



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP-300927-18

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| <b>Development</b>                  | 2 storey extension to side of house, and attic conversion with dormer extension. |
| <b>Location</b>                     | 3 Farmhill Drive, Goatstown, Dublin 14.  |
| <b>Planning Authority</b>           | Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council  |
| <b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b> | D17A/1026  |
| <b>Applicant(s)</b>                 | Susan Swan and Michael Healy   |
| <b>Type of Application</b>          | Permission   |
| <b>Planning Authority Decision</b>  | To Refuse Permission   |
| <b>Type of Appeal</b>               | First Party  |
| <b>Appellant(s)</b>                 | Susan Swan and Michael Healy   |
| <b>Observer(s)</b>                  | No observers   |
| <b>Date of Site Inspection</b>      | 17.05.2018   |
| <b>Inspector</b>                    | Erika Casey  |

## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The subject site has an area of 0.0310 ha and is located in close proximity to the junction of Farmhill Drive and Larchfield Road. The site currently accommodates a semi-detached, 3 bedroom dwelling with a single storey garage to the side with a floor area of c. 125.4 sq. metres. Vehicular access is from Farmhill Drive and the dwelling is served by a front and rear garden.
- 1.2. The dwelling is located in a typical suburban estate constructed in the 1950's. No. 1 Farmhill Drive adjoins the site to the north west. This house is located perpendicular to the subject site and a single storey extension located to the side of this property abuts the subject site.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises:
  - The construction of a 2 storey extension to the side of an existing semi-detached dwelling incorporating the site of an existing garage and single storey extension to the rear. The proposed extension is c. 8.1 metres high and runs for the entire depth of the house. A large glass window is incorporated into the western gable elevation.
  - A new attic conversion with dormer extension to the rear of the extended roof line to provide for habitable bedroom accommodation.
  - Widening of existing vehicular entrance with sliding timber gate and timber screening to front boundary walls.
  - New porch extension.

## **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

### **3.1. Decision**

- 3.3.1 To Refuse Permission for 1 no. reason:

*“Having regard to the provisions of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan, 2016-2022, the proposed development, in particular the dormer roof extension, the two storey side extension and the roof alteration (from hip to gable), by reason of their size, position and design, would materially contravene the aims and objectives of section 8.2.3.4 Additional Accommodation in Existing Built-up Areas of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, and the zoning objective for the site, objective A which seeks to ‘protect and or improve residential amenity’. The proposed development would seriously detract from the visual coherence and character of the street and would set an unwelcome precedent in the immediate area for similar schemes.”*

## **3.2. Planning Authority Reports**

### **3.2.1. Planning Report (23.01.2018)**

- The dormer roof extension is considered large and concern is raised with regard to its compliance with Development Plan Policy 8.2.3.4.
- Concern that the first floor extension has not been set back and that this contrary to the development plan which advises that in certain cases, a set back of an extensions front façade, roof profile and ridge may be sought to protect amenities, integrate into the streetscape and avoid a terracing effect.
- Notes that there is no set back from the mutual side boundary and that the roof profile would be gable ended. Other similar extensions in the vicinity have retained a hipped roof profile.
- Precedent examples cited by the applicant are not considered relevant due to their distance from the subject site.
- No. 3 Farmhill Drive is located in a prominent position, on/near a corner junction and is highly visible from the street. The predominant roof profile of the area is hipped and any change to no. 3’s roof profile from hip to gable would seriously impact on the visual coherence and character of the street and would set an unwelcome precedent.
- No objections to the rear single storey extension, porch or works to the entrance.

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

**Drainage Planning (04.01.2018):** No objection subject to condition.

**Transportation Planning (03.01.2018):** No objection subject to condition.

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- No submissions.

### 3.4. Third Party Observations

- No third party observations.

## 4.0 Planning History

### **Planning Authority Reference: D18A/0232**

- 4.1 Permission sought for: 1. A 2 storey extension to side of existing semi-detached dwelling incorporating existing garage area and a single storey extension to the rear. 2. New attic conversion with dormer extension to rear of extended hipped roof line to provide habitable bedroom accommodation. 3. Widening of existing vehicular entrance with sliding timber gate and timber screening to front boundary walls. 4. New front porch extension. The principal difference between this application and the subject appeal was that the applicant proposed a hipped mansard roof profile. Permission refused on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 for the following reason:

*“Having regard to; the provisions of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan, 2016-2022, the proposed development in particular the two storey side extension, the roof alterations, and the new dormer roof extension by reason of their size, position, and design, would be contrary to policy and aims of section 8.2.3.4 Additional Accommodation in Existing Built-up Areas of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, and the zoning objective for the site, objective A which seeks 'to protect and / or improve residential amenity'. The proposed development would seriously detract from the visual coherence and*

*character of the street and would set an unwelcome precedent in the immediate area for similar schemes.”*

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Development Plan

5.1.1 The operative Development Plan is the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016 – 2022.

5.1.2 The subject site is zoned A: *“To protect and/or improve residential amenity.”* The principle of a residential extension is acceptable under this zoning objective.

5.1.3 Section 8.2.3.4 of the Plan addresses additional accommodation in existing built up areas. This notes the following key points:

- In determining first floor extensions the Planning Authority will have regard to factors such as:
  - Overshadowing, overbearing and overlooking -along with proximity, height and length along mutual boundaries.
  - Remaining rear private open space, its orientation and usability.
  - Degree of set-back from mutual side boundaries.
- Side extensions will be evaluated against proximity to boundaries, size and visual harmony with existing (especially front elevation), and impacts on residential amenity. First floor side extensions built over existing structures and matching existing dwelling design and height will generally be acceptable, though in certain cases a set-back of an extension’s front facade and its roof profile and ridge may be sought to protect amenities, integrate into the streetscape and avoid a ‘terracing’ effect. External finishes shall normally be in harmony with existing.
- Ground floor rear extensions will be considered in terms of their length, height, proximity to mutual boundaries and quantum of usable rear private open space remaining.

- Dormer extensions to roofs will be considered with regard to impacts on existing character and form, and the privacy of adjacent properties. The design, dimensions and bulk of any roof proposal relative to the overall size of the dwelling and gardens will be the overriding considerations.
- The level and type of glazing within a dormer structure should have regard to existing window treatments and fenestration of the dwelling. Particular care will be taken in evaluating large, visually dominant dormer window structures, with a balance sought between quality residential amenity and the privacy of and the privacy of adjacent properties.
- Roof alterations/expansions to main roof profiles -changing the hip-end roof of a semi-detached house to a gable/ 'A' frame end or 'half-hip' for example – will be assessed against a number of criteria including: the character and size of the structure; its position on the streetscape and proximity to adjacent structures; existing roof variations on the streetscape; distance/contrast/visibility of proposed roof end; harmony with the rest of the structure, adjacent structures and prominence.

## 5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

- None applicable.

## 6.0 The Appeal

### 6.1. Grounds of Appeal

- State that the scheme is a considered contemporary architectural solution and accords with a well established precedent for this type of development. There are numerous examples of apex gable ended side extensions in the area and in this context, the application of the development plan policies, guidelines and objectives are inconsistent.
- The extended width of the 2 storey extension is a modest 2.645 metres. A deep recessed stairwell window is proposed which provides natural daylight, serves as a visual break and acts as a form of partial setback. A degree of set back from the side boundary is not feasible given that the boundary wall is currently

shared. A set back would render the extended rooms unusable. This is the case for the majority of houses in this estate whereby garages adjoin each dwelling with a shared party wall with no side access or means for a setback.

- With regard to a potential terracing effect, No. 3 Farmhill Drive is at the beginning of the row of houses, effectively bookending the street. Its potential to create a terracing effect is not a valid argument on this context. Cites a number of precedents where this form of side extension has previously been developed in the estate, with some examples protruding from the established building line. The orientation of the house will not result in any negative overshadowing noting the distance to no. 1 Farmhill Drive. Nor will there be any overlooking as the proposed window on the western elevation serves a stairwell.
- The dormer roof extension is a contemporary proposal seeking to improve on the design of this common form of roof development. The design is necessary having regard to the requirements of the building regulations to achieve habitable accommodation. The dormer accords with generally accepted set back distances from each boundary wall and the top of the dormer is below the ridge. The larger glazed element of the dormer to the ensuite is opaque with the bedroom window set back from this projection. Any degree of overlooking is typical in a suburban context.
- An alternative option of a partially hipped gable or mansard roof profile is submitted. The preference however, is for the gable solution as it is considered that the mansard option is a visually weaker architectural compromise.
- Queries recommendation of condition regarding electric siding gate by the Transportation Planning Department.

## 6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

- It is considered that the grounds of appeal do not raise any new matter which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would justify a change of attitude to the proposed development.

### 6.3. Observations

- No observations.

## 7.0 Assessment

7.1.1 The main issues are those raised in the grounds of appeal and it is considered that no other substantive issues arise. Appropriate Assessment also needs to be addressed. The issues can be dealt with under the following headings:

- Design
- Appropriate Assessment

### **Design**

7.1.2 The proposed development comprises a number of elements including a single storey extension to the rear, porch, revised entrance and a side extension over the existing garage. The principle of a residential extension is in accordance with the zoning objective for the area. The Planning Authority have raised no objection to the rear extension, porch and vehicular entrance. I have reviewed these aspects of the proposal and am satisfied that they are in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The principal issue, therefore, to be considered in this assessment is the proposed side extension and alterations to the roof profile.

7.1.3 The development plan specifically acknowledges that first floor side extensions built over existing structures are generally acceptable. The plan notes that in certain cases a set-back of an extension's front facade and its roof profile and ridge may be sought to protect amenities, integrate into the streetscape and avoid a 'terracing' effect. Concerns have been raised by the Planning Authority that the extension is not set back.

7.1.4 I would note that the Development Plan Guidance is not prescriptive in this regard. Whilst a set back may be appropriate in certain instances, it is not a given that this applicable or indeed necessary in all cases. With regard, to the subject site, it is noted that it effectively forms the end of a terrace. The adjacent house to the north



west (no. 1) is offset at an angle and, therefore, there will be no terracing effect arising from the proposed development. It is also noted that there are numerous precedents in the vicinity of where second floor side extensions have been permitted without the necessity for an offset. I would concur with the applicants that in this instance due to the siting of the site that a set back of the front façade is not warranted. I also consider that there is an adequate separation between the site and the adjacent no. 1 Farmhill Drive to prevent any potential overshadowing, overbearing or overlooking effects. The only fenestration in the western elevation is recessed and serves a stairwell. As noted by the applicant, any further set back from the adjacent property boundary would impact negatively on the amenity of the proposed internal accommodation.

7.1.5 The application includes a dormer to the rear, to which the Planning Authority have raised concerns. The design and impact of this element of the proposal can clearly be seen in the photomontages submitted with the appeal. Whilst the structure is undoubtedly large, its disaggregated form breaks down its massing and visual impact. The main element of the dormer provides fenestration to the bedroom accommodation and is set back. The dormer sits below the ridge of the existing roof and is set back over 2.3 metres from the boundary with no. 5. In this context, I am satisfied that the design response is appropriate and that this element of the proposal will have no adverse visual impact. As part of the fenestration is opaque and the remainder serves bedroom accommodation, I am satisfied that having regard to the length of the rear garden and separation from adjacent properties, that there will be no adverse overlooking.

7.1.6 The Planning Authority have raised particular objections to the proposed gable profile of the roof. It is contended that the predominant roof profile in the area is hipped and that the proposal would seriously impact on the visual coherence and character of the street.

7.1.7 The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan provides specific guidance on roof alterations and notes that changing the hip-end roof of a semi-detached house to a gable will be assessed against a number of criteria including: the character and size of the structure; its position on the streetscape and proximity to adjacent structures; existing roof variations on the streetscape;

distance/contrast/visibility of proposed roof end; harmony with the rest of the structure, adjacent structures and prominence.

7.1.8 Farmhill Drive and the surrounding roads is a standard suburban estate characterised by similar style semi-detached dwellings constructed in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Whilst the existing dwellings are similarly designed and create a unified streetscape, it is not considered that the area has any particularly sensitive architectural character or identity. A number of the dwellings have been extended and modified in recent years. The area is not designated an architectural conservation area and has not been identified as an area with any particular significant architectural attributes or sensitivity. There is evidence in the immediate vicinity and surrounding streets of existing roof variations, where roof profiles have been amended to mansard hipped and gable designs. Details of some of these are outlined in the photographic report and in the appendix in the applicants appeal. It is considered that the potential visual impact of the development must be considered in this context.

7.1.9 The proposed gable roof profile in my view forms part of a coherent design approach to the comprehensive refurbishment and extension of this dwelling. In this regard, I do not consider it to be discordant with the existing structure or that it will impact negatively on the integrity of the architectural character of the existing dwelling or surrounding area. The design is contemporary with the recessed windows providing a point of visual interest in the gable elevation. The dwelling in my view, is not particularly prominent in the streetscape. In any event, as it is effectively located at the end of the terrace, I consider that there are less constraints and it provides the opportunity to develop a different architectural response to this elevation without any due impact on the streetscape or character of the area. I am satisfied that in this instance, the proposed extension and roof profile amendments are appropriate and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7.1.10 As part of the appeal submission, the applicant has submitted photomontages of an alternative mansard hip option. It is noted that a recent application for a proposal with a similar design to this was refused permission by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council under Planning Authority Reference D18A/0232. Whilst I note that there are precedents for this form of roof profile in the vicinity, in this instance, I would concur with the applicant that the gable design as proposed is preferable as it

is more streamlined and less visually obtrusive. In this regard, I do not recommend that this alternative be conditioned by the Board.

7.1.11 It is noted that as part of the application, it is proposed to erect timber screening behind the front boundary wall which would extend to a height of 1.175metres. I consider this boundary treatment to be incongruous with the existing pattern of development in the area and recommend that it be omitted by condition.

## **7.2 Appropriate Assessment**

7.2.1 Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, an extension to an existing dwelling within an established urban area, and its distance to the nearest European site, 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 It is recommended that permission be granted subject to conditions for the reasons and considerations set out below.

## **9.0 Reasons and Considerations**

9.1. Having regard to the provisions of the current Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, the location of the site in an established residential area and its zoning for residential purposes and to the nature, form, scale and design of the proposed development, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

## **10.0 Conditions**

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement

of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

**Reason:** In the interest of clarity.

2. The external finishes of the proposed extension, including roof tiles/slates, shall be the same as those of the existing dwelling in respect of colour and texture.

**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity.

3. Water supply and drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

**Reason:** In the interest of public health.

4. The site and building works required to implement the development shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 to 1800 Monday to Fridays, between 0800 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

**Reason:** In order to safeguard the residential amenities of adjoining property in the vicinity.

5. All public service cables for the development, including electrical and telecommunications cables, shall be located underground throughout the site.

**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity.

6. The footpath in front of the proposed new vehicular entrance shall be dished at the road junction in accordance with the requirements of the planning authority and at the Applicant's own expense.

**Reason:** In the interest of pedestrian safety.

7. The proposed hardwood latted screen above existing well proposed along the front boundary of the dwelling is to be omitted in its entirety and replaced with appropriate landscaping. This landscape boundary treatment shall consist predominantly of shrubs and hedging of native species. The planting shall be completed within the first planting season following the substantial completion of external construction works.

(b) Any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the development shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

**Reason:** In the interest of visual amenity.

8. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to the commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

**Reason:** It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.

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**Erika Casey**

**Senior Planning Inspector**

**17th May 2018**