



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-304605-19.

Development

Roof alterations for attic conversion to comprise of a roof dormer to the rear elevation together with associated site works.

Location

No. 40 Ravenswood Crescent.

Planning Authority

Fingal County Council.

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

FW19B/0037.

Applicant

Daniel Cosma.

Type of Application

Planning Permission.

Planning Authority Decision

Refused.

Type of Appeal

First Party

Appellant

Daniel Cosma

Observer(s)

None.

Date of Site Inspection

3rd September, 2019.

Inspector

Patricia-Marie Young.

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. No. 40 Ravenswood is located in the city suburb of Clonsilla, to the north west of Dublin's city centre. The site has a stated 0.0302ha area and it contains an end of terrace 2-storey part brick and part dashed dwelling house that is setback from the public road by a part hard surface area which accommodates off street car parking and an area of grass lawn. It occupies a prominent position in terms of its streetscape setting as a result of it occupying a corner site where two internal estate roads meet. The surrounding area consists of well-established highly homogenous groups of mainly 2-storey terraces with gable roofs over.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for roof alterations for an attic conversion to comprise of a roof dormer to the rear elevation including 2 roof windows to the front elevation all at second floor level together with associated site works.
- 2.2. The works proposed consist of the conversion of the attic space into a bedroom with en-suite. It is proposed to increase the height of the attic space by inserting a dormer window into the slope of the rear roof and to provide further light as well as ventilation to the space by the insertion of two velux windows into the slope of the front roof. The proposed dormer window would be inserted in a manner that its exterior form's height matches the existing ridge height at its highest point in the roof slope and it has a stated width of 4.2m.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

- 3.1.1. The Planning Authority decided to refuse planning permission for the following stated reason:

"Having regard to the location of the site at a prominent corner at Ravenswood Crescent it is considered that the dormer by virtue of its location, scale, bulk and design would be overly dominant, visually obtrusive and incongruous in the street scene and would be out of character with the area. The proposed development

would therefore be contrary to the provisions of Objective DMS41 of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023. Furthermore the proposed development in the immediate area and, is therefore considered to be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.”

3.1.2. **Planning Reports:** The Planning Officer’s report reflects the decision of the Planning Authority.

3.1.3. **Other Technical Reports:** None.

3.2. **Prescribed Bodies**

3.2.1. None.

3.3. **Third Party Observations**

3.3.1. None.

4.0 **Planning History**

4.1. **Site and Surrounding Setting**

4.1.1. None relevant.

5.0 **Policy and Context**

5.1. **Local Planning Policy Provisions**

5.1.1. The policies and provisions of the Fingal Development Plan, 2017-2023, apply. The site lies within an area zoned ‘RS’ which has an aim to: *“provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity”*.

5.1.2. Objective DMS41 is relevant. It states: *“dormer extensions to roofs will only be considered where there is no negative impact on the existing character and form, and the privacy of adjacent properties. Dormer extensions shall not form a dominant part of a roof. Consideration may be given to dormer extensions proposed up to the ridge level of a house and shall not be higher than the existing ridge height of the house.”*

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

5.2.1. None relevant.

5.3. EIA Screening

5.3.1. Having regard to the nature, scale and scope of the proposed development within the mature and built-up residential setting of the Dublin city suburb of Clonsilla, the nature of the receiving environment, the serviced nature of the site and its surroundings, I consider that 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.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

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

- The reasons for refusal are reiterated.
- The dormer is necessary to allow adequate and safe internal spaces at second floor level for the occupants of this dwelling.
- The windows to the front elevation exploit the views over the parkland to the front and the overall alterations and additions to the roof structure would have no negative visual or residential impact.
- It is not accepted that the dormer is visually incongruous, visually intrusive, overly dominant or out of character with the development.
- Reference is made to a development at Littlepace Meadows, Clonee, Dublin 15.
- No opportunity was afforded to submit revisions to the development or for a visual impact assessment.
- Additional space is needed for the appellants growing family.
- The Board is sought to overturn the decision of the Planning Authority.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

6.2.1. The Planning Authority's response can be summarised as follows:

- The issues raised by the appellant in their appeal submission were adequately addressed in their Planner's Report.
- The reason for refusal should stand as even if the proposed development was permitted on a reduced scale, it would be visually out of character with the predominant design, style, roof profile, building line and bulk of its setting, thus, conflicting with Objective DMS41 of the Development Plan.
- Each application must be judged on its own merits.
- There are clear policies and objectives in the current Development Plan against planning provisions against which this proposal is assessed. These are implemented in a consistent manner with their planning policy provisions.
- It is requested that the Board uphold its decision, but should the Board be minded to grant permission, it is requested that it include a Section 48 financial contribution condition be imposed.

7.0 **Assessment**

7.1. **Overview:**

7.1.1. The substantive issues in this appeal case are: -

- Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity
- Appropriate Assessment

I am satisfied that no other substantive issues arise.

7.2. **Visual Amenity**

7.2.1. In terms of the visual impact of the proposed development I have considered the examples of similar types of development referred to by the appellant in their grounds appeal which relate to a different residential estate to the one in which the appeal site is located. In addition, I have also had regard to the planning history referred to by the Planning Authority's Planning Officer which relates to the

residential estate in which the appeal site is located. I have also carried out an inspection of the site and its environs. On the matter of planning precedent for or against such developments it is appropriate that each application should be considered on its individual merits. The proposed development is subject to demonstrating compliance with the standards and objectives set out in the Fingal County Development Plan, 2017-2023, which includes Objective DMS41, which only deems dormer extensions acceptable where there is no negative impact on the existing character and form of the existing dwelling.

- 7.2.2. In terms of visual impact, I consider that the proposed development would negatively impact on the existing character and form of 40 Ravenswood Crescent, which is an end-of-terrace 2-storey dwelling in a group of three with both end properties have gabled side elevations and matching low tiled sloping roof structure over. This is characteristic of the other terrace groups that makes up the Ravenswood residential estate and is also a characteristic of other built forms in this estate which includes pairs of semi-detached dwellings.
- 7.2.3. Within the streetscape scene of No. 40 Ravenwood there are no precedents for significant modifications to roof structures of dwellings, i.e. in terms of their front, rear and at attic level of side gable walls. These are highly intact as such I do not consider that the roof structure as one of the dominant features of the coherent design of buildings within this residential development has been diminished as appreciated from the public domain. Further I can find no planning precedent for such alterations within this estate.
- 7.2.4. In relation to the subject property itself, it occupies a highly prominent location within this estate due to its location at an intersection where two internal estate roads meet alongside the fact that it also opens out onto a large four side rectangular pocket of green space with similar terrace group properties addressing it. The rear of this property is highly visible in the approach to this communal green space. This results from an internal estate road running alongside its western boundary. The north south curving alignment of this boundary and the fact that there is another internal estate road intersection in close proximity to the south (Note: c43m).
- 7.2.5. The insertion of a dormer extension to the rear roof of the subject property, one that extends 4.2m in width across what is indicated in the submitted plans as a 5.723m in

width terrace property; that has a rear elevation that includes a 3m wide window and is 2.05m high, that has a roof over that ties into and matches at its highest point the ridge height of the subject dwelling alongside the insertion of dormer windows into the front roof structure in my view is excessive and visually incongruous for a building whose height is 7.689m. These terrace groups were built as legible 2-storey built forms with no habitable accommodation within the roof structure. Further, the other residential built structures of 2-storey semi-detached are of matching height and matching roof structure design. Indeed, even with such proposed modifications and alterations the roof structure through to the floor-to-ceiling heights do not meet current Building Regulations and standards. This I note is a different code and falls under a different jurisdiction to the Board but it is not logical to suggest that these interventions are necessary to make a second floor level safe in a building that has not got the built form to accommodate three levels of habitable accommodation which is one of the arguments put forward by the appellant in their grounds of appeal. The proposed development would result in the roof structure of the subject premises being overtly out of character with other residential properties within this coherent in design and layout residential scheme, a scheme that does not include 3-storey built forms.

- 7.2.6. Objective DMS41 of the Development clearly states that “*dormer extensions to roofs will only be considered where there is no negative impact on the existing character and form, and the privacy of adjacent properties. Dormer extensions shall not form a dominant part of a roof. Consideration may be given to dormer extensions proposed up to the ridge level of a house and shall not be higher than the existing ridge height of the house*” and, Objective DMS44 states that the Planning Authority will seek to “*protect areas with a unique, identified residential character which provides a sense of place to an area through design, character, density and/or height and ensure any new development in such areas respects this distinctive character.*”
- 7.2.7. Based on the visual amenity concerns raised above I concur with the Planning Authority in this instance that to permit the development would be contrary to Objective DMS41 of the County Development Plan and I am not of the view that the roof structure in this dwelling could accommodate such an intervention even if amended to be of a less obtrusive design. I am also of the view that it would be contrary to Objective DMS44 which seeks to protect areas with a unique and

identified residential character that provide them with a sense of place. I am of the view that the residential scheme of Ravenswood has an identifiable residential character that provides it with a sense of place.

- 7.2.8. Further, I share the view of the Planning Authority that if permitted the proposed development has the potential to result in an undesirable precedent within what is an identifiable residential scheme whose character is informed in part by the uniformity of its built form.

7.3. Residential Amenity

- 7.3.1. While the proposed development would result in improved residential amenity for occupants of No. 61 Lanesborough View I am of the view that it would result in additional perception of overlooking of properties in its immediate vicinity. Notwithstanding, this is not a reason in itself that would provide sufficient grounds to refuse planning permission for the development sought under this application.

7.4. Appropriate Assessment

- 7.4.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and to the nature of the receiving environment, namely an urban and fully serviced location, 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 following stated reasons and considerations.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 9.1. Having regard to the end-of-terrace location of No. 40 Ravenswood Crescent, in a residential streetscape characterised by its coherent and uniform design, built-form, massing and design, the proposed development would result in a built insertion that would fail to respect and harmonise with its streetscape context, it would be visually obtrusive in its setting and it would establish an undesirable precedent for similar development in its vicinity. This would be contrary to Objective DSM41 of the Fingal

County Development Plan, 2017-2023, which only permits such interventions where no negative impact arises on the existing character and form of the property. Moreover, it would also be contrary to Objective DMS44 of the Fingal County Development Plan, 2017-2023, which only permits such interventions where no negative impact arises to the identified residential character of an area which has in its own right an identifiable residential character through its design which provides the area with a sense of place and distinctiveness. For these reasons, the proposed development seriously injure the visual amenities of the area and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Patricia-Marie Young
Planning Inspector

4th day of September, 2019.