



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report

### ABP-321816-25

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<b>Development</b>	Attic conversion and all associated site works.
<b>Location</b>	33 Sycamore View, Castleknock, Dublin 15, D15 W58R
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Fingal County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	FW24A/0493E
<b>Applicant</b>	Paula Fay.
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission.
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Refuse Permission
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	First Party
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	Paula Fay.
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None.
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2025.
<b>Inspector</b>	Lucy Roche

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## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

- 1.1. The proposed development site is on Sycamore View, a residential cul-de-sac located off Sycamore Avenue in Castleknock, Dublin 16, c1km southwest of M50 Junction 6.
- 1.2. The site comprises, No 33 Sycamore View, a two-storey, three-bed, semi-detached dwelling with a single storey projection to the rear. The dwelling has a stated gross floor area of 130sqm, it is set back c8m from the public footpath and benefits from in-curtilage parking to the front and private amenity space to the rear. The dwelling has a hipped roof and currently accommodates c. 16 sq. m of floor space at attic level. This space is accessed via an internal staircase and benefits from two rooflights to the rear.
- 1.3. The surrounding area is primarily residential in nature with dwellings of similar design, form and appearance to No. 33 Sycamore View.
- 1.4. The site has a stated site area of 0.023ha.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

- 2.1. The proposal is for alterations / extensions to the existing dwelling to accommodate additional floor space at attic level. The submitted plans indicate that the space is intended for use as a study. The proposal includes for:
  - The re-modelling of the existing roof to change the hipped design to a gabled design.
  - The provision of dormer structure to the front and rear of the roof. Both structures are shown to be c3.9m wide and approximately 2m high, sitting just below the ridgeline and above eaves of the existing dwelling. The dormer structures are shown as centred on their respective roof plane with a set-back of 1.35m from the both the party boundary with the adjoining dwelling No. 34 Sycamore View to the north and from the proposed southern side gable. They are to be finished in metal cladding. Each dormer structure is served by a single window, c. 2.2m wide and c.1m high.

- A projecting structure at first floor level to the side of the house to accommodate the stair to the attic from the first floor. The structure sits c2.6m above ground level. It is set back c. 3.48m from the front elevation of the dwelling and projects c. 1m from the side. It is to be clad in metal sheeting to match the proposed dormer structures and includes glazing to front, rear and side elevations.

2.2. The proposed works would provide for an additional 27 sq, m of internal floor area.

### **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

#### **3.1. Decision**

3.2. Fingal County Council did by order dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2024, decide to grant permission for the proposed development subject to eight conditions. Condition 3, the subject of this first party appeal, is of note:

C3. The proposed development shall be amended as follows:

- a) The proposed dormers shall have a maximum external width of 3m.
- b) The total width of the glazed area in each dormer structure shall be 1.5m externally.
- c) The proposed dormers shall be centred on their respective roof plane.
- d) The proposed dormers shall be set down 300mm from the existing roof ridgeline.
- e) The proposed projecting structure on the southern elevation shall be omitted with access to the attic area internalised within the existing frame of the house.

Reason: In the interest of residential and visual amenity.

#### **3.3. Planning Authority Reports**

##### **3.3.1. Planning Reports**

- The report of the Local Authority Case Planner forms the basis of the planning authority decision.

- The Case Planner considers the alteration of the existing roof profile to be acceptable in principle but raises concerns regarding the scale of the proposed dormer and the extent of glazing which is described as excessive. The Case Planner recommends that the design of the dormers be amended to protect the amenity of the area. Concerns are also raised in relation to the proposed first floor projection to the side, which is described as overbearing, and the negative impact this would have on the visual amenity of the existing house and surrounding area.
- No concerns are raised with respect to overlooking or overshadowing.
- The report concludes with a recommendation to grant permission subject to 11 no. conditions which was amended to 8 no. condition in the decision.

### 3.3.2. Other Technical Reports

- **Water Services:**

Flood risk: No objection

Surface water drainage: No objection subject to: (1). No surface water / rainwater is to discharge into the foul water system under any circumstances. (2) The surface water drainage must be in compliance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works, Version 6.0, FCC, April 2006.

### 3.4. Prescribed Bodies

None

### 3.5. Third Party Observations

None

## 4.0 Planning History

### 4.1. Subject Site

None of relevance on the subject site.

4.2. Reference is made in the application / appeal to a number of precedent cases, including:

*32 Sycamore Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15, D15 CY8W*

*FW23B/0044      Planning permission granted (Dec. 2023) for the construction of a dormer window to the front section of the main roof and to increase the size of window to the first-floor smaller bedroom on the front facade and extend the existing front porch roof and all associated site works.*

*33 Sycamore Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15, D15 WC3V*

*FW22A/0302      Planning permission granted (Mar. 2023) for the construction of a two storey extension to side of the existing semi - detached house with a change of the hipped roof to a gabled detail, to include utility & boot room entrance porch and amendment to front canopy detail at ground floor, extended front bedroom and rear bathroom at first floor level and a new access stair to the attic level & the conversion of the attic space to include dormer windows to the front & rear roofs; new entrance sliding gates and amendment to access piers & walls, new garden shed to rear & associated site works.*

*43 Sycamore Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15, D15*

*FW20B/0171      Planning permission granted (Mar. 2021) for an attic conversion to include a dormer window at the rear of the of the roof and a realignment of the main roof structure to replace the hipped design with a new gable design and the inclusion of a projecting bay type structure at the side of the house to accommodate the stair to the attic.*

*105 Burnell Park Lawn, Carpenterstown, Dublin 15*

*FW12B/0015      Planning permission granted (May 2012) for attic conversion with dormer to rear and velux to front of existing dwelling including internal alterations*

*27 Bramley Crescent, Carpenterstown, Dublin 15*

## 5.0 Policy Context

### 5.1. Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029

Zoning: The site is zoned 'RS' with the objective 'to provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity'. The vision for this area is to ensure that any new development in existing areas would have a minimal impact on and enhance existing residential amenity

#### Section 3.5.13.1 Extensions to Dwellings:

The need for people to extend and renovate their dwellings is recognised and acknowledged. Extensions will be considered favourably where they do not have a negative impact on adjoining properties or on the nature of the surrounding area.

#### Section 14.10.2 Residential Extensions

The need for housing to be adaptable to changing family circumstances is recognised and acknowledged and the Council will support applications to amend existing dwelling units to reconfigure and extend as the needs of the household change, subject to specific safeguards.

#### Section 14.10.2.2 Side Extensions

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. In certain cases, a set-back of the 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 generally match the existing.

#### Section 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. Noted Policies and Objectives



Policy SPQHP41:	Residential Extensions:- Support the extension of existing dwellings with extensions of appropriate scale and subject to the protection of residential and visual amenities.
Objective SPQHO45	Domestic Extensions: - Encourage sensitively designed extensions to existing dwellings which do not negatively impact on the environment or on adjoining properties or area

### 5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

The subject site is not located on or adjacent to any designated site. Designated sites within the wider area include:

- Royal Canal pNHA, c250m to the north
- Rye Water Valley/Carlton SAC c. 7km to the southwest
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, c. 10.5km to the southeast

## 6.0 The Appeal

### 6.1. Grounds of Appeal

This is a first party appeal against Conditions 3 (a), (b), (d) and (e) of the planning authority's decision to grant permission for works at No. 33 Sycamore View.

Condition 3 requires alterations to the proposed development. The issues raised in the grounds of appeal can be summarised as follows:

- **C.3(a)** "*The proposed dormers shall have a maximum external width of 3m*": - It is contended that the design of the dormer is proportionate with the existing house design and that reducing its width to 3m would make the attic too small from a functional point of view. The grounds of appeal reference two examples of where dormers exceeding 3m in width have been granted in the Dublin 15 area.
- **C.3(b)** "*The total width of the glazed area in each dormer structure shall be 1.5m externally*": - The designed width of glazing is 2.2m, which is

proportionate with the proposed dormers (3.9m) and existing the first-floor windows of the subject house and its neighbours (2.6m). It is not excessive and provides more light to the attic rooms.

- **C.3(d)** “*The proposed dormers shall be set down 300mm from the existing roof ridgeline*”: - It is contended that this condition is particularly problematic as it would reduce the headroom in the attic to 1.7m which is unworkable. The dormer can be set below the ridgeline but should correctly sit at the base of the ridge tile and by doing so the headroom in the attic space would not be reduced.
- **C.3(e)** “*The proposed projecting structure on the southern elevation shall be omitted with access to the attic area internalised within the existing frame of the house*”: - The projecting structure in question is described as a positive design feature that serves to not only create architectural interest but as a practical function by preserving space within the house that would otherwise be taken up by the stairs. The grounds of appeal reference precedent cases in the area where similar features have been granted. The submission notes that no objections in respect of the proposed development were received.

## 6.2. Planning Authority Response

The planning authority’s response to the grounds of appeal is set out in correspondence received 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2025, and can be summarised as follows:

- The application was assessed against the policies and objectives of the FDP etc. The planning authority considered that the development would generally comply with the Development Plan policy and guidance.
- Permission was not granted for the projecting element to the side for reason of visual amenity and because this structure was deemed unnecessary - the stairs to the attic can be accommodated within the existing house.
- The combination of front dormer and side projection would add visual clutter.
- The design and scale of the proposed front and rear dormers were considered inappropriate and overbearing, the proposed fenestration excessive.

- The proposed dormer structures only serve a non-habitable space given the small height dimension proposed. Revised dormers of the dimensions specified under condition 3 would be more appropriate in terms of scale and visual impact.

### 6.3. **Observations**

None

## 7.0 **Assessment**

- 7.1. This is a first party appeal against Condition 3 attached to Fingal County Council's (FCC's) decision to grant permission for works at No. 33 Sycamore View Castleknock namely, the re-modelling of the existing roof to change the hipped design to a gabled design, the provision of dormer structures to the front and rear elevations and the provision of a projecting structure at first floor level to the side of the house to accommodate the stair to the attic from the first floor.
- 7.2. The planning authority in their assessment, raised no objection to the development in principle or to the proposed re-modelling of the existing roof but considered that the proposed dormer structures and projecting structure to the side would be overbearing when viewed from surrounding properties and that the quantum of fenestration proposed within the dormers was excessive. The planning authority decided to grant permission for the development subject to 8no. Conditions. Condition 3 requires that the development be amended so that:
- a) the proposed dormers have a maximum external width of 3m.
  - b) The total width of the glazed area in each dormer structure is reduced to 1.5m externally
  - c) The proposed dormers shall be centred on their respective roof plane
  - d) The proposed dormers shall be set down 300mm from the existing roof ridgeline and
  - e) The proposed projecting structure on the southern elevation shall be omitted with access to the attic area internalised within the existing frame of the house.

I note the reason cited for inclusion of Condition 3 – In the interests of residential and visual amenity.

- 7.3. The first party raise issue with Conditions 3 (a), (b), (d) and (e), no objection is raised with respect to Condition 3(c). The case is made that the proposed dormer structures and associated glazing are proportionate to the existing house and that the amendments required under conditions 3 (a), (d) and (e) would compromise the usability and functionality of the accommodation.
- 7.4. The alteration / extension of the existing dwelling to facilitate additional floor space at attic level is I consider acceptable in principle. I am satisfied the development is otherwise in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. I am therefore satisfied 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. My assessment will therefore be limited to the matters raised in relation to the terms of the condition, pursuant to the provisions of section 139 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- 7.5. In terms of the scale and design of the proposed dormer structures, regard is had to section 14.10.2.5 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 (FDP) which provides guidance on roof alterations including attic conversions and dormer extensions and which states that 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. It is further stated that 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 and that the level and type of glazing within a dormer extension should have regard to existing window treatments and fenestration of the dwelling.
- 7.6. Following consideration of the plans submitted with the application and following inspection of the site and the surrounding area, I would be of the view that while the proposed dormer additions would be visible from neighbouring properties, they would not unduly detract from the character or amenity of the existing dwelling, neighbouring dwellings or the streetscape.

- 7.7. The appeal site is on a residential cul-de-sac, it is not a corner site or other location such that it is excessively visually prominent or likely to have a significant impact on visual amenity. As per FDC guidance, the dormer structures have been set back from the eaves and from the gable and party boundaries and are in my opinion proportionate to the to the scale of roof and to the existing dwelling.
- 7.8. The proposed dormer structures sit just below the ridge line of the existing dwelling. The requirement to set down the dormers 300mm from the ridgeline would result in a reduction in the floor to ceiling height within the attic space which is already restricted at c. 1.87 meters. Such a reduction would, in my opinion, seriously compromise the amenity value of the space and its intended use as a study. As the proposed dormer structures do not exceed the ridge line of the existing dwelling, they would not in my view have a significant negative impact on the visual amenities of the area or the streetscape. Therefore, I do not consider that a reduction in height, that would impact on the accommodation provided, is justified on visual amenity grounds.
- 7.9. Further to the above, I am satisfied that the quantum of glazing proposed within each dormer structure is visually proportionate to the scale of the proposed dormer and to the existing windows of the dwelling. Given the pattern of development in the surrounding area and the separation distances available between the proposed dormer windows and neighbouring dwellings, I am satisfied that the development as proposed would not result in significant new overlooking of neighbouring properties.
- 7.10. The proposed first floor projection to the side of No. 33 Sycamore View, is set back c. 3.48m from the front elevation and established building line along Sycamore View. It projects c. 1m from the side of the dwelling and is shown on the plans submitted to be wholly within the confines of the site. The structure is to be finished in metal cladding to match the proposed dormer structures, providing visual harmony. In my view this structure represents a modest scale addition that is subservient to and compatible with the existing structure and that would integrate into the streetscape.
- 7.11. Overall, I am satisfied that the extensions / alterations to No. 33 Sycamore View as proposed would accord substantially with the guidance for residential extensions set out in the FDP and would not seriously impact the amenities of the area or of

neighbouring properties. On this basis, I consider that the amendments required by Condition 3 of the planning authority's decision are unwarranted.

## **8.0 AA Screening**

- 8.1. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- 8.2. The subject site is located on Sycamore View in Castleknock. The site is not on or within proximity to any designated European Site. The closest site being the Rye Water Valley/Cartron SAC, c. 7km to the southwest. The proposed development comprises alterations / extensions to the existing dwelling facilitating additional floor space at attic level. No nature conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 8.3. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- The established residential use of the site
  - The nature and scale of the development proposed.
  - The distance to the nearest European site, intervening land uses and the lack of connections; and,
  - Taking into account the screening determination of the Planning Authority.

I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development would not have a likely significant effect on any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

## **9.0 EIA Screening**

The proposed development is not of a type listed under Part 1 or 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) nor is it considered

a sub-threshold development for the purposes of Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations. An EIAR is not therefore required.

## **10.0 Recommendation**

- 10.1. Having regard to the nature of Conditions 3 (a), (b), (d) and (e), the subject of the appeal, the Board is satisfied that the determination 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 & Development Act 2000, as amended, to Omit Conditions 3 (a), (b), (d) and (e), for reasons and considerations hereunder:

## **11.0 Reasons and Considerations**

- 11.1. Having regard to the existing dwelling on site, the proposed extensions / alterations would be compatible with this structure and would not seriously impinge on the visual amenities of the area or the residential amenities of adjoining properties and would otherwise be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

*I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.*

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Lucy Roche  
Planning Inspector

07<sup>th</sup> April 2025

# Form 1

## EIA Pre-Screening

<b>An Bord Pleanála Case Reference</b>	<b>ABP-321816</b>		
<b>Proposed Development Summary</b>	<b>Alterations / extensions to existing dwelling to facilitate the provision of additional floor space at attic level.</b>		
<b>Development Address</b>	<b>33 Sycamore View, Castleknock</b>		
<b>1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA?</b> (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)		<b>Yes</b>	<b>X</b>
		<b>No</b>	
<b>2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>		<i>State the Class here.</i>	
<b>No</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>No further action required</b>	
<b>3. Does the proposed development equal or exceed any relevant THRESHOLD set out in the relevant Class?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>			
<b>No</b>			
<b>4. Is the proposed development below the relevant threshold for the Class of development [sub-threshold development]?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>		<i>State the relevant threshold here for the Class of development and indicate the size of the development relative to the threshold.</i>	<i>Preliminary examination required (Form 2)</i>
<b>5. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?</b>			
<b>No</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q4)</b>	
<b>Yes</b>		<b>Screening Determination required</b>	

Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_