



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report

**ABP-310926-21**

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### Development

Modifications to previously approved alterations to include: 1) raising of pitched roof to front, 2) conversion of store to bedroom, 3) 2 new rooflights to new pitched roof, 4) removal of previously approved dormer to front and widening of dormer to rear and associated site works.

### Location

5 Clonmore Road, Mount Merrion

### Planning Authority

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

### Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

D21A/0410

### Applicant(s)

Janet and Matt Twomey

### Type of Application

Permission

### Planning Authority Decision

Refuse.

### Type of Appeal

First-Party

### Appellant(s)

Janet and Matt Twomey

### 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 single storey house in a mature housing development of what were initially fairly uniform design. The houses are typically L plan and join to form a U shape and feature a stepped façade. The plots are c.11.5m wide and houses are set back from the side boundary. The side is typically walled which screens a side shed or extension . Overall there is a considerable variety of extensions and insertion of windows and rooflights to provide attic accommodation.
- 1.2. The subject dwelling retains its original roof plan and façade. A screen wall conceals a flat roof extension and store to the side of the house.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1.1. The proposed development comprises modifications to previously approved alterations to include: 1) raising of pitched roof to front and insertion of a vertical window to provide extended attic accommodation to the front, 2) conversion of ground level store to side to a bedroom and new façade window, 3) 2 new rooflights to new pitched roof, 4) removal of previously approved dormer to front and widening of approved dormer to rear and associated site works.

## **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

### **3.1. Decision**

- 3.1.1. The Planning Authority decided to refuse permission for the reason as stated inter alia: Having regard to the objective A zoning of the site and policies and objectives as set out in the Development Plan it is considered that the development would detract from the amenities of the area and is inconsistent with the provisions of the current development plan .

### **3.2. Planning Authority Reports**

- 3.2.1. Planning Report

- The report refers notably to section 8.2.3.4(i) of the Development Plan in respect of extensions.
- The alteration to the bay ridge height is generally acceptable and would not be unduly out of sync with the adjoining property.
- Regard was had to the highly defined streetscape character particularly in terms of roof profiles and bungalow scale which add to the visual amenity of the area.
- The overall design would be out of sync in terms of design and scale and proportion and would adversely impact on the visual amenity. The extension would not be subservient to the main house due to the associated changes to roof profile and pitch height to provide for large playroom at first floor.
- The conversion of the store to a bedroom is not acceptable by reason of the visual impact of the extension.
- No objection to the rooflight in the front, removal of the dormer or increase in rear dormer – alterations are considered to have an indiscernible impact.
- The changes to the front roof profile by changing the hip to a vertical triangular window and the related increase in the ridge height and overall scale of front façade are not considered acceptable.

### 3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Drainage Division - no objection

### 3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- No reports

## 4.0 Planning History

D19A/0883 – permission for changed hip roof profile to a gable end, dormer to rear and front , new rooflights and removal of chimney.

## 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
  - Consideration of neighbour has also influence approach – it was preferable to alter the front rather than extend to the rear. the neighbour presently enjoys full sunshine to the rear and this protected.
  - The streetscape has changed significantly as reflected in the many variations of extensions and remodelling of facades. (photographs provided)

- The proposal was considered very much in terms of scale and proportion and hence the use of the half-hipped roof with a chance to introduce a window more in keeping with the modern vernacular but still respecting the proportion and scale of the house and the road. The conversion of the attic and store is using existing space in the house to accommodate a growing family
- 13 other houses in the area have converted the store to the side to a bedroom and windows are all shapes and sizes have been inserted to facilitate this.

## 6.2. Planning Authority Response

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

## 7.0 Assessment

### 7.1. Issues

7.2. This appeal relates to a proposal for remodelling and extending a modest semi-detached bungalow. Permission has previously been granted for the dormer window to the rear and extension of the roof to the side incorporating a revised gabled profile. (Drawings are included with the application. ) There are no objections by the planning authority to what are described as indiscernible alterations to the dormer windows and rooflights in this application. Having reviewed the plans I concur with this aspect of the appraisal. The issue in this case centres on the alterations to the façade and accordingly, this is the subject of assessment.

### 7.3. Visual incongruity

7.3.1. The reason for refusal is based on the proposed scale and design of the remodelled bay which is considered not in keeping with principles of subordination as guided in the development plan. The objectionable aspect of the proposal relates to the raising of the projecting roof and remodelling of the façade hip by inserting a glazed gable – a triangular window. This is to provide a second attic room. (A playroom and an office en-suite are now proposed at attic level.) The ridge which is raised does not breach the ridge height of the main house but will result in an asymmetrical projection in terms of height, width and roof profile as compared to the adjoining

bungalow. This deviation of symmetry is in addition to the already permitted (but not yet constructed) gable ended roof as extended.

- 7.3.2. The applicant makes the case that there is a variety of designs as illustrated in the attached photographs with the appeal and I accept this is the case. While I accept that there is historic uniformity as referred to by the planning authority, the houses have evolved at the hand of quite individual treatment. While I accept the overall design is somewhat incongruous in its asymmetrical deviations, there are I consider a number of factors that allow the development to be absorbed in the streetscape.
- 7.3.3. Aside from the architectural style evolving in a variety of ways in the area, the sites are wide and feature mature landscaping and on this side of the road they are slightly lower than the road – the streetscape being more dominated by the opposing elevated houses. This combined with the low house height permits some leeway. I also note that the house is modest and that the expansion uses the existing structure while avoiding the need to extend to the rear thereby avoiding impacts on the adjacent residents. I note the applicant has consulted with the adjoining neighbour in this regard and there are no objections.
- 7.3.4. The enlarged roof space and window to the front permits additional family accommodation without being unduly obtrusive. The reconfigured layout at ground level is not I consider significant - there is no additional floor area – it is simply a reordering of space to provide similar accommodation but by relocating an existing bedroom to the front allows a better level of daylight by the addition of a ground level window in the façade. I consider this to be relatively minor intervention in the façade.
- 7.3.5. On balance, having regard to the pattern of development in the area, the planning history for the site, I consider the proposed development to be acceptable and that it would not unduly detract from the streetscape or visual amenity of the area and would therefore not conflict with the proper planning and sustainable development 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

- 9.1.1. I recommend that planning permission for the proposed development be granted based on the following reasons and considerations, as set out below.

## 10.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 10.1. Having regard to the site characteristics, the pattern of development in the area and the provisions of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would integrate in a satisfactory manner with the existing built development in the area, would not detract from the character of the streetscape and would not seriously injure the visual amenity of adjacent properties. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area

## 11.0 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. Surface water drainage arrangements shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

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



3. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, 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:** To safeguard the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

4. Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes to the proposed dwelling, including roof slates/tile, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

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

5. 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 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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Suzanne Kehely

Senior Planning Inspector

30<sup>th</sup> December 2021

