



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-302106-18

Development	Permission for attic conversion
Location	27 Corke Abbey, Bray, Co. Dublin
Planning Authority	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	D18B/0204
Applicant(s)	Barry Guilfoyle
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	To Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party v. Decision
Appellant(s)	Barry Guilfoyle
Observer(s)	No observers
Date of Site Inspection	25.09.2018
Inspector	Erika Casey

1.0 Site Location and Description

1.1. The subject site with a stated area of 0.01 hectares comprises an existing 2 storey semi-detached dwelling located in a mature residential estate. The dwelling is served by a front and rear garden and there is an existing single storey extension to the rear. The general character of the area is suburban with similar semi-detached housing.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. The proposed development comprises the conversion and extension of the existing attic to the dwelling with the addition of a dormer structure to the rear. The width of the proposed dormer is c. 5.2 metres and it has a height of c. 2.2 metres. The proposed dormer structure is approximately 0.3m higher than the ridge height of the existing dwelling.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. To Refuse Permission for 1 no. reason:

“Having regard to its size, overall width, and relationship with the existing roof and dwelling, it is considered that the proposed attic conversion, consisting of a dormer structure would be visually dominant, excessive in scale and would be visually prominent when viewed from adjoining properties. It is considered that the proposed attic extension fails to accord with the provision of Section 8.2.3.4 (i) Extensions to Dwellings in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, and would seriously injure the amenities, or depreciate the value of property in the vicinity and is, therefore, considered to be contrary with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.”

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report (22.06.2018)

- Notes that permission has been granted for dormer structures in the vicinity that exceed the height of the existing ridgeline, however, none of these structures have been constructed and were assessed under the provisions of previous Development Plans.
- States that the development now proposed differs from that refused under Reg. Ref. D17B/0055 in that the proposed dormer structure has been redesigned to provide a curved roof profile and the window within the dormer structure has been set back from the edges of the dormer structure.
- The height of the dormer structure has been reduced 0.4m from that refused and its extension above the ridge height of the dwelling has been reduced by 0.1 metres. The dormer structure has been set further into the roof slope by setting back from the existing eaves by c. 0.3m. The extent of converted floorspace has been reduced by more than 50%.
- Notes that dwellings in the area have shallow roof pitches and consider that the design response, whilst exceeding the ridge height, curves the highest part of the dormer away from the ridgeline. The proposed dormer would not be readily visible for the street.
- Considers however, that the dormer structure remains excessive in size and scale and remains visually prominent within the existing roof, particularly having regard to its overall width. Also consider that the dormer structure would be visually overbearing to adjoining properties.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- None received.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- No reports received.

3.4. Third Party Observations

- No observations.

4.0 Planning History

Planning Authority Reference D17B/0055

- 4.1 Permission refused in March 2017 for the conversion of the existing attic space into storage space by increasing the roof height and adding a rear dormer window, along with all associated and ancillary site development works. The reason for refusal related to the scale and bulk of the dormer extension which was considered excessive relative to the existing dwelling and adjacent houses.
- 4.2 Permissions granted in the vicinity of the site for attic conversions include D13B/0075 and D11B/0278.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

- 5.1.1 The operative Development Plan is the Dun Laoghaire County Development Plan 2016 – 2022.
- 5.1.2 The subject site is zoned A: *“To protect and/or improve residential amenity.”* The principle of an attic 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:
- 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 adjacent properties.

- Criteria to consider where roof alterations are proposed include 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

5.2.1 The nearest Natura 2000 site is the Bray Head SAC located c. 1.7 km to the south east of the site.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

- Consider that the dormer roof space is not visually dominant when viewed from the front of the dwelling or from adjoining dwellings. The ridge line as viewed from both sides of the street is not compromised.
- Note that there have been no objections from adjoining neighbours regarding the proposal. Consider that it would be good planning to permit people to extend the floor areas in dwellings well served by existing infrastructure.
- State that permission has previously granted for dormer extensions in the estate. The design approach under the current application is a more innovative design response.
- Due to limited rear private open space, the only viable space to develop is the roof. The design as submitted is consistent with roof space design and conversions.

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

- Design and Visual Impact.
- Appropriate Assessment.
- EIA Screening.

7.2 **Design and Visual Impact**

7.2.1 The proposed development comprises the conversion of the existing attic space of the dwelling to include a large dormer structure to the rear. Permission was previously refused for a similar development in 2017 on the basis that the dormer structure was of excessive scale. Under the current proposal, the applicant has amended the design to try and overcome the previous reasons for refusal. A more innovative design approach is proposed with the roof of the dormer structure having a curved profile, thus reducing its dominance and visibility over the ridge height of the existing dwelling.

7.2.2 Notwithstanding the amendments to the design, I still have concerns regarding the overall scale and bulk of the dormer structure. When viewed from the rear, due to its width and scale, I consider that it is visually obtrusive and overly dominant within the existing roof profile. I concur with the view of the planning authority that the dormer

structure would be visually overbearing to adjoining properties, would impact negatively on their residential amenities and set an undesirable precedent.

7.2.3 I note the reference by the appellant regarding previous precedents for dormer structures in the estate. The most recent of these was granted under D14B/0075. The drawings indicate that this permitted dormer was far less obtrusive and modest in scale than that currently proposed.

7.2.4 Whilst I acknowledge the need of the applicant to extend their home and provide for additional habitable accommodation, the proposal in my view is of excessive scale and contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7.3 Appropriate Assessment

7.3.1 Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the conversion and extension of the existing attic within an established urban area, and the 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.

7.4 EIA Screening

7.4.1 Having regard to nature of the development comprising the conversion and extension of the existing attic and the urban location of the site there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1. It is recommended that permission be refused permission for the reason set out below.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. Having regard to the pattern of development in the vicinity of the site, it is considered that the proposed dormer structure, by reason of its scale, width and relationship with the existing roof profile of the dwelling would be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity. The development

would be visually discordant and have an overbearing impact. It would be detrimental to the amenities of the area and of property in the vicinity by reason of visual obtrusion, set and undesirable precedent and be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Erika Casey
Senior Planning Inspector

25th September 2018