by a report from David Slattery Conservation Architects and can be summarised as follows:

- Proposal designed to meet the appellants needs so that she can live over her new medical practice providing a better quality living environment to that permitted;
- Traditional design approach adopted using quality and contemporary materials;
- The appeal outlines the proposals compliance with residential development standards;

- Principle of 2+ storeys in surrounding streetscape well established with second storey extension to the rear not a major departure from the existing built form with a range of 2-3 storey buildings in the vicinity;
- Montages presented which show proposal is not excessive in scale or mass with minimal impact;
- Additional roof profile protrudes 1-2 metres above the existing property to the east in line with pitch of the roof of the approved development with similar materials used to minimise impact;
- Proposed to alter the material on the dormer from zinc to tile to match the surrounding area with same noted on drawings enclosed;
- PA overstated the impact of the proposal on the ACA with Strand Street not an architectural set piece containing a wide variety of mostly late 20th century buildings with varying roof profiles;
- The painted render gable of the new construction will dominate views rather than the dormer extension which will not have a significant presence on the streetscape;
- Vertically slated gables should fit well alongside the adjoining mansards;
- Modest dormer extension does not have an undue visual impact on a streetscape lacking coherence and composition;
- Dormer is to be kept within the existing building footprint and not proposed to be increased in depth, ridge and eave height not altered;
- There will be no impact on the character of the view of the railway bridge to the west of the site which is the only item referred to in the ACA that is relevant;

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- Having revised the grounds of appeal and photomontages submitted, PA remains of the view that the scale and mass of the proposal and single storey nature of adjoining development would mean proposal would be visually intrusive and incongruous in the streetscape.
- Proposal would detract from the traditional two storey design of the development and would adversely impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area which forms part of the ACA for Malahide historic core.
- The use of tiles on the side of the extension would not minimise the impact;
- If permission is granted impose a Section 48 financial contribution.

6.3. **Other Party Responses**

The Board sent Section a 131 notice on 29th July 2016 to An Taisce, The Heritage Council and the Development Applicants Unit with no responses received.

6.4. **Observations**

No observations on file.

7.0 **Assessment**

The main issues in this appeal are those raised in the grounds of appeal and I am satisfied that no other substantive issues arise. I consider the key issues in determining this appeal are as follows:

- Principle of Proposal
- Visual Impact and Impact on Architectural Conservation Area
- Appropriate Assessment

7.1. **Principle of Proposal**

The proposal seeks to increase the area of residential accommodation within an existing residential unit and effectively to increase the extent of the unit from 2-storeys to 2.5 storeys. The proposal is set within an existing apartment located within the town centre. Subject to the considerations outlined in the next section I consider that the principle of increasing the residential space is acceptable.

7.2. Visual Impact and Impact on Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

- 7.2.1. The visual impact of the proposal on the streetscape and in particular the potential impact on the ACA is the most pertinent consideration in respect of the proposal, in my opinion. The Planning Authority refused permission for the proposal due to the scale and massing of the proposal and single storey nature of development adjoining the site to the west with the proposed dormer extension visually intrusive and incongruous in the streetscape detracting from the traditional two-storey design of the site and resulting in an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area which forms part of the ACA for Malahide Historic Core.
- 7.2.2. I would note that this stretch of the street has undergone considerable change since the ACA Statement of Character (SOC) was produced in 2009 which itself references significant change on the south side of The Strand which they considered had by that time undergone much recent development which had detracted from its character. The Statement refers specifically to the western end of Strand Street where there are two single-storey cottages set between taller slate-roofed houses standing as a reminder of the former character despite their modern renders, tiled roofs and altered window openings'. However, this view has been considerably altered from that shown in Figure 66 included in the SOC with the appeal site, formerly a single storey property, now a large two-storey rendered property. I would also note that while the building to the west of the appeal site is single storey, the roof of the extension to the rear extends over the ridge of the single storey property creating a back drop to the original ridge. The scale and roof profile along this streetscape has therefore considerably changed with the appeal site the former

subservient single storey cottage between more imposing higher structures now the dominant feature on this streetscape.

- 7.2.3. The appellant states that there will be no impact on the character of the view of the railway bridge to the west of the site, which is the only item referred to in the ACA that is relevant. The SOC states in respect of the railway bridge that 'From the junction with Old Street, there is a significant view from the ACA of the attractive, single arch rail bridge with panelled guard rail'. The view is described as significant and I would suggest that the impact of the proposal on the streetscape is a matter of concern. Therefore, there is an additional requirement on the appellant to provide a design which respects the site's location within an ACA and views along this street towards the railway bridge.
- 7.2.4. They state that the PA have overstated the impact of the proposal on the ACA with Strand Street not an architectural set piece containing a wide variety of mostly late 20th century buildings with varying roof profiles. I would tend to agree with the appellants in respect of the importance of Strand Street as a set piece. However, this streetscape has been specifically noted in the ACA and has, as I note above, been significantly altered even since the SOC was produced. The roof profiles along this streetscape are varied in height and design however, it does not provide that the streetscape is bereft of protection. Given its location within the ACA I consider that it is important to ensure that this streetscape and the view along this streetscape are not irreparably compromised.
- 7.2.5. The appellants describe the proposal as a modest dormer extension which does not have an undue visual impact on a streetscape which it is stated, lacks coherence and composition and that the dormer is to be kept within the existing building footprint and not proposed to be increased in depth, ridge and eave height not altered. While the streetscape does lack coherence, it also has a roof profile, albeit significantly altered in recent times, which adds a certain visual interest and which is

part of the view towards the railway bridge. The appellants have proposed to amend the material from zinc as originally proposed to slate on the basis that the vertically slated gables should fit well alongside the adjoining mansards.

7.2.6. While I note the changes proposed to the materials, the proposal provides for the creation of effectively a slated box, or zinc as originally proposed, attached to the rear of the ridge line of the building. The appellants contend that the painted render gable of the new construction will dominate views rather than the dormer extension which will not have a significant presence on the streetscape. They have included a number of images within the appeal which illustrate the extent of the proposal when viewed from the street to the east and west of the proposal and to the rear of the site. The images show the new build slated.

7.2.7. I would note that the impact of the proposal looking east included in the appeal is slightly impaired in the image by the scaffolding on the property to the west of the building immediately adjoining the appeal site to the west. However, the current views provide that the recently constructed extension to the rear of the adjoining properties which also adjoin Old Street would screen most of the subject proposal from views looking towards the town centre. I would suggest to the Board that the impact of the proposal is heightened by the fact that the adjoining buildings particularly the building to the east is considerably lower in height making the appeal property more visible from both angles. However, the most important view is looking west towards the railway bridge and the proposed structure on the ridge line would be highly visible and I would suggest that the proposal creates a jarring addition to the streetscape given its bulk and scale. If the building was adjoined by two-storey properties, the proposal would not be as visible or arguably have any impact, in my opinion. In this regard the appeal site must have regard to its immediate context which determines its ability to absorb additional development. I do not consider that the site has the ability to absorb the impact of the proposal given its immediate context. The image looking west with the proposal shown slated impacts negatively

on the streetscape in my opinion and I do not consider it is an appropriate addition to a streetscape located within an ACA.

7.3. Appropriate Assessment

- 7.3.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, nature of the receiving environment, the likely emissions arising from the proposed development, the availability of public water and sewerage in the area, and proximity to the nearest European sites, I am satisfied that no appropriate assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

8.0 Recommendation

- 8.1. I recommend that planning permission should be refused for the reasons and considerations as set out below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

The proposed development, by reason of its scale, bulk, massing and design would be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity and would constitute a visually discordant feature that would be detrimental to the distinctive architectural and historic character of this area. Furthermore, the development would materially affect the character of the Malahide Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area, and would thereby seriously injure the visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Una Crosse
Senior Planning Inspector
September 2016