



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-309564-21

Development	Conversion of attic & installation of dormer window to the front.
Location	33 Dunville Lawn , Athlumney, Navan, Co. Meath
Planning Authority	Meath County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	NA201850
Applicant(s)	Ronald Bouman & Diana Martos Martos.
Type of Application	Planning permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Ronald Bouman & Diana Martos Martos.
Observer(s)	None.
Date of Site Inspection	24 th May 2021.
Inspector	Elaine Sullivan

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site has a stated area of 0.0198ha and is located in a new housing estate in the south-eastern outskirts of Navan town. It comprises a mid-terrace, 2 storey dwelling with a peak façade roof detail. To the front of the house is an off-street parking space with open landscaping and an enclosed garden to the rear.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the attic to habitable space comprising two bedrooms and the installation of a front dormer window with a double-pitched roof profile and a velux rooflight on the front roof plane.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

The Planning Authority refused planning permission for the following reason;

1. It is considered that the proposed development by reason of its design would be out of character with the pattern of development in this urban area. The proposal would constitute a disorderly form of development which would impact negatively on the residential amenity of the proposed occupants and the adjacent properties. Accordingly, to grant the proposed development would seriously injure the residential amenities and depreciate the value of adjacent properties in the vicinity, would set an undesirable precedent for similar future developments in the area, would interfere with the character of the area, would detract from the visual amenity of the area and therefore, would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The report of the Planning Officer dated the 27th January 2021 informed the decision of the PA and includes the following;

- Owing to the uniform design of the terrace of dwellings, the dormer to the front will set a precedent in this newly constructed housing estate.
- The need for a dormer window has not been established as the attic space cannot comply with building regulations and the space should only be used for storage purposes.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- None on file. The application was not referred to internal departments.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- None on file. The application was not referred.

3.4. Third Party Observations

- None received.

4.0 Planning History

- No planning history for the subject site.
- **NT130058** – Planning permission granted by the PA on the 4th December 2014 for a housing development comprising 310 no. residential units and ancillary infrastructure.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019

The subject site is zoned objective A2, 'New Residential' in the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015. The objective of the A2 zoning is 'To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of Navan as a Large Growth Town I'.

Section 11.2.4 of the CDP provides guidance on domestic extensions and includes the following;

- High quality designs for extensions will be required that respect and integrate with the existing dwelling in terms of height, scale, materials used, finishes, window proportions etc.
- Dormer extensions should not obscure the main features of the existing roof, i.e. should not break the ridge or eaves lines of the roof. Box dormers should be avoided.
- Front dormers should normally be set back at least three-tile courses from the eaves line and should be clad in a material matching the existing roof.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

No designations apply to the subject site.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The main grounds of appeal include the following;

- There are a number of different house styles in the Dunville Estate, some of which include front dormer windows and peak façade features. Therefore, the proposal would not be visually incongruous.
- The proposed velux windows to the front are similar in scale and design to the existing front facing solar panels on the houses in the estate.
- The proposal is in accordance with Section 11.24 of the Development Plan and will have no impact on the neighbouring properties or on the value of the properties.
- As the proposal is similar to the existing pattern of development, it does not set an undesirable precedent for future development.
- The recent pandemic has necessitated that both appellants work from home. This has become unfeasible and the family need more space.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

A response was received from the PA on the 29th March 2021 and includes the following;

- The PA has reviewed the issues raised by the 1st Party and the position remains that as set out in the report of the Planning Officer.
- The Board is requested to uphold the decision of the PA and to refuse planning permission.

6.3. Observations

- None received.

7.0 Assessment

I consider the main issues in determining this appeal are as follows;

- Principle of Development
- Visual Impact
- Appropriate Assessment

7.1. Principle of Development

The proposed development is for internal alterations to an existing house to provide two bedrooms at attic level. It would also include the installation of a dormer window on the front elevation. Residential extensions are in accordance with the zoning objective for the site and are assessed against the provisions of Section 11.24 of the CDP.

The report of the Planning Officer raised concerns regarding compliance with Building Regulations with respect to the attic conversion. As set out in Section 34, (13) of the Planning and Development Act, (as amended), *'A person shall not be entitled solely by reason of a permission under this section to carry out any development'*. The issue of compliance with Building Regulations is evaluated under a separate legal code and thus need not concern the Board for the purposes of this

appeal. Therefore, it is my opinion that the main issue concerning the development is that of the visual impact of the front dormer within the streetscape.

7.2. Visual Impact

The appeal site comprises a mid-terrace dwelling within a new housing estate. All dwellings in the estate have a common design aesthetic that includes peak façade roof details and terraces that are book-ended with larger detached dwellings which have a set-back dormer window to the front.

The grounds of appeal argue that the front dormer window would not be out of keeping with the existing pattern of development given the existing roof features and dormer windows. However, it is my view that, whilst the dormer window would be in accordance with the provisions of the CDP as set out in Section 11.24, it would result in a negative visual impact on the terrace as a whole.

Existing dormer windows to the corner dwellings have been designed to create signature features to the estate that reference the rhythm of the peak façade details to the terraces. The overall effect creates a uniform aesthetic for the estate that has been carefully considered. In my opinion the proposed dormer to the front, which is higher than the ridge of the façade detail, would interrupt the original design aesthetic and disrupt the rhythm of the built form. It would also represent a piecemeal form of development which could set a precedent for similar forms of development that could be delivered in a haphazard manner. I recommend that permission be refused on this basis.

7.3. Appropriate Assessment

The appeal site is neither within nor immediately abutting any European site. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the location of the site in a serviced urban area and the separation distance to the nearest European site, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the 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 be refused for the development.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The proposed development for the installation of a dormer window to the front of a mid-terrace dwelling, would result in a negative visual impact on the existing terrace by reason of its design and location, and would represent a piecemeal form of development within the streetscape. It would therefore set an undesirable precedent for similar development and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Elaine Sullivan
Planning Inspector

27th May 2021