



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-314173-22

Development

Demolition works to existing single storey side and rear extensions, construction of two storey extension to the side and front, single storey extension to rear, and porch to the front, attic conversion to include two dormer roofs to the side and to the rear, and ancillary changes to elevations.

Location

424 Clontarf Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3

Planning Authority

Dublin City Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

WEB1438/22

Applicant(s)

Liam McHugh & Lorna Cronnelly

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Grant, subject to 9 conditions

Type of Appeal

First Party -v- Condition 4

Appellant(s)

Liam McHugh & Lorna Cronnelly

Observer(s)

None

Date of Site Inspection

6th October 2022

Inspector

Hugh D. Morrison

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The site is located on Clontarf Road (R807) in a position overlooking Bull Island and to the south of St. Anne's Park. This site lies within a row of residential properties (Nos. 415 – 425 (inclusive)), which back onto the grounds of Manresa Retreat House to the north-west. They comprise two-storey dwelling houses all of which are semi-detached apart from the one to the north of the site. These dwelling houses occupy elongated plots, and they are sited in their south-eastern halves with accompanying gardens to the front and to the rear. Each is accessed directly off Clontarf Road.
- 1.2. The site itself is of rectangular form and it extends over an area of 738 sqm. This site accommodates an existing two storey, three-bed, semi-detached dwelling house with an attached single garage and utility room to the side and a single storey rear extension. This dwelling house is served by front and rear gardens, and it is accessed along its north-eastern boundary by means of a gated pedestrian and vehicular entrance and driveway.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposal would comprise the following elements:
 - The demolition of the existing single storey side and rear extensions,
 - The construction of a two storey extension to the side and front, a single storey extension to the rear with rooflights, and a porch to the front,
 - The construction of an attic conversion to include two dormer roofs, one to the side and one to the rear, and to include 2 no. rooflights to the front of the existing roof,
 - Ancillary changes to elevations, and
 - All associated site works.
- 2.2. The proposal would entail the retention of 140.5 sqm and the addition of 75.5 sqm to give a total floorspace of 216 sqm.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Permission was granted, subject to 9 conditions, including the following one:

4. The first floor element of the front two-bay projection shall be omitted – with the remaining single storey bay feature tied visually back into the extended dwelling or the two-storey feature be omitted in its entirety.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The case planner expressed the concern that “the provision of a two storey extension to the front of the dwelling would have an adverse impact upon the character of the dwelling and would set an undesirable precedent for similar house types in the area.”

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Dublin City Council: Drainage: No objections + standard advice.

4.0 Planning History

WEB1058/22: Identical proposal: Permitted 10/05/22, subject to 9 conditions, including the following one:

5. The first floor element of the front two-bay projection shall be omitted – with the remaining single storey bay feature tied visually back into the extended dwelling or the two-storey feature be omitted in its entirety.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

5.0 Policy and Context

5.1. Development Plan

Under the Dublin City Development Plan 2016 – 2022 (CDP), the site is shown as lying within an area that is zoned Z1, wherein the objective is “To protect, provide and improve residential amenities.”

Section 16.10.12 of the CDP addresses extensions and alterations to dwellings as follows:

The design of residential extensions should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties and in particular the need for light and privacy. In addition, the form of the existing building should be followed as closely as possible, and the development should integrate with the existing building through the use of similar finishes and windows. Extensions should be subordinate in terms of scale to the main unit.

Applications for planning permission to extend dwellings will only be granted where the planning authority is satisfied that the proposal will:

- *Not have an adverse impact on the scale and character of the dwelling.*
- *Not adversely affect amenities enjoyed by the occupants of adjacent buildings in terms of privacy, access to daylight and sunlight.*

Appendix 17 of the CDP sets out “Guidelines for Residential Extensions”. Section 17.7 of this Appendix addresses appearance as follows:

Most houses were originally designed and built as completed entities and did not take account of any need to incorporate future extensions. It is therefore necessary when considering the design of an extension to take account of the following criteria:

- *The extension should not dominate the existing building and should normally be of an overall shape and size to harmonise with the existing house and adjoining buildings; the original appearance should be the reference point for any consideration of change that may be desired.*
- *The materials used should ideally be the same as those used on the existing building; features such as windows and doors on the new extension should relate to those on the original building in terms of proportion.*
- *Extensions to the front, which significantly break the building line, should be resisted.*

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

Portions of Dublin Bay are the subject of European designations.

5.3. EIA Screening

The proposal is for domestic extensions, which are not a class of development for the purpose of EIA.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The applicants appeal Condition No. 4 attached to the Planning Authority's permission. They begin by describing their dwelling house within the context of 5 pairs of semi-detached dwelling houses within which it features at the northern end of the row. The majority of these dwelling houses have been/are being altered/extended to different designs.

Turning to the subject first floor front extension, the applicants explain that it would be of importance to their family as it would facilitate the provision of a third double bedroom. This extension would be modest, as it would project by only 1.2m from the line of the original front elevation. Its visibility from Clontarf Road would be limited as a result of the length of the front garden and the presence of mature trees.

The applicants consider that the subject first floor front extension would act as a "stop-end" to the aforementioned row of dwelling houses, and it would resemble the adjacent detached dwelling house to the north.

Exception is taken to the case planner's view that the subject first floor front extension would have an adverse impact on the character of the dwelling house and that it would establish an undesirable precedent. In this respect, the variety of works being undertaken to the host row and, likewise, the variety of comparable extensions to the same house type on nearby streets is referred to. The following examples are cited:

- At 425 Clontarf Road, a substantial projecting two storey side extension was permitted under 2556/10.

- At 417 Clontarf Road, a substantial two storey side extension with bay windows was permitted under WEB1471/21.
- At 418 Clontarf Road, remodelling of an earlier two storey front extension was permitted under 2497/21.

Several other examples are depicted by way of photographs: the one at 247 Mount Prospect Avenue (2078/12) bears the greatest resemblance to the current proposal.

6.2. Applicant Response

None

6.3. Planning Authority Response

None

6.4. Observations

None

6.5. Further Responses

None

7.0 Assessment

7.1. The applicants have appealed Condition 4 attached to the permission granted by the Planning Authority. Under Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 – 2022, the Board has the discretion to determine this appeal without undertaking a *de novo* assessment of the proposal. I have reviewed the proposal in the light of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016 – 2022 (CDP), relevant planning history, the submissions of the parties, and my own site visit. Accordingly, I consider that the Board should exercise the aforementioned discretion in this case. I also consider that the appealed condition should be assessed under the following headings:

- (i) Visual and residential amenity, and
- (ii) Appropriate Assessment.

(i) Visual and residential amenity

- 7.2. Under the proposal, the two storey side extension to the dwelling house would project forward of the existing front building line in a stepped manner, i.e., the ground floor, which would be continuous with the proposed adjoining front porch, would project forward by 1.8m and the first floor by 1.2m. The step between these levels would be spanned by a lean-to roof, which would, likewise, be continuous with the lean-to roof over the front porch. A double pitched roof with a fully hipped front gable would rise above the first floor.
- 7.3. The Planning Authority attached Condition No. 4 to its permission, which requires that the forward projection of the two storey side extension be omitted at first floor level with the ground floor level being “tied visually back into the extended dwelling”. Alternatively, the entire projection should be omitted, i.e., at both ground and first floor levels. The reason for this Condition is stated as being “In the interests of visual amenity”, and the case planner’s report elucidates that the front extension at issue “would have an adverse impact upon the character of the dwelling and would set an undesirable precedent for similar house types in the area.”
- 7.4. The applicant has responded to the Planning Authority by making the following points:
- The first floor floorspace at stake represents the difference between a single and double bedroom,
 - The dwelling house on the site is screened from the roadside by means of mature trees and a long front garden,
 - The row of dwelling houses in question has been the subject of a variety of alterations and extensions,
 - The front projections to the proposed side extension would provide a stop-end to the row of semi-detached dwelling houses at its north-eastern end, while resonating with the pattern of projecting gabled features to the front elevation of the detached dwelling house on the neighbouring house plot to the north-east, and
 - Precedent for the front projections on comparable house types exists already within the locality.

- 7.5. Prior to going on site, my provisional view of the submitted plans was that the front elevation of the extended dwelling house looked “busy” in 2-dimensions. During my site visit, I observed the site within its context, particularly that of the adjoining semi-detached dwelling house at No. 423, which has been the subject of a two storey side extension with ground and first floor projecting bay windows. From my observations, I can confirm the validity of the points made by the applicant, which are summarised above. Furthermore, I observed the dwelling houses at Nos. 247 & 253 Mount Prospect Road, which have been the subject of two storey side extensions to comparable house types. These extensions project forward as the applicants’ proposal would do and, when viewed in 3-dimensions, they work well with the aesthetic of their host dwelling houses and surrounding streetscape. Accordingly, I take the view that the applicants’ proposal would do likewise.
- 7.6. I conclude that Condition No. 4 is unnecessary to ensure that the visual amenities of the area are safeguarded and so it should be omitted.

(ii) Appropriate Assessment

- 7.7. The site is not in any European site. It is a fully serviced suburban site. Under the proposal, the dwelling house on this site would be extended. No Appropriate Assessment issues would arise.
- 7.8. Having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the proposal, and proximity to the nearest European site, it is concluded that no Appropriate Assessment issues arise as the proposal would not be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

8.0 Recommendation

That the Planning Authority be directed to omit Condition No. 4 attached to the permission granted to WEB 1438/22.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the site within its context and the precedent for similar forward projecting two storey side extensions to comparable house types in the surrounding area, it is considered that the attachment of Condition No. 4 to the permission

granted by the Planning Authority to WEB 1438/22 is unnecessary to safeguard visual amenity and so its omission would accord with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Hugh D. Morrison
Planning Inspector

25th October 2022