

An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ABP-322165-25

Development

New gate, garage conversion and ground floor extension to existing bungalow. Rear extension with balcony, works to include a front sun patio and garden structure and home gym study and shed and all associated site works

Location

6, Esker Lane, Ballydowd, Lucan, Co. Dublin K78 R5D3

Planning Authority

South Dublin County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

SD24B/0355W

Applicant(s)

Frances Wright

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Grant permission with conditions

Type of Appeal

First Party

Appellant(s)

Frances Wright

Observer(s)

None

Date of Site Inspection

18th May 2025

Inspector

Killian Harrington

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1.0 Site Location and Description

The subject site is a detached dormer dwelling on c. 0.07 hectares located on Esker Lane, Ballydowd, Lucan, Co. Dublin, within an established residential estate that is directly accessed by the R835 road. Ballydowd is a residential area east of Lucan village centre. The streetscape in the estate is predominantly characterised by similar detached gable-fronted dormer dwellings of varying heights and form with front and rear gardens. On this northern part of Esker Lane, the subject dwelling is visually paired with the adjacent property 7 Esker Lane, with both houses characterised by a large dormer roof facing the road or a 'gable fronted' design mixed with an extended 'side' hipped roof to the south-facing slope of each property. They are not identical, however with 7 Esker Lane having a lower hipped roof and at a slightly different slope angle.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. The proposed development consists of the following works to the dwelling:

- Alterations to the front boundary to relocate existing vehicular access gate and the formation of a new pedestrian gate.
- Garage conversion with flat roof ground floor extension to front of existing Bungalow.
- 2 No. flat roof box dormer extensions to south and north elevations
- Two storey rear extension with concealed balcony
- External alterations to replace the existing window on the north elevation with a single door to new bootroom / laundry room and new high level window facing north all with new rooflights generally.
- Other works including a front sun patio and a garden structure at rear for home gym, study and tool shed.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Following receipt of Additional Information, South Dublin County Council decided to grant planning permission for the development subject to six conditions.

Condition 2 involved the submission of revised plans to the planning authority. It states:

‘Prior to the commencement of development the applicant, owner or developer shall submit the following for the written agreement of the Planning Authority: Revised plans that incorporate all of the following amendments- (a) Revise the form and design of the dormer extensions to hipped roof profile when viewed from the front or as otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority. (b) Reduce the overall height of the garden structure to no more than 3 metres.

REASON: To protect the amenities of the area and in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.’

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The planning authority requested Additional Information from the applicant after they found the initial alterations to the house would be unacceptable due to the height of the 3.25m garden structure not being of appropriate scale, provision of toilet and services needing to be removed from the garden structure, overlooking impact from first floor balcony, dormer roof extensions not in keeping with traditional appearance in addition to harmful impacts on residential amenity in terms of overlooking and overbearance, drawings not being accurate and concerns from the Roads department about the width of the entrance gate.

It is noted that Item 1(c) relates to the dormer roof extensions and is worded as follows:

‘The proposed dormer extensions would account for a large area of the roof area, dominating well over 50% of the area on both sides. The southside falls below the

eaves line of the roof, which goes against the attic conversions and dormer windows section within the South Dublin House Extension Guidelines. This has raised concerns over the proposal's design and its potential to negatively impact on the character of the immediate (and wider) surrounding area. The building in its current form is considered to be at odds with the overall setting of the area, which follows a traditional hipped or pyramid shaped roof line. It is recommended that revised plans are submitted that show the first floor level (dormer) extensions revised to be better incorporated into the design and form of the existing dwelling and surrounding context. This should include references to the more traditional design elements found within the immediate residential area and reduce overlooking into neighbouring properties at No. 5 and 7 Esker Lane. Any revision should ensure that the massing is appropriate to the dwelling and surrounding area'

In response, to the AI Request the applicant submitted the following (dated 8th October 2024)

- Proposed vehicular Access gate repositioned
- Proposed Front Extension omitted
- Responding to Item 1(c) - Dormers provided with a more traditional appearance to public road/front elevation and pulled back on both sides to terminate above the eaves.
- Concealed Balcony omitted from Master Bed
- Bedroom 2 provided with high level window for light and recessed escape window facing West (front). All other side windows are frosted where sill is 900mm above FFL and clear glass where sill is 1700mm above FFL
- Redesign of Garden Room to reduce the visual impact on North boundary
- WC removed from the Garden Room
- Site Layout Plan revised to include neighbour extensions to the North & South
- Contiguous elevations revised to accurately represent the neighbour roof to the North

The planner's report noted the AI submission and found that it addressed previously stated concerns. The report stated that although the dormer roof extensions on either side were reduced in scale, they were not of the traditional design evident in the surrounding area. Subsequently, Condition 2(a) was attached requesting the revision of the form and design of the dormer extensions to hipped roof profile when viewed from the front or as otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Roads Department – No objection subject to the following:

1. The vehicular access points shall be limited to a width of 3.5 metres (achieved following A.I Request).
2. Footpath and kerb shall be dishd and widened, and the dropped crossing shall be constructed to the satisfaction of South Dublin County Council and at the applicant's expense. The footpath and kerb shall be dishd and widened to the full width of the proposed widened driveway entrance (condition 5 subsequently applied)
3. Any gates shall open inwards and not out over the public domain (condition 4 subsequently applied)

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- None

3.4. Third Party Observations

There was one objection from the occupant of 7 Esker Lane with the following concerns:

1. Front extension works would obstruct views from inside the property, decrease levels of safety and property value and would disrupt the architectural character of Esker Lane
2. Front extension is not in keeping with other properties in the locality, appearing blocky and incongruent, disrupting the overall architectural harmony of the area.

3. Roof extension – the proposed 'square roof' would disrupt the architectural consistency of the pyramid roofs and would result in loss of light to the hall way

4.0 Planning History

Subject site

Reg. Ref. SD15B/0044 - Permission granted for the extension and renovation of the existing detached single storey dwelling to include: the construction of a single storey extension to the side/rear of the existing dwelling; the replacement of the existing roof with a new tiled roof to provide habitable accommodation on the first floor; first floor gable windows to the front and rear elevations; four roof lights; minor alterations to all elevations and all associated site works.

Adjacent Sites

Reg. Ref. SD18B/0465: 5 Esker Lane - Permission granted for the conversion, extension and new pitched roof over single storey garage to side of dwelling; single storey extension to rear of dwelling to provide accommodation for a fourth bedroom and living spaces; provision of 4 'Velux' roof lights to existing and proposed south and east facing roof planes; widening of vehicular entrance and all associated site works and landscaping

Reg. Ref. SD16B/0393: 5 Esker Lane – Permission granted for the alterations and extensions to single storey detached house, comprising new roof profile (with roof lights) and front and rear gables (with windows) to accommodate 3 bedrooms at attic level, also single storey rear sunroom extension, single storey kitchen/utility extension attached to south side of house, conversion of attached garage to en-suite and associated site works.

Reg. Ref. SD09B/0438: 7 Esker Lane - Permission granted for the revisions to previously approved plans (Reg. Ref. SD09B0269) for reconstruction of existing tiled pitched roof to form a new tiled pitched roof with raised ridge level and first floor gable windows to front and rear; erect new single storey extension at side and rear with tiled pitched hipped roof extended over existing garage and 8 Velux roof lights.

The revisions are: (1) the construction of a flat roof with rooflight to replace part of an approved pitched roof at side; (2) increasing the pitch of the front tiled pitched roof where it extends over the existing garage; (3) fitting of a larger window to first floor rear gable.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

Under the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 the site is subject to the Land Use Zoning Objective RES - 'To protect and / or improve Residential Amenity'. The following sections of the Development Plan are relevant to the subject application:

Section 6.8.2 Residential Extensions

- Policy H14: Residential Extensions

Support the extension of existing dwellings subject to the protection of residential and visual amenities. H14 Objective 1 seeks to favourably consider proposals to extend existing dwellings subject to the protection of residential and visual amenities and compliance with the standards set out in Chapter 12 *Implementation and Monitoring* and the guidance set out in the South Dublin County Council House Extension Design Guide, 2010 (or any superseding guidelines)

Chapter 12 Implementation and Monitoring

- Section 12.6 Housing – Residential Development
- Section 12.6.8 Residential Consolidation

South Dublin County Council House Extension Design Guide (February 2025)

The updated House Extension Design Guide (February 2025) contains the following general guidance on house extensions and specific guidance on side extensions:

'Extensions in general should be well designed, cohesive, appropriate, innovative and addresses basic considerations to ensure good design, progressive improvements to the built environment, consideration for neighbouring properties,

reflect best practice, architectural innovation and high standard of design, construction technology and sustainability.'

Section 3.3.1 '*General considerations relating to all side extensions*' notes that the roof profile of first floor/two storey side extension should be carefully considered relative to that of the main house and parapet height should always be minimised.

Section 3.5.2 '*Built Form Principle 5 – Roof Alterations and Extensions*' notes that roof profile alterations:

- should tie in with the original ridge height and ridge position of the dwelling.
- should be finished with materials that match the main roof of the dwelling.
- and any window provided in an extended gable elevation that faces an adjacent house should be fitted with obscure glazing

Front or Side Dormer Elements:

- should be located below the ridge line of the main dwelling.
- should be set back at least 3 no. tile courses from the eaves line of the dwelling.
- should be inset from party boundaries and side wall/ roof hip of dwelling.
- should be appropriately scaled to be subsidiary to the roof slope.
- should be finished with high quality materials.
- And side dormers should be inset from adjacent roof edges.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC and Rye Water Valley/Carton proposed NHA c.4km to the west of the site, Liffey Valley proposed NHA less than 1km to the north of site and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA c.12 km to the east

5.3. EIA Screening

The proposed development is not a class for the purposes of EIA as per the classes of development set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. No mandatory requirement for EIA therefore arises and there is also no requirement for a screening determination. Refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of report.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

The applicant wishes to appeal Condition 2(a) attached to the approval, which states that the applicant shall 'revise the form and design of the dormer extensions to hipped roof profile when viewed from the front or as otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority'. The first party appeal consists of the following grounds:

- The upward extension to the bungalow approved under Reg. Ref. SD15B/0044 provided the first floor space as existing but it does not allow for wardrobes or bunk beds due to the intersecting roof slope and in order to make the rooms habitable with more headroom, there is a need to 'square out' the roof with box dormers.
- The box dormers were already modified following a Request for Additional Information. The planning authority requested a more traditional design. Therefore the redesigned dormers were modified to be 'gabled dormers' morphing to box dormers at the rear while remaining below original ridge height and set back above from the eaves. Now the condition is more 'hipped dormers' despite the approval of the scheme.
- A more contemporary style of dormer roof is far more appropriate and more legible with the existing bungalow design
- There is precedence of contemporary dormers in suburban Dublin and in the immediate vicinity with Reg. Ref. SD20A/0217 on Esker Lane and SD21B/0001 in Ballydowd Grove Estate, which is also a gable fronted dwelling with flat roof dormers.

- Proposal as lodged complies with SDCC House Extension Design Guide (2025) as the dormers in the design guide are located to the side and not the to the front.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

The planning authority submitted a response confirming its decision and stating the issues raised in the appeal have been covered in the Chief Executive Order.

6.3. **Observations**

- None

6.4. **Further Responses**

- None

7.0 **Assessment**

- 7.1. I am satisfied that Condition 2 part (a) is the single issue in this appeal and I intend to limit my consideration to this matter. The grounds for appeal centre on precedence in the area for box dormers on roof slopes and the contemporary design being in compliance with the SDCC House Extension Design Guide (2025)
- 7.2. The principle of attic level conversions combined with lower floor extensions is acceptable and I agree with the planner's report that, following the redesign as part of the Additional Information Request reducing the bulk and scale and balcony of the original proposal, there would be no longer be overlooking or unacceptable loss of light to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties 5 and 7 Esker Lane. The concern appears to be the appearance from street level of the two box dormer extensions with one on a pitched roof slope and the other on the hipped 'side' roof slope.
- 7.3. The planning authority was satisfied with the principle of the side dormer extensions being visible from street level following the reduced massing as part of the AI response. The applicant attempted to slightly improve the appearance at street level by lessening the severity of the box shape. Item 1(c) of the Additional Information Request noted that properties in the area generally follow a traditional hipped or

pyramid shaped roof line and the applicant was requested to include in the re-design references to the 'more traditional design elements found within the immediate residential area'. Despite being of acceptable scale, the planning authority sought a more traditional hipped roof appearance by way of Condition 2(a).

- 7.4. The question then is whether the planning authority's requirement of a hipped roof variety of dormer extension is unreasonable.
- 7.5. The proposed dormer extensions are located to the sides of the roof slope. One of these sides is of a hipped roof variety. There is no style reference in the Housing Extension Guide (February 2025) for dormer extensions of this nature. The Extension Design Guide states that proposed dormer ridges ought to be set appropriately below the ridge line of the existing house, and as far back as possible from the eaves line, generally by three course tiles so as to create a balanced appearance. The revised design as part of the AI Request meets this criteria as confirmed by the planning authority but Condition 2(a) requests the consideration of a 'more traditional hipped roof profile when viewed from the front'.
- 7.6. The subject appeal argues that there is precedence for contemporary dormers on similar type properties in the area and includes some images of examples. However I note that the address and planning reference is omitted from some images and includes general suburban examples.
- 7.7. The appeal does reference two particular planning permissions in Ballydowd - Pebble Lodge cottage, Esker Lane (Reg. Ref. SD20A/0217), which has a front box dormer on a hipped roof and is not comparable with the subject appeal site and 12 Ballydowd Grove (Reg.Ref. SD21B/0001), which is more similar to the subject appeal site in that it is also a gable fronted bungalow dwelling with flat roof dormers on either side. I have reviewed both of these permissions as part of the assessment. However it is noted that 12 Ballydowd Grove has no side hipped roof like 6 Esker Lane.
- 7.8. An inspection of the site and surrounding Ballydowd area corroborates the appellant's assertion of there being precedents of box or flat roof dormer extensions on gable-fronted pitched roof properties in the area. It is clear that a particular typology exists in Ballydowd with several estates containing rows of triangular/ gable-fronted bungalow dwellings – similar to 6 and 7 Esker Lane but without the

hipped roof to the side. Some of these dwellings have built box dormer extensions on both or one side of the roof slope, altering the appearance of the original design to a noticeable but not substantial degree from street level. In all cases, the host roof slopes have no hipped design whereas 6 Esker Lane is heavily hipped on one side.

- 7.9. For 12 Ballydowd Grove (Reg. Ref. SD21B/0001), the applicant proposed box dormer extensions for both roof slopes of a gable-fronted dwelling. Similar to the application that is subject to this appeal, the planning authority also requested a reduction in the scale, width and height of the dormer structures to comply with the SDCC House Extension Design Guide - namely to locate dormer windows below the ridge of the roof and as far back as possible from the eaves line. The applicant subsequently made those changes. Having regard to the pattern of development in the area and the diminishing uniform style, it was considered that the extensions would not adversely impact on the visual amenity of the area. However, as mentioned, 12 Ballydowd Grove had no hipped profile in its original roof.
- 7.10. For 6 Ballydowd Grove (Reg. Ref. S00B/0635), permission was granted for an attic extension in the form of a box dormer facing onto the main road in order to allow sufficient space and headroom for 2 no. bedrooms. The planner's report states that 'in view of the established precedent in the estate for similar developments, it is considered that the proposal accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area'. As with 12 Ballydowd Grove, this precedent is only valid for roof slopes that are not hipped and so they would not apply to either 6 or 7 Esker Lane as neither property follow this form.
- 7.11. The planning authority has already found the general scale and massing of the dormer extensions to be acceptable having responded to the AI Request and complied with the Extension Design Guide in terms of setbacks. Having made the appropriate reductions, the dormer extensions would still appear incongruous and out of place without adaptation to the existing hipped roof profile.
- 7.12. Flat roof box dormers would be in line with the prevailing pattern of roof extensions for gable-fronted properties if 6 Esker Lane was identical to the properties in Ballydowd Grove. Applying this style to the subject dwelling, however, would make the roof extension appear out of place and Condition 2(a) has appropriately requested the proposal to follow the existing roof design.

- 7.13. It is agreed that the revised design has removed most of the harmful visual impacts that could have occurred in the original proposal and there would be no issue with regard to overlooking. It is also clear that there is no prescribed style for roof extensions of this type of property in the Development Plan or Extension Design Guide other than what has already been achieved as part of the AI response i.e. set back from the eaves, kept below the ridge line and proportionate to the main roof. However, it is reasonable to follow the form and design of the existing roof and this follow a more traditional style of dormer and the revised elevation drawings do not indicate that the dormer extensions follow the existing roof design.
- 7.14. The attachment of Condition 2(a) therefore accords with the residential zoning objectives, the policies and objectives of the Development Plan 2022-2028 and the South Dublin County Council House Extension Guide (2025).
- 7.15. I am therefore satisfied from this assessment that the proposed box dormer extensions as granted are acceptable in planning terms and there is no requirement for further alterations. Therefore Condition 2(a) of the planning permission should be retained.

8.0 AA Screening

- 8.1. I have considered the proposed domestic extension and alterations in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is located in a well-serviced urban settlement c. 4km from the nearest European sites Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC c.4km to the west of the site and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA c.12 km to the east
- 8.2. The proposed development comprises a new gate, garage conversion and ground floor extension to an existing bungalow in addition to dormer roof extensions and all associated works as per Section 2.0 of this report. 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:

- Nature of works
- Location in an established residential area
- Lack of connections to nearest European sites

8.4. 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 Recommendation

9.1. I recommend to ATTACH the subject condition

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

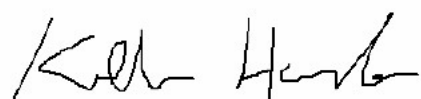
Having regard to the nature of the condition that is the subject of this appeal, the Board is satisfied that the determination by the Board of the relevant application as if it had been made to it in the first instance would not be warranted and, based on the reasons and considerations set out below, directs the said Council under subsection (1) of section 139 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to ATTACH condition number 2(a) and the reason therefor.

Having regard to the residential land use zoning for the site and the pattern of development in the area, it is considered that the dormer roof extensions would detract from the character of the dwelling and adjoining properties and would be visually discordant with properties in the area. The planning authority's Condition 2(a) requiring a revised form and design of the dormer extensions is, therefore, warranted.

11.0 Conditions

1.	<p>The development shall otherwise be retained and completed in strict accordance with the terms and conditions of Planning Permission Reg. Ref. SD24B/0355W This permission shall expire at the same time as Reg. Ref. SD24B/0355W.</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of proper planning and sustainable development</p>
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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.



Killian Harrington
Planning Inspector
30 May 2025

Appendix 1 - Form 1

EIA Pre-Screening

[EIAR not submitted]

An Bord Pleanála Case Reference	322165-25		
Proposed Development Summary	New gate, garage conversion and ground floor extension to existing bungalow. Rear extension with balcony, works to include a front sun patio and garden structure and home gym study and shed and all associated site works		
Development Address	6, Esker Lane, Ballydowd, Lucan, Co. Dublin K78 R5D3		
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (that is involving construction works, demolition, or interventions in the natural surroundings)		Yes	X
		No	
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?			
Yes		State the Class here.	Proceed to Q3.
No	X		Tick if relevant. No further action required
3. Does the proposed development equal or exceed any relevant THRESHOLD set out in the relevant Class?			
Yes	Tick/or leave blank	State the relevant threshold here for the Class of development.	EIA Mandatory EIAR required
No	Tick/or leave blank		Proceed to Q4
4. Is the proposed development below the relevant threshold for the Class of development [sub-threshold development]?			
Yes	Tick/or leave blank	State the relevant threshold here for the Class of development and indicate the size of the development relative to the threshold.	Preliminary examination required (Form 2)

5. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?		
No	Tick/or leave blank	Screening determination remains as above (Q1 to Q4)
Yes	Tick/or leave blank	Screening Determination required

Inspector: 

Date: 30 May 2025