



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL29N.246911

Development	Attic conversion with associated works
Location	21 Watermill Park, Raheny, Dublin 5
Planning Authority	Dublin City Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2752/16
Applicant(s)	Paul and Lorraine Hollins
Type of Appeal	First Party
Planning Authority Decision	REFUSE
Appellant(s)	Paul and Lorraine Hollins
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	26 th October 2016
Inspector	Niall Haverty

1.0 Site Location and Description

1.1. The appeal site has a stated area of 0.0193 ha and is located on the north eastern side of Watermill Park, a residential street which runs in a north west to south east direction, c. 400m south of Raheny Village. The site comprises an existing two storey mid-terrace house with rear single storey extension. The rear garden backs onto the rear gardens of 20 and 22 Watermill Avenue to the north east, and the separation distance between the opposing rear elevations of the houses is c. 28 metres.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. The proposed development consists of the conversion of the attic of the existing house to provide 19.5 sq m of floor area, and the construction of a dormer roof to the rear elevation and a rooflight to the front elevation. The intended use of the converted attic is stated to be as a study and storage area.

2.2. The proposed rear dormer extension will be finished in nap render with a low pitch fibreglass roof. It will be set back from the adjoining houses to either side by 0.65m, resulting in a width of 5.38m, while its height above the point where it intersects the roof pitch is c. 1.2m. It will protrude above the existing ridge of the roof by c. 150mm and extend outwards by c. 3m from the ridge line.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Dublin City Council decided to refuse planning permission on the basis that the proposed development would result in a highly visually incongruous roofscape which would be out of character, set an undesirable precedent, seriously injure residential amenities and be contrary to the relevant provisions of the Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

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

- Proposed dormer is c. 80% of width of the rear roof and, on quantitative grounds, is excessive in scale.
- Dormer extension would visually dominate the rear of the house.
- Window positioning does not relate to windows below.
- Raising of dormer above ridge height would be visually incongruous.
- Similar proposal at 11 Windmill Park was refused permission, but subsequently granted when permission was sought for a more modest dormer extension.
- Proposed development would set an undesirable precedent for excessive scale rear dormers and is contrary to Appendix 25 and Section 17.9.8 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017.

3.3. Other Technical Reports

3.3.1. **Drainage Division:** No objection subject to Conditions.

3.4. Third Party Observations

3.4.1. None.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Subject Site

4.1.1. No relevant planning history.

4.2. Neighbouring Sites

4.2.1. 11 Watermill Park:

- **Reg. Ref. 3658/12:** Permission refused for attic conversion with raised ridge, dormer window to rear and velux windows to front.
- **Reg. Ref. 2425/13:** Permission granted for reduced scale development to that previously refused under Reg. Ref. 3658/12.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. The appeal site is zoned as 'Z1' in the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022. This zoning objective seeks to protect, provide and improve residential amenities.

5.2. Section 16.10.12 and Appendix 17 of the Development Plan set out the Planning Authority's detailed requirements for residential extensions.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. The grounds of appeal can be summarised as follows:

- There are a large number of attic conversions with dormer windows in the area, including some with raised ridge lines (photographs included in appeal).

- Raised dormer roof would not be visible from the roadway to the front of the building.
- Dormer is set back 650mm from adjoining properties to either side. Applicant would be willing to reduce size slightly if necessary.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

- There is no apparent planning history for the examples of rear dormers with raised ridge heights provided by the appellants.
- There is only one house on Watermill Park with a raised dormer roof, but it is smaller and does not appear to have a planning history.
- Development Plan requirements for roof level extensions are clear.
- Proposed development would be highly visually incongruous and obtrusive and would set a highly undesirable precedent for overly large dormers in the area.

6.3. **Observations**

6.3.1. None.

7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. I consider the key issues in determining this appeal are as follows:

- Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity
- Appropriate Assessment

7.2. Visual Amenity

- 7.2.1. Design guidance for roof extensions is set down in Part 11 of Appendix 17 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022. This includes a requirement that dormer windows should be visually subordinate to the roof slope to enable a large proportion of the original roof to remain visible, and that window arrangements should relate to windows below.
- 7.2.2. The appeal site comprises a relatively narrow mid-terrace dwelling in a densely developed area. I consider that the proposed rooflight to the front elevation is acceptable as it will not impact on the streetscape due to its limited scale and position on the roof plane. However, the proposed dormer extension has a width of 5.38m, which comprises 80% of the overall roof width and it protrudes above the ridgeline of the house. I also note that the dormer window arrangements do not relate to the size or spacing of the windows below.
- 7.2.3. With regard to the examples that the appellants have provided of other large dormer extensions in the area, the Planning Authority has noted that these do not appear to have a planning history. I consider the case of 11 Watermill Park to be a more appropriate example, where a more modest dormer extension which was 3.9m wide and which didn't protrude above the ridge line was permitted by Dublin City Council following an earlier refusal for a large dormer extension.
- 7.2.4. Having regard to the design and scale of the proposed dormer extension, I consider that it would be contrary to the requirements of the Development Plan. Furthermore, due to its excessive size in this constrained mid-terrace location, I consider that it would be visually obtrusive and overly dominant in appearance. The proposed development would therefore seriously injure the visual amenities of the area and would not be in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan.

7.3. Residential Amenity

- 7.3.1. Having regard to the design and layout of the proposed development, the context of the appeal site, and the separation distance from the houses to the rear (c. 28m), I do not consider that any significant adverse overlooking or overshadowing impacts would arise from the proposed development.
- 7.3.2. However, as noted above, I consider that the proposed development is visually obtrusive due to the excessive size of the dormer extension relative to the overall roof. The proposed development will have an adverse impact on the character of the dwelling and I consider that it would also have an adverse impact on the residential amenities enjoyed by neighbouring properties, due to its overbearing and over-dominant presence in this constrained mid-terrace location and its proximity to the site boundaries on either side.

7.4. Appropriate Assessment

- 7.4.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, which comprises the conversion of an attic and associated development in an existing house in a serviced and established residential area, and the location of the site outside of any Natura 2000 sites, I do not consider that any Appropriate Assessment issues arise and I do not consider 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 reason set out below.

9.0 REASONS

Having regard to Section 16.10.12 and Part 11 of Appendix 17 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, which gives guidance in relation to proposals for extensions to dwellings and to the design and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that the proposed development would not be adequately subordinate to the roof slope and would constitute the overdevelopment of a restricted mid-terrace dwelling. Furthermore, it is considered that, by virtue of its over-dominant scale, the proposed dormer window would be visually obtrusive in appearance and would seriously injure the character of the dwelling and the visual and residential amenities of property in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, contravene the provisions of the development plan, and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Niall Haverty

Planning Inspector

28th October 2016