



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report PL27.248063

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<b>Development</b>	Demolition of utility room, sun room, relocation of site entrance gates, construction of extension and associated site works.
<b>Location</b>	Grosvenor House, Grosvenor Avenue, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Wicklow County Council.
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	16/1314
<b>Applicant</b>	Maoiliosa O'Culachain
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Refuse permission
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	First Party
<b>Appellant</b>	Maoiliosa O'Culachain
<b>Observers</b>	(1) Aidan & Ellen O'Callaghan (2) Richard & Mary Pugh
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> of April 2017
<b>Inspector</b>	Siobhan Carroll

## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The site is located at Grosvenor Avenue to the south-east of Bray, Co. Wicklow. Grosvenor Avenue is a private residential road accessed off Newcourt Road. It runs for circa 100m and serves 8 no. dwellings. The area is characterised by a mix of residential types, sizes and styles. The dwellings along Grosvenor Avenue are predominantly single storey and detached.
- 1.2. The appeal site has a stated area 0.074 hectares. It contains Grosvenor House which is a semi-detached two-storey house built c.1875. The house has a ridge height of 9.7m. The finish is plastered and painted yellow with lined render with quoins. The front door is panelled and framed with paired pilasters and paired console style brackets. There is a plain fanlight above the doorway. The dwelling is served by timber sash framed windows. The slate roof is pitched and double-piled and includes a high parapet. The chimneystack is rendered and has a plain chamfered top and clay pots.
- 1.3. The dwelling has been extended to the side and rear at ground and first floor levels. There is a sunroom, kitchen, utility, store and bathroom at ground floor and a bedroom and bathroom at first floor.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1. Permission is sought for
  - demolition of the utility room and sun room (48sq m),
  - relocation of site entrance gates,
  - construction of three-storey extension (157sq m)

## **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

### **3.1. Decision**

Permission was refused for one reason;

1. Having regard to

- a) the design of the proposed extension
- b) the height of the proposed extension with extensive glazed areas and balcony at second floor level
- c) the proximity of the site to existing single storey dwellings

it is considered that the proposed development would distort the scale of the existing building of character, would result in new overlooking and have an overbearing effect on surrounding properties, and would significantly reduce the residential amenity and privacy of these properties and would have a detrimental impact on the character and form of the existing building of substance and would be contrary to the provisions of Section 12.3.1.1 of the Bray Town Development Plan and to the proper planning and development of the area.

**3.2. Planning Authority Reports**

3.2.1. Planning Reports

- It was considered that the proposed extension would detract from the character of the existing Victorian dwelling and due to the height and scale of the proposed extension relative to surrounding properties it would be overbearing and cause overlooking.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

3.2.3. Municipal District Engineer – no objections

3.2.4. Environmental Health Officer – no objections

**3.3. Third Party Observations**

The Planning Authority received 4 no. submissions/observations in relation to the proposed development. The main issues raised are similar to those set out in the observations to the appeal.

## 4.0 Planning History

None

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Development Plan

Bray Town Development Plan 2011-2017

The site is zoned Objective RE1 – To protect existing residential amenity; to provide for appropriate infill residential development; to provide for new and improved ancillary services.

- Section 12 refers to – Development Control Standards & Guidelines.
- Section 12.3.1.1 Residential Development in Established Residential Areas

The design and layout of extension to houses should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties as regards sunlight and privacy. The character and form of the existing and adjoining buildings should be respected and external finishes and window types should match the existing. In particular the Council will not permit development that has a significant overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing effect on adjoining properties, where this effect significantly reduces the residential amenity and privacy of adjoining properties.

### 5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

- 5.2.1. Bray Head SAC (site code 000714) is c. 320m to the east of the site.

## 6.0 The Appeal

### 6.1. Grounds of Appeal

A first party appeal was lodged by MPBA Architects on behalf of Maoiliosa O’Culachain on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2017. The main issues raised are as follows;

- It is acknowledged that Grosvenor House is a building of significant importance and a Conservation Appraisal prepared by Rob Goodbody an Historic Building Consultant is included with the appeal.
- The proposed modern extension would provide a contrast to the main dwelling and also complement it. It is considered that the proposed development does not detract from the character of the building and that it would improve the appearance by provided a more coherent overall design.
- The proposal will increase the overall height by just over 1m. The proposed extensions would be located a significant distance from the adjoining houses and therefore the additional height would not result in an overshadowing or overbearing impact.
- The proposed setback at second floor level will provide that the exiting proportions of the façade are maintained.
- The existing first floor windows are large sash windows. The cill and head heights are 5.05m and 7.05m above ground level. It is stated that the proposed glazing to the second floor would not result in any increase in overlooking of the railway cottages to the east. The applicant is willing to alter the design if required to ensure that access is only available for maintenance purposes.
- The applicant is also amenable to reducing the extent of glazing which abuts the existing dwelling should the Board consider it appropriate.
- The existing dwelling has three bedrooms which does not adequately provide for the applicant's needs.
- A revised proposal for a mansard type roof with sash windows to the extension has been included with the appeal submission. This is indicated on Drawing 16-32-11 RevA. The Board may wish to consider this alternative design if they agree with the Planning Authority regarding the original design proposed.

## 6.2. Planning Authority Response

- None received

## 6.3. Observations

(1) An observation was received from Aidan & Ellen O'Callaghan on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2017. The main issues raised are as follows;

- The observers live in a bungalow to the south-west of the site.
- They have raised concern in relation to the height and scale of the proposed extensions relative to their property. The height of the dwelling would be increased by 1070mm and it would be along most of the existing double roof.
- The observers consider that the proposed extensions to the rear will have an overbearing impact when viewed from their property.
- The proposed three storey extension which includes two new windows to the east elevation would cause new overlooking of the observers' property.
- Overlooking would also occur from the proposed balcony.

(2) An observation was received from Richard & Mary Pugh on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2017. The main issues raised are as follows;

- The observers reside at Elton, Grosvenor Avenue which is a single storey dwelling.
- Grosvenor House is a large two-storey property. The proposed height and design of the proposed extensions would be out of character with the single storey bungalows and railway cottages on Grosvenor Avenue.
- The height of the Grosvenor House would be increased by 1077mm with a new chimney increasing the height further.
- Due to the height and design of the proposed extension specifically the roof the visual impact would be significant.
- The proposed balcony would give rise to overlooking of properties and gardens to the front, east and west of Grosvenor House.

## 7.0 Assessment

Having regard to the above, and having inspected the site and reviewed all documents on file, the following is my assessment of this case. Issues to be considered in the assessment of this case are as follows:

- Design
- Impact upon residential amenity
- Appropriate Assessment

### 7.1. Design

- 7.1.1. The refusal issued by the Planning Authority refers to the extension being out of character with the existing building in terms of its design and scale. Grosvenor House is a Victorian property built in circa 1875. It was constructed following the arrival of the railway to Bray in 1854. While it is not a Protected Structure nor is it located within an Architectural Conservation Area it is listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) as being of regional importance. Therefore, it is important that any extension of the dwelling should be designed to take account of the character and context of the property. The site is situated at the corner of Grosvenor Avenue and Newcourt Road. While I note the presence of a number of large trees to the front of the dwelling nonetheless the corner site location renders the property highly visible from Newcourt Road.
- 7.1.2. The proposed extension in terms of overall floor area at 157sq m represents a relatively large extension. The existing dwelling has an area of 206sq m and it is proposed to demolish 48sq m of existing extensions. The existing ridge height of the property is circa 9.7m to the front. The proposed ridge height to the front is 10.7m. The front elevation which addresses Grosvenor Avenue and Newcourt Road with the development of the extension would extend out 4m to the side. Due to the nature of the design of the extension including a new curved roof 1m higher than the existing

and adjoining roof it would effectively surround the original dwelling. The height, scale and design of the proposed extension is completely out of character with the original dwelling and adjoining semi-detached property. The use of extensive curtain wall glazing to the front with large high level glazing to the roof combined with the large zinc clad roof bears no regard to the design portions of the glazing and roof of the original Victorian property nor the materials and finishes used.

- 7.1.3. Similarly, the proposed rear (south) elevation with the large zinc clad roof and use of varying sized glazing is out of character with the design features of the original dwelling. The proposed side elevation to the west with the large roof would appear relatively bulky.
- 7.1.4. The appellant submitted revised drawings which proposed an alternative designed for extension. This alternative design includes a large mansard roof with two windows to the front. The proposed ridge height to the front is 10.8m. While I note the proposed windows to the front elevation are of a similar design to the existing sash windows having regard to the bulk and scale of the proposed extension relative to the original dwelling, I am not satisfied that the revised design has addressed the matters raised in the refusal issued by the Planning Authority.
- 7.1.5. In conclusion the proposed extension by reason of its design, bulk and scale would be out of character with the existing property which is listed in the NIAH as being of regional importance. The proposed development has failed to respond appropriately to the character of Grosvenor House and the context of the site and its surroundings, and it would represent an incongruous feature. The proposed extension by reason of its design, bulk and scale would be out of character with the existing property which is listed in the NIAH as being of regional importance and would therefore, seriously injure the visual amenities of the area.

## 7.2. Impact upon residential amenity

- 7.2.1. In relation to the impact upon residential amenity the refusal issued by the Planning Authority stated that that the proposals would have an overbearing impact and result in new overlooking. The site directly adjoins the semi-detached dwelling to the east and a single storey railway cottage to the east.
- 7.2.2. Firstly, regarding the visual impact of the proposed extension upon the adjoining dwellings to the east, I consider that the proposed three-storey extension would have



an overbearing impact particularly in relation to the bulk of the proposed roof when view from the properties to the east.

7.2.3. Secondly, regarding the matter of overlooking the proposed three-storey extension includes a significant amount of glazing at second floor level and a balcony to the front. New second floor windows are proposed within the roof to the rear and eastern side elevations which would result in new overlooking of the adjoining residential properties to the east.

7.2.4. The revised design submitted to An Bord Pleanála indicates a mansard roof and omits the second floor balcony to the front. However, only alternative proposal for the front and side elevation to the west have been provided. Therefore, it is not possible to assess the potential impact of fenestration in terms of overlooking the rear (south) elevation and side elevation to the east.

### 7.3. Appropriate Assessment

7.3.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, nature of the receiving environment and proximity to the nearest European site, 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 have read the submissions on file and visited the site. Having due regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, together with all other issues arising, I recommended that permission be refused for the following reasons.

## 9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The proposed three-storey extension by reason of its height, design, bulk and scale, notwithstanding the revised proposals submitted to the Board on appeal, would appear visually obtrusive and incongruous within the existing streetscape and would be out of keeping with the character of the Grosvenor House a semi-detached two-storey Victorian dwelling which is listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The proposed development would, therefore, seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, would not be in accordance with the current development plan for the area and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
2. Having regard to height, design and proximity to boundaries, it is considered that the proposed extension would cause overlooking and have an overbearing impact upon neighbouring properties to the east and would therefore seriously injure the amenities of the area and of property in the vicinity. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

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Siobhan Carroll  
Planning Inspector

4<sup>th</sup> May 2017