



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-315919-23

Development	Replacement of existing dormer with increased size dormer, and sundry minor works
Location	27 South Hill, Sutton, Dublin 13, D13 P972
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	F22B/0234
Applicant(s)	Simon & Christina Knowles
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant subject to conditions
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Simon & Christina Knowles
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	26 th May 2023
Inspector	Bernard Dee

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site is located at the terminus of a cul-de-sac residential development on the south side of Howth Head. No. 27 is a dormer bungalow within a well-established estate comprised of similar dwelling types.
- 1.2. The appeal site is comprised of a detached dormer bungalow dwelling and the attendant garden. The dwelling does not directly overlook any neighbouring properties to the front (west) where the proposed enlarged dormer is to be located.
- 1.3. During the site on 26th May 2023 visit it was noted that No. 27 is significantly screened from views from South Hill as it is set back from the end of the cul-de-sac road.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The development will consist of the removal of the existing hip roofed dormer, c. 2.7m in width, and its replacement by an enlarged flat roofed dormer running across the front roof for c. 9.7m. The depth of the existing dormer is c. 3.4m and the depth of the proposed dormer is c. 4.5m. The height of the existing dormer (to ridge line) is c. 3m while the height of the proposed dormer is c.2.6m. The proposed dormer would be constructed of smooth render surrounds with red cedar insets between 3 no. glazed areas.
- 2.2. It is also proposed to demolish the existing porch and to build a new flat roofed slightly enlarged roof to match the materials and style of the proposed dormer. The front left window is proposed to be converted to sliding doors as is the rear kitchen window.
- 2.3. The site area is stated to be 0.1021 ha.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Permission for the proposed development was granted on 30th January 2022 subject to 7 no. conditions. Condition No. 3 which is the subject of the First Party appeal states:

The scale of the dormer structure shall be broken up into two dormer structures not exceeding 3m each and maintaining the set down from the ridgeline of the house.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The Planner's Report notes the residential zoning of the site and the acceptability in principle for the proposed works. The Planner then cites the relevant Development Plan provisions (see Paragraph 5.0 of this Inspector's Report) and notes that other dormer extensions are evident in neighbouring properties. The Planner feels that the scale, bulk and massing of the proposed dormer structure would be excessive and visually dominant and would not integrate with the surrounding context. The Planner recommends a grant of permission subject to the breaking up of the dormer into two smaller dormers not to exceed 3m each in width.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

The Water Services Section replied that there was no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions.

3.2.3. Prescribed Bodies

No responses received.

3.2.4. Observations

None received.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. On the Appeal Site (No. 27)

- Ref. F13A/0097: permission granted for revised boundaries, new boundary walls to front and the widening of the existing entrance.
- Ref. F02B/0737: permission granted for a dormer window to front, two dormer windows to rear and a single storey sun room to rear.

4.2. In the Vicinity of the Site

- F16B/0308: permission granted at 7 South Hill for the replacement of a triangular dormer with a rectangular dormer, new skylights to front roof elevation and sundry minor works.

5.0 Policy and Context

5.1. Development Plan

The site is zoned Objective RS - Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity, where the vision is to ensure that any new development in existing areas would have a minimal impact on and enhance existing residential amenity in the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 is the statutory plan for the area.

Landscape Character – Highly Sensitive. The appeal site is located in a Buffer Zone associated with the Howth Special Amenity Area

14.10.2.5 Roof Alterations including Attic Conversions and Dormer Extensions

Roof alterations/expansions to main roof profiles, for example, changing the hip-end roof of a semi-detached house to a gable/'A' frame end or 'half-hip', will be assessed against a number of criteria including:

- Consideration and 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 evaluated against the impact of the structure on the form, and character of the existing dwelling house and the privacy of adjacent properties. The design, dimensions, and bulk of the dormer relative to the overall extent of roof as well as the size of the dwelling and rear garden will be the overriding considerations, together with the visual impact of the structure when viewed from adjoining streets and public areas.

Dormer extensions shall be set back from the eaves, gables and/or party boundaries and shall be set down from the existing ridge level so as not to dominate the roof space.

The quality of materials/finishes to dormer extensions shall be given careful consideration and should match those of the existing roof.

The level and type of glazing within a dormer extension should have regard to existing window treatments and fenestration of the dwelling. Regard should also be had to extent of fenestration proposed at attic level relative to adjoining residential units and to ensure the preservation of amenities.

Excessive overlooking of adjacent properties should be avoided.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The following natural heritage designations are located in the vicinity of the appeal site:

- Howth Head SAC – 000202.
- North Dublin Bay SAC - 000206
- North Bull Island SPA – 004006.

5.3. EIA Screening

Having regard to the limited nature and scale of the proposed development and the absence of any significant environmental sensitivity in the vicinity/ 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

The grounds of the First Party appeal prepared by O'Neill Town Planning are, in summary, as follows:

- The proposed dormer is compliant with the provision of the Fingal County Development plan relating to residential extensions, dormer extensions and the requirements set down in the Development Plan regarding such extensions.
- The proposed enlarged dormer would not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of adjoining properties or be out of character with the existing pattern of development in the area.
- The proposed dormer is required to allow the occupants to live and work from home. Removing the central element of the dormer to break the dormer into two smaller and separate dormers will leave the home office with no natural light.
- The dormer as proposed represents only 35% of the front roof area, 50% of the height of the roof and 70% of the width of the roof area. Visually therefore the proposed dormer does not dominate the front elevation of the appeal property.
- No. 27 is at the end of a cul-de-sac road and is not prominent in the streetscape or forward of the established building line. There is no house opposite the front of No. 27. Therefore, the proposed dormer is not proposed on a house that is prominent in the public realm.
- There are several other precedent cases in South Hill for this type of enlarged dormer which the Board should have regard to.
- There are also several examples of dormers that have been broken into two separate dormers as per the requirements in the present case. These design solutions are less successful in aesthetic terms than the unified and enlarged single dormer designs.

- The proposed design would not have a negative impact on the character of the area and would not appear incongruous within the established architectural context of South Hill.
- A compromise which the Board may wish to consider is the placement of a skylight over the home office between the two separate dormers required by Condition No. 3.

6.1. Applicant Response

Not applicable.

6.2. The Planning Authority response is as follows:

- The application was assessed against relevant Development Plan zoning and standards and existing government policy and guidelines as well as the potential impact on neighbours and the character of the area.
- The proposed development was considered to be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area subject to the imposition of Condition No. 3 in the interests of visual amenity.
- Should the Board grant permission it is requested that the Section 48 condition be reapplied to the Board's Order.

6.3. Observations

None received.

6.4. Further Responses

Not applicable.

7.0 **Assessment**

Having examined all the application and appeal documentation on file, and having regard to relevant local and national policy and guidance, I consider that the main issues in this appeal are those raised in the grounds of appeal and I am satisfied that no other substantive issues arise. The development in principle, an extension to an occupied residential structure, is considered acceptable in principle.

The main issues, therefore, are as follows:

- Impact on residential amenity.
- Visual impact.
- AA Screening.

7.1. Impact on Residential Amenity

7.1.1. The appellant states that the proposed development will not have any impact on the residential amenity of the area. Having regard to the cul-de-sac location of No. 27, the fact that there are no houses opposite No. 27 and unlikely to be any houses at any point in the future, and the off-street situation of the appeal site, I find that development at this site is highly unlikely to have any negative impacts on the residential amenity of the area.

7.1.2. I conclude, subject to the conditions drafted below, that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of the area.

7.2. Visual Impact

7.2.1. The context within which it is proposed to construct this dwelling is not an Architectural Conservation Area nor in proximity to Protected Structures. No. 27 itself is not a Protected Structure. It is located in a Buffer Zone associated with the Howth Special Amenity Area but this is designed to prevent further development in the Buffer Zone as opposed to restricting additional development at existing structures.

7.2.2. From the drawings submitted, initially it appears that the enlarged single dormer is visually dominant. However, the rationale of lighting three rooms necessitates such a design response. Regard must be had to the contemporary design of the dormer which is in line with Development Plan requirements. The dormer forms a visual dialogue with the proposed reconstructed porch and brings a certain design unity to the front elevation.

7.2.3. The dormer glazed areas align vertically with the ground floor opes to achieve an elevational symmetry that is, in design terms, more successful than the current façade that presents to the front of this structure.

- 7.2.4. I have inspected the site and viewed other dormer extensions on South Hill and I find that where there are two smaller dormers rather than one elongated dormer, the facades of those structures are not as pleasing in aesthetic terms as those houses where the single elongated dormer design solution has been employed.
- 7.2.5. I conclude therefore that the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential amenity of adjoining property or the visual amenity of the area and that the dormer as proposed is a better design solution than that required by Condition No. 3.
- 7.2.6. The other minor works, converting windows to sliding glazed doors is also acceptable in design terms and should not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the area.

7.3. AA Screening

Having regard to the relatively minor development proposed within an existing housing estate and the distance from the nearest European site being approximately 200m uphill to the east of the appeal site (Howth Head SAC – 000202), 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.

8.0 Recommendation

I recommend that Condition No. 3 be omitted and that planning permission be granted for the reasons and considerations set out below and subject to the following conditions.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the provisions of the Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029, including the zoning objective for the site ('RS – Residential'), which seeks to provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity; it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the visual or residential amenities of the area, or of property in the vicinity, would provide an acceptable standard of amenity for future residents, and be acceptable in terms of architectural design. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

10.0 Conditions

1.	The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application on 5 th December 2022, 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.	Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes of the proposed development shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.
3.	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.
4.	Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 and 1900 from Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between

	<p>0800 and 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.</p> <p>Reason: In order to safeguard the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.</p>
5.	<p>The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution of 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. The application of any indexation required by this condition 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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Bernard Dee
Planning Inspector

29th May 2023