



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-311148-21

Development	Revisions of the design of previously approved extension: plan ref. no. 21/51675
Location	Kinnelargy, Downings, Co. Donegal
Planning Authority	Donegal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2151148
Applicant(s)	Patrick Dunne.
Type of Application	Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Grant with conditions
Type of Appeal	First Party v Condition
Appellant(s)	Patrick Dunne.
Observer(s)	None.
Date of Site Inspection	October 6 th 2021.
Inspector	Paul Caprani

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located outside the coastal village of Downings (or Downies) on the Rosguill Peninsula in North Donegal. Downings is a large tourist destination with large numbers of holiday homes and mobile homes in the settlement. The dwelling which is the subject of the application and appeal is located in the townland of Kinnalargy c.1 km west of the Main Street in the Village. The dwelling forms part of a recently constructed small residential development comprising of single storey, dormer bungalow and two storey dwellings. The small estate in which the appeal site is located comprises of c. 10 dwellings set around two small cul-de-sacs.
- 1.2. The appeal site accommodates a dormer bungalow with a single storey sunroom to the side. The dwelling currently has a GFA of 241 sq.m.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Planning permission is sought for the substantial redevelopment of the sunroom in the south-western elevation of the house to replace the existing single storey structure to a new two storey structure. The redevelopment is to incorporate extensive glazing at ground floor level. The first-floor element incorporates a slightly larger foot plate which overhangs the ground floor. The overhang accommodates a balcony area along the south-eastern and south-western elevation. As proposed, the extension is to incorporate a pitched roof; clad in 'stading seam zinc' The pitched roof rises to a point just below the ridge of the main dwelling. The area of the proposed first floor extension provides an additional 25 sq.m (excluding the balcony area) at first floor level.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Donegal County Council granted planning permission subject to 3 conditions. Condition 2 (a) and (b) stated the following:

(a) Pitched roof detail shall be removed and a flat roof, consistent in level shall be provided to first floor sitting room extension and link thereto.

(b) Level of the flat roof shall be raised by 500mm to provide for internal ceiling level of 2.4m minimum.

Reason: To define the terms of the permission, protect the amenities of the area and ensure orderly development.

3.2. Documentation Submitted with the application

- 3.2.1. A covering letter submitted by the architect notes that planning permission was granted for an extension to this dwelling under Reg. Ref. 20/51675. In granting permission, a condition was attached to convert the roof to a flat roof. Concern is expressed that this condition results in a building form that bears no relationship with the existing dwelling and results in a building that is much more imposing when viewed from the side elevation. Photomontages are attached depicting the alternative designs.

3.3. Planning Authority Reports

3.3.1. Planning Report

The planners report noted that this is a repeat application of 20/51675. It is considered that the pitched roof proposed neither constitutes an acceptable modern interpretation of the Donegal vernacular and is not consistent with the existing dwelling design or the design of dwellings in the vicinity. Concerns are expressed that the proposal will set an undesirable precedent in the area. For this reason, the same condition should be attached altering the roof profile as per the condition attached to the previous permission. The development is considered to be acceptable in terms of public health, appropriate assessment and amenity issues.

3.3.2. Other Technical Reports

- None on file.

3.4. Prescribed Bodies

- None on file.

3.5. Third Party Observations

- None on file.

4.0 Planning History

Details of one planning application is attached in a pouch to the rear of rear of the file. Under 20/51675 planning permission was granted for the construction of an extension to the subject dwelling together with the extension to the existing garage. The extension to the house appears to be the same as that sought under the current application. Donegal County Council granted permission for the proposal subject to 4 conditions. Condition 3(a) & (b) stated the following:

(a) Pitched roof detail shall be removed and a flat roof, consistent in level shall be provided to first floor sitting room extension and link thereto.

(b) Level of the flat roof shall be raised by 500mm to provide for internal ceiling level of 2.4m minimum.

Reason: To define the terms of the permission, protect the amenities of the area and ensure orderly development.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

The site is governed by the policy and provisions contained in the Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024. The subject site is located outside the settlement boundary of Downings, a Tier 3 settlement in the settlement hierarchy in the development plan.

In relation to extensions to dwellings, Policy UB-P-27 states the following:

Proposals for extension to a dwelling shall be considered subject to the following criteria:

(a) The development reflects and respects the scale and character of the dwelling to be extended and its wider settlement.

(b) Provision is made for an adequate and safe vehicular access and parking; and

(c) The proposal would not adversely affect the amenity of adjoining properties.

Appendix 4 of the Development Plan relates to building a house in rural Donegal – A Location Siting and Design Guide.

In relation to plan form the following should apply:

- Where necessary overall massing maybe fragmented into smaller units thus reducing the apparent scale of the development.
- The location of service areas; garages, stores or outbuildings should be considered to provide for an integrated grouping of built form.
- A linear form often responds well to ground levels, contours and orientation.
- The building mass should relate proportionally to the site and landscape setting, and therefore relative to its surroundings. Large buildings generally are unlikely to be compatible with a small enclosed site.
- Consider the scale and proportion of traditional buildings in the countryside to inform a contemporary design resolution.
- Form, scale, proportion and massing are intrinsically linked and should all be considered carefully, to provide for a sensitive building intervention which sits harmoniously within its environs.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The site is not located within or adjacent to a natura 2000 site. The nearest European Site is the Sheephaven SAC which encompasses the Coastal area to the south of the settlement of Downings c500 meters to the south west of the site and also includes Rosspenna Lake which at its closest point is c.270 meters to the south of the site.

5.3. EIA Screening

An extension to a residential dwelling is not a class of development for which an EIAR is required.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The decision of Donegal County Council was the subject of a first party appeal specifically against conditions 2(a) and 2 (b). The arguments set out in the appeal are outlined below

- It is noted that this is a repeat application. A similar condition was attached in the previous granted planning permission. 3D images were supplied to the planning authority depicting a flat roof in the hope that this would convince it that the proposal would not blend with the existing vernacular appearance of surrounding houses. Contrary to what is stated in the planning report, it is considered that a flat roof would not represent an acceptable modern interpretation of Donegal vernacular architecture. The flat roof is completely alien and has no resemblance to the existing design in the area.
- Reference is also made to Donegal County Council Design Guidelines for rural towns which notes that historically a 35 - 45 degree roof pitch provides maximum wind and rain resistance and is of particular rural reference. The condition it is argued, is at odds with this guidance.
- It is unfortunate the County Council did not seek to engage with the applicant in respect of the design.
- In conclusion it is argued that the incorporation of a pitched roof isn't keeping with the existing vernacular architecture of the existing dwelling and the condition imposed is detrimental to the visual amenities of the area.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

A response from Donegal County Council is summarised below:

- It stated that the planning authority had regard to policy UB-P-27. It is considered that the pitched roof proposed, together with glazing, neither constitutes an acceptable modern interpretation of the Donegal vernacular nor is it consistent with the existing dwelling design and dwelling designs in the

vicinity. For this reason, An Bord Pleanála are requested to include this condition in any grant of permission.

6.3. Observations

- None

6.4. Further Responses

- None

7.0 Assessment

7.1. I have read the entire contents of the file, visited the subject site and its surroundings, and have had particular regard to the grounds of the first party appeal which only relates to condition no.2. I consider the principle of extending the residential dwelling has already been examined under the extant permission granted under 20/51675. On this basis, I consider that the Board can restrict its deliberations to whether or not condition no.2 is appropriate. Condition no. 2 requires that:

(a) Pitched roof detail shall be removed and a flat roof, consistent in level shall be provided to first floor sitting room extension and link thereto.

(b) Level of the flat roof shall be raised by 500mm to provide for internal ceiling level of 2.4m minimum.

Reason: To define the terms of the permission, protect the amenities of the area and ensure orderly development.

7.2. The matter on which the Board is requested to adjudicate upon, is somewhat subjective. It relates to the aesthetics of the extension and is therefore, to some extent, is a matter of personal taste. The appellant in this instance has helpfully submitted photomontages of the proposed extension depicting the original design as submitted to the planning authority and the reconfigured design incorporating the flat roof as required by way of condition.

7.3. The houses surrounding the subject site are set out on large individual plots, and while incorporating a similar type design, they are not exact replications and include different orientations. This in my view allows more flexibility in departing from the

prevailing design expression which is dominated by pitched roofs. The flat roof in my view offers a more simplistic and cleaner design and also provides a design which is of reduced bulk and scale and therefore is subordinate to the main dwelling and in my view offers a more appropriate design solution in providing a first-floor extension.

- 7.4. The flat roof reflects and respects the scale and character of the dwelling to be extended to a greater extent and in this regard complies to a greater extent with Policy UB-P-27 in that it better respects the scale and character of the dwelling;
- 7.5. On the basis of the above therefore I would recommend that the Board retain condition No.2.

8.0 Appropriate Assessment

- 8.1. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, which relates to an extension to an existing residential dwelling which is connected to public services, and nature of the receiving environment together with the proximity to the nearest European site The Sheephaven SAC (001190) c.270 metres away, 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. It is recommended that condition no.2 be retained in the decision issued by the Board.

10.0 Decision

Having regard to the nature of the conditions the subject of the appeal, the Board is satisfied that the determination of 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 to attach Conditions 2(a) and 2(b).

11.0 Reasons and Considerations

It is considered that the incorporation of Condition 2 (a) and 2 (b) is appropriate and would result in an extension of reduced size and bulk which would be subordinate to the main dwelling which would be beneficial to the visual amenities of the area, and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

12.0 Matters Considered

12.1. In making its decision the Board had regard to those matters which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any submissions and observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

Paul Caprani
Planning Inspector

December 20th 2021