



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP306322-20

Development	Attic extension and provision of two bedrooms, extension to first floor bay windows and ancillary works.
Location	32 Wheatfield, Bray, County Wicklow.
Planning Authority	Wicklow County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	19655
Applicant(s)	Robin Kelly
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Robin Kelly
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	24 th February 2020.
Inspector	Hugh Mannion

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site has a stated area of 0.9125ha and comprises a mid-terrace two storey house at 32 Wheatfield, Bray, County Wicklow. The site has a rear garden and a front garden partially given over to a car parking space. The house is within a terrace of four houses all with direct access onto Wheatfield. The external finish is a yellow brick and tiled roof. There is a variation in house types in the area and opposite the site along Wheatfield are dormer houses, a bungalow and two storey units with a variety of render finishes. The character of the area is residential.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprised the provision of two bedrooms in a raised attic space, amended front windows and associated works at 32 Wheatfield, Bray, County Wicklow.
- 2.2. The proposal was amended and reduced to a single bedroom with front and rear dormers by way of unsolicited additional information submitted in 28th August 2019.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision – Refuse Permission.

The design, bulk, height and scale of the proposed development would be overly dominant and visually incongruous with the pattern of development in Wheatfield. The proposed development would be contrary to the objectives set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The planner's report recommended refusal as set out in the manager's order.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Roads Section reported no objection.

4.0 **Planning History**

4.1. No relevant history for this site.

5.0 **Policy and Context**

5.1. **Development Plan**

5.2. **Bray Municipal District Local Area Plan 2018 – 2024**

5.3. The application site is located in an area zoned Existing Residential in the LAP with the objective “to protect, provide and improve residential amenity”.

5.4. **The Wicklow County Development Plan 2016-2022.** (Appendix 1) sets out criteria for assessing domestic extensions. These are;

The construction of extensions to existing houses will be encouraged generally as it usually provides a less resource intensive method of expanding living space than building a new structure. Given the range of site layouts prevailing, it is not possible to set out a set of ‘rules’ that can be applied to all extensions, but the following basic principles shall be applied:

- The extension should be sensitive to the existing dwelling and should not adversely distort the scale or mass of the structure;
- The extension shall not provide for new overlooking of the private area of an adjacent residence where no such overlooking previously existed;
- In an existing developed area, where a degree of overlooking is already present, the new extension must not significantly increase overlooking possibilities. If for example a two-story dwelling already directly overlooks a neighbour’s rear garden, a third storey extension with the same view will normally be considered acceptable;
- New extensions should not overshadow adjacent dwellings to the degree that a significant decrease in day or sunlight entering into the house comes about.

In this regard, extensions directly abutting property boundaries should be avoided;

- While the form, size and appearance of an extension should complement the area, unless the area has an established unique or valuable character worthy of preservation, a flexible approach will be taken to the assessment of alternative design concepts.

5.5. Natural Heritage Designations

Not relevant

5.6. EIA Screening

5.7. Having regard to the modest scale of the proposed domestic extension and its location within an appropriately zoned and serviced area there are no likely significant environmental impacts arising therefrom.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

- The applicant's family has grown to the point where additional accommodation is necessary.
- The applicant has done his best to satisfy the design criteria set out by the planning authority.
- The planning authority has permitted similar development in the area.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- No response

6.3. Observations

- None

7.0 Assessment

- 7.1. The application site is in an area zoned 'existing residential' in the current LAP. The Wicklow County Development Plan sets out several criteria against which domestic extensions should be assessed. These criteria include that the proposed development should be sensitive to the existing dwelling and should not adversely distort the scale or mass of the structure and that the form, size and appearance of an extension should complement the area. However, the planning authority would adopt a flexible approach unless the area has an established unique or valuable character worthy of preservation.
- 7.2. The appeal makes the point that the applicant's family requires additional accommodation. The existing house is three rooms deep at ground floor and two rooms deep at first floor. There are two bedrooms at first floor and the proposed development would provide a further two bedrooms and shower/WC.
- 7.3. The house is one of a terrace of four houses and on this side of the road there are other similar four house terraces close by. While there is a variation in house type in the immediate area there is no example of development breaking the roofline. The proposed development would break the roofline and significantly alter the roadside elevation of the house in a manner which would unreasonably detract from the coherence of the terrace where it is located and would be an incongruous feature when viewed in the context of the wider area. The applicant references a domestic extension in a nearby estate but it may be noted that that extension is not to a mid-terrace house and the height of the raised element above the roofline is minimal.
- 7.4. I conclude that the originally proposed two-bedroom extension would seriously injure the visual amenity of the area and materially contravene the zoning objective for the area set out in the Local Area Plan and the County Development Plan policy in relation to domestic extensions.
- 7.5. The applicant submitted a revised proposal by way of unsolicited additional information which reduced the proposed extension to one bedroom and reduced the scale of the intervention in the front façade but maintained a front dormer extension which breaks the roofline. I consider that this is a material change to the application that, were the Board to consider a grant of permission, should be re-advertised to allow for public submissions,

7.6. However, on the principle of the revised proposal I consider that it too will break the roofline and introduce a front dormer extension in a manner as to seriously injure the visual and residential amenity of the area in a manner as to materially contravene the zoning objective for the area set out in the Local Area Plan and the policy in relation to domestic extensions set out in the County Development Plan.

7.7. **AA Screening**

7.8. Having regard to the modest scale of the proposed development, its location within an appropriately zoned and serviced area and the foreseeable emissions therefrom 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 permission be refused for the reasons and considerations set out below.

8.2. **Reasons and Considerations**

The proposed development is located in an area zoned for residential development in the Bray Local Area Plan and Wicklow County Development Plan sets out criteria against which domestic extensions should be assessed. The proposed development would break the roofline and amend the façade of a house within a terrace. The form, size and appearance of the proposed extension would distort the existing house and be out of character with the pattern of residential development in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, seriously injure the residential amenity of the area, materially contravene the zoning objective for the area set out in the Local Area Plan, the policy in relation to domestic extensions set out in the County Development Plan and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Hugh Mannion
Senior Planning Inspector
27th February 2020