



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-310815-21

Development	Relocation of front doors, new porch/bay windows/dormer window and rooflight, external finishes. Dormer window to rear and associated site works.
Location	8 Ballinteer Grove, D16
Planning Authority	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	D21A/356
Applicant(s)	Jacqueline and Erwin Verhoog
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant with conditions.
Type of Appeal	First-Party v conditions
Appellant(s)	Jacqueline and Erwin Verhoog
Observer(s)	No
Date of Site Inspection	23rd December 2021
Inspector	Suzanne Kehely

1.0 Site Location and Description

1.1. The appeal site relates to a semi-detached two storey house in a mature housing development of fairly uniform two storey semi-detached houses. The houses are 5.821m wide. The house form is of simple lines with horizontally proportioned picture windows. They are typically finished with a mix of cladding and painted render. The adjoining dwelling is different in so far as it has added a gabled bay to the front with complete render finish and more vertically proportioned and traditional façade.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1.1. The proposed development comprises the following:

- A flat roofed zinc clad dormer window to the front and back. It is just below the ridge and spans 2000mm and has height of 1704mm. This provides a 2270mm internal floor to ceiling height. The layout provides a single room with ensuite.
- Addition of flat roofed bay extension to the front elevation over ground and first floor level to eaves height.
- Relocation of front door to front building line – incorporating porch as part of the hallway. New external canopy extending from gable to new bay window.
- Replacement of cladding with rendered finish.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. The Planning Authority decided to grant permission subject to 4 conditions.

Condition 2 states:

The dormer window on the front elevation of the dwelling is considered to be out of character with the dwelling and the streetscape and shall be omitted. Reason: In the interests of visual amenities.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report

- The report refers notably to section 8.2.3.4 of the Development plan.

- The bay extension, entrance canopy and rooflight to the front would not impact on visual or residential amenities
- While the rear dormer is acceptable, the front dormer would be out of character. It is noted that there are no such dormers in the streetscape and the site is visually prominent at its junction location. It is also considered the dormer does not integrate with the dwelling.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Drainage Division - no objection
- Transportation - No objections subject to a condition.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- No reports

4.0 Planning History

None relating to site.

5.0 Policy & Context

5.1. Development Plan

5.1.1. The objective for the site is 'to protect and/or improve residential amenities' (ZoneA)

5.1.2. Chapter 8 sets out housing standards. Section 8.2.3.4 (i) refers to extensions.

(i) Extensions to Dwellings First floor rear extensions will be considered on their merits, noting that they can often have potential for negative impacts on the amenities of adjacent properties, and will only be permitted where the Planning Authority is satisfied that there will be no significant negative impacts on surrounding residential or visual amenities. In determining applications for first floor extensions the following factors will be considered:

- 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.
- External finishes and design, which shall generally 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.

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.

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:

- Careful consideration and special regard to 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.

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. Dormer extensions shall be set back from the eaves, gables and/or party boundaries.

The proposed quality of materials/finishes for dormers will be considered carefully as this can greatly improve their appearance. 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. Excessive overlooking of adjacent properties should be avoided unless support by the neighbours affected can be demonstrated.

More innovative design responses will be encouraged, particularly within sites where there may be difficulty adhering to the above guidance and where objectives of habitability and energy conservation are at stake.

5.2. Environmental Impact Assessment - Preliminary Examination

- 5.2.1. Having regard to the limited nature and scale of the proposed development and the absence of any connectivity to any sensitive location, 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. A first -party appeal has been lodged by the applicants against condition 2 based on the following grounds:

- The design had regard to the development plan provisions in section 8.2.3.4 (i).
- There is precedence in the area.
- The dormer is set back from the eaves, roof ridge and party boundary.
- The proposed finishes would integrate.
- It is a modest alteration and would not be incongruous or injurious to the streetscape or visually obstructive.
- An example of a large scale of alteration to the facade is shown- it relates to a permission at 91 Landscape Park in Churchtown. The assessment by the planning authority concluded that the design was appropriately set back from eaves, gables and party boundaries and did not provide a visually dominant form. Accordingly it is submitted that the planning authority is inconsistent in this case.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

A change in attitude to the proposed development is not justified.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Issues

- 7.1.1. This is a first-party appeal against condition 2 attached in the decision by the Planning Authority to grant permission. Condition 2 requires the omission of the front dormer. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development and the nature of condition no.2, I consider that the determination by the Board of the application, as if it had been made to it in the first instance, would not be warranted. Therefore, in accordance with Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the Board should only determine the matters raised in the appeal.
- 7.1.2. In this case there are two elements to the design that are addressed in condition 2: incongruity with the dwelling and incongruity with streetscape.

7.2. Visual incongruity

- 7.2.1. The case is made that the proposed scale and design is in keeping with principles of subordination as guided in the development plan. It is also stated that there are comparable examples and one illustrated example is provided in support and refers to Churchtown.
- 7.2.2. I note the proposed dormer is set just below the ridge and above the eaves. As viewed in elevation, the dormer window is I consider, oversized relative to the other windows – it is marginally taller than the existing first window to be retained.
- 7.2.3. Its visual assimilation is not helped by a lack of coherence in the fenestration detailing. The remodelling of the façade incorporates a variety of window designs which I consider visually jarring. There is a mix of symmetrical treatment in the four paned vertically divided new bay windows, the centred multipaneled door between a pair of vertical side lights and the asymmetrical existing first floor window and proposed asymmetrical dormer window. This could be addressed by modifying the design however there is also an issue of bulk.
- 7.2.4. The proposed dormer projects 2.673m from the roof slope just below the ridge and for a width of 2m. This is in a roof that is 5.8m wide and by itself and proportionately adds consider bulk to the roof and is highly visible along the streetscape. The roof

would simply be top heavy and not in a way that meaningfully redefines the overall architectural style of the building.

- 7.2.5. I have looked at the example in Churchtown and this is not directly comparable: The roof level in that case is almost 3.5m in height and permits considerably lower set dormers with less proportionate depth of projection and it is also in a much wider house and plot. The dormer in that case also appears as a part of a redefined composite and rationalised architectural design. Reduction to a comparable height below the ridge as illustrated in the Churchtown example is constrained by the roof height in the subject case which provides a floor to ceiling height of 2.27m at its highest.
- 7.2.6. If the Board is of mind to permit the retention of the dormer to the front, I consider it should be subject to a reduced height and depth – it is marginally taller than the window to be retained at first floor. The glazed window should I consider be no higher than the proposed first floor glazing. The window design should also be revised and rationalised so that it is either all symmetrical or all asymmetrical. One centred vertical division in all windows, as used in the Churchtown design as cited by the applicant, would be, for example, more unifying.
- 7.2.7. I note in this case that the dormer extension to the rear also provides for attic accommodation and natural light but that the attic level is restricted in providing for a habitable room. I would question the justification for a 2nd dormer and such an intrusion in the roofscape in this context.
- 7.2.8. On balance I concur with the planning authority that the proposed dormer to the front by reason of its scale and projection should be omitted to prevent an overbearing impact and to generally protect the visual and residential amenities of the area.

8.0 **Appropriate Assessment**

- 8.1. Having regard to the nature of the development, its location in a serviced urban area, and the separation distance to any 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.

9.0 Recommendation

I recommend that the planning authority be directed to amend condition 2 based on the following wording.

Having regard to the nature of the condition the subject of the appeal, the Board is satisfied that the determination by the Board of the relevant application as if it had been made to it in the first instance would not be warranted and, based on the reasons and considerations set out below, directs the said Council under subsection (1) of section 139 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to AMEND condition number 2 as worded below and based on the following Reasons and Considerations.

Condition 2:

The proposed dormer window in the front elevation of the dwelling shall be omitted.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenities of the area.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations.

Having regard to the scale and design of the proposed dormer window in the front elevation it is considered that its visual relationship with the existing and adjoining dwellings, would seriously injure the visual and residential amenities of the area and would, therefore, not be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area

Suzanne Kehely

Senior Planning Inspector

30th December 2021