



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-322715-25

Development

PROTECTED STRUCTURE:

Modifications to rooflights and all associated site works

Location

Gortnadrew, 9 Alma Road,
Monkstown, Blackrock, Dublin,
A94V4A3 (A Protected Structure)

Planning Authority

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County
Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

D25A/0211

Applicant(s)

Ms Nicola Mitchell

Type of Application

Permission

Planning Authority Decision

Refusal

Type of Appeal

First Party

Appellant(s)

Ms Nicola Mitchell

Observer(s)

None

Date of Site Inspection

01/09/2025

Inspector

Carol Smyth

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Form 2 - EIA Preliminary ExaminationError! Bookmark not defined.

Appendix 1 – Form 1: EIA Pre-Screening

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site has a stated area of 0.08 ha and is located within the administrative area of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. The site is positioned on the west side of Alma Road approximately 80 metres south of the junction with Seapoint Avenue. The street runs on a north-south axis and slopes down towards Seapoint Avenue.
- 1.2. Alma Road comprises a mix of period properties and more recently constructed detached, semi-detached and terrace dwellings.
- 1.3. The subject site contains a 3 storey over basement semi-detached red brick house, which is a Protected Structure. The dwelling is setback from the street with vehicular access and off-street car parking.
- 1.4. The site is bounded by similarly scaled residential property to the north and south and by the rear garden of a dwelling to the west which is accessed by Temple Crescent. The adjoining property No. 11 Alma Road is also a Protected Structure.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The modification of an existing velux rooflight on the northern roof pitch, into a dormer roof window, together with localised making good works. These works are an amendment to the previously approved application D24/0316.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council issued a notification of decision to Refuse Permission on the 9th May 2025, due to impacts on the roofscape of the Protected Structure. The reason for refusal is as follows:

1. The dwelling subject of this application, known as Gortnadrew, is listed on the Record of Protected Structures included in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028. Having assessed the proposed dormer which is to be located on the north pitch of the roof profile, it is considered that the proposed works

would erode and materially affect the character and appearance of the distinctive roofscape of the Protected Structure, which is an intrinsic feature of the protected structure. Accordingly, the proposed works are considered to detract from the character of the roofscape and if permitted, would set an undesirable precedent for similar modifications, which is contrary to Policy HER 8 of the County Development Plan 2022-2028. Therefore, to permit the proposed works would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development in the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The Planners report recommendation is consistent with the notification decision issued.

The report considered that the proposed dormer at the side/northern pitch of the existing roof would erode and materially affect the character and appearance of the roof of the protected structure and would set an unfavourable precedent. The proposal was deemed not in compliance with Section 9 of the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) or with the relevant policies and the provisions of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Drainage Report:

No objection

- Conservation Division Report:

Refusal recommended as the placement of a dormer on the side roof slope of the Protected Structure would visually detract from the profile and character of the roofscape and would be unsympathetic to the character of the building. The Conservation Division considered that the proposal did not comply with Policy Objective HER 8, Section 12.11.2.1 and Section 9 of The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011).

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

None Received.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None received.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. The following planning history relates to the appeal site:

4.1.1. DLRDCC Reg. Ref. D24A/0316

Permission granted for the construction of a rear facing roof dormer window, enlarged rooflight and relocation of bathroom ensuite at attic level, together with provision of new en-suite fittings and associated services alterations. External works to include landscaping works and associated services to front driveway and side passage of house, reinstatement of brick screen wall and wrought iron side gate, selected roof, chimney, rainwater goods and parapet repairs and localised repointing of brickwork.

4.1.2. DLRDCC Reg. Ref. D05A/1716

Permission granted for the installation of an automatic sliding gate using existing gates, the refurbishment of one gatepost and the reconstruction of the other.

4.2. The following planning history relates to the adjoining, No 11 Alma Road.

4.2.1. DLRDCC Reg. Ref. D24A/0955

Permission was granted for the restoration, refurbishment and extension of existing 3 storey over basement dwelling. Internal alterations and works, single storey extension to the rear and side at basement level and a rear facing dormer window.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. National Guidance

5.1.1. Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)

The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines provide a framework to ensure the protection, conservation and sensitive management of architectural heritage and provides advice and guidance on alterations and extensions in historic contexts.

5.2. Development Plan

- 5.2.1. The site is governed by the policy and objectives of the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028 (referred to hereafter as the Development Plan). The site is zoned 'A' with the objective to provide residential development and improve residential amenity while protecting existing residential amenities. Residential development is listed within the 'Permitted in Principle' category of this zoning objective.
- 5.2.2. The site is a Protected Structure and listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) Ref: 357. Policy Objective HER 8 of the Development Plan seeks to protect the character and special interest of Protected Structures against any works that would negatively impact their distinctive character and appearance.
- 5.2.3. Chapter 11 Heritage and Conservation includes specific objectives and guidance relating to the protection of the County's heritage under the headings of archaeological heritage, architectural heritage, and countywide heritage (which includes the DLR Heritage Plan).
- 5.2.4. Section 12.11.2.1 Works to a Protected Structure, provides guidance in relation to works to protected structures including extensions, alterations and change of use etc.
- 5.2.5. Section 12.3.7.1 and Section 12.3.7.1(iv) Alterations at Roof/Attic Level of the Development Plan provides development standards for extensions and alterations to dwellings.

5.3. Natural Heritage Designations

The site is situated approximately 190 metres from the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and South Dublin Bay SAC, and approximately 197 metres from the South Dublin Bay proposed NHA.

5.4. EIA Screening

See EIA Pre-Screening Form 1 in Appendix 1. The development is not a class of development requiring mandatory or sub-threshold EIA and therefore there is no EIA Screening requirement.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

There is a first party appeal against the Planning Authorities decision to refuse permission. A Landscape/Townscape and Visual Assessment prepared by Murray and Associates and Verified Views prepared by 3D Design Bureau has been submitted by the first party in support of the grounds of appeal.

The following provides a summary of the content of the appeal:

- The decision by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council was made without the benefit of technical studies that now accompany the appeal.
- The introduction of a dormer window in the location proposed would not generate a significant alteration in the character and appearance of the distinctive roofscape of the protected structure.
- The proposed dormer would not inherently detract from the special character of the uniquely profiled roof or cause a direct visual change of the protected structure from the public realm.
- There is a local precedent, in No. 13 Alma Road (two houses to the west of No. 9 Alma Road) where a similar roof window has been inserted, and which is visible from the rear garden of No. 9 Alma Road (the subject site).

6.2. Planning Authority Response

The Planning Authority acknowledges the submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and notes that the proposal has not been changed or been altered. The grounds of appeal do not raise any new matter which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority would justify a change in attitude to the proposed development.

The Conservation Department further refers to the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines (2011). The Conservation Department further highlights Section 6.8.1 of the Guidelines which refer to modern living standards and extension to Protected Structures. The Conservation Officer highlights that the proposed dormer window is not essential to increase daylight to the attic bedroom which comprises a rear facing dormer window and roof light granted under DLRDCC Rag. Ref. D24A/0316 and that the existing roof light provides sufficient daylight.

6.3. Observations

None on file.

7.0 Assessment

Having examined the applications details and all other documentation on file, including all the submissions received in relation to the appeal, the report/s of the local authority, and having inspected the site, and having regard to the relevant local/regional/national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal are:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on the Character of the Protected Structure
- Local Precedent

7.1. Principle of Development

- 7.1.1. The appeal site, Gortnadrew, No. 9 Alma Road, is a Protected Structure and is wholly contained within an area zoned 'A' the objective to provide residential development and improve residential amenity while protecting existing residential amenities. Residential development is permitted in principle under this zoning

objective. Residential extensions and alterations to an existing dwelling for residential purposes is considered a permissible use.

- 7.1.2. I am satisfied that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable subject to site specifics and policies in relation to the impact of the proposed development on the character of the protected status of the building. This matter is discussed below.

7.2. Impact on the Character of the Protected Structure

- 7.2.1. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council issued a notification to refuse permission for a dormer window on the north facing, side roof plane of the semi-detached dwelling, which is a Protected Structure. The proposed dormer window is setback circa 2.4 metres from the eaves of the dwelling and is set down circa 1.2 metres from the ridge line (measured along the roof slope). The reason for refusal related to the impacts of the proposed development on the Protected Structure, which would materially affect the character and appearance of the distinctive roofscape. The proposal was also deemed contrary to Policy HER8 of the Development Plan.
- 7.2.2. The Planning Authority considered that the proposed dormer window was positioned on a roof plane which is not a lesser roof plane. The Planning Authority's Conservation Officer considered the roof profile to be a distinctive feature that contributes significantly to the architectural merit of the Protected Structure and that the placement of the dormer on the side roof slope would detract from the profile and character of the roofscape.
- 7.2.3. The first party grounds of appeal consider that the proposed dormer window on the side roof plane would not significantly alter the character or appearance of the roofscape of the Protected Structure. It is further contended that the proposed dormer window would not undermine the special character of the roof profile or alter the appearance of the Protected Structure from the public realm.
- 7.2.4. In terms of policy and guidance, Policy Objective HER8 of the Development Plan seeks to protect buildings listed on the Record of Protected Structures from any works that would negatively impact their special character and appearance and also seeks to ensure that any development proposals to Protected Structures have regard to the 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities'. The 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (2011)', considers that new rooflights and dormers on minor or concealed slopes may be

acceptable in some cases. Furthermore, the Guidelines require that roofs of Protected Structures should be preserved in their original form and not undergo significant alterations and that the cumulative effects of minor additions can compromise the special interest of a Protected Structure.

- 7.2.5. The Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) submitted to the Planning Authority in conjunction with the planning application considers that the proposed dormer window constitutes a modest change to the Protected Structure, which would not negatively impact on the architectural character of the house. The AHIA also states that the proposed dormer positioned between 2 no. chimney stacks combined with the elevated status of the building and the descending nature of the street will be almost unnoticeable from the adjoining public realm.
- 7.2.6. I note the contents of the submitted Landscape/Townscape and Visual Assessment and Verified Views which contains 2 no. verified views of the development which was submitted with the first party appeal documentation and was therefore not previously considered by the Planning Authority. I acknowledge the comments from the Planning Authority that the proposal has not been changed or been altered and that the proposed dormer window is not essential to increase daylight to the attic bedroom.
- 7.2.7. Verified View No. 1 is taken from a viewpoint to the north of the subject site, close to the junction with Seapoint Avenue, on the east side of Alma Road, looking up the sloped street towards the subject site. Table 1 of the accompanying Landscape/Townscape and Visual Assessment indicates that the predicted effects of the proposed dormer window on the character of the area from this location as 'negligible to slight, neutral, long term'.
- 7.2.8. Verified View No.2 is taken from the east side of Alma Road from a viewpoint directly opposite the subject site. Table 1 of the accompanying Landscape/Townscape and Visual Assessment indicates that the predicted effects of the proposed dormer window on the character of the area from this location is also 'negligible to slight, neutral, long term'.
- 7.2.9. After visiting the site and having regard to the contents of the AHIA, the documents submitted with the first party appeal including the Landscape/Townscape and Visual

Assessment, and Verified Views, I am not satisfied that the dormer will not have a negative impact on the Protected Structure.

- 7.2.10. The proposed dormer window on the side roof plane will be visible from the street as evidenced in the submitted Verified Views and submitted elevations.
- 7.2.11. I further note that the proposed dormer window is a secondary window to an attic bedroom which benefits from a rear facing dormer window granted under DLRDCC Reg. Ref. D24A/0316 and an existing roof light. I am not satisfied that the proposed window is essential to provide daylight to the bedroom corridor, given the area is lit by an existing roof light.
- 7.2.12. I consider that the proposed dormer is positioned on a roof plane which is not a minor roof plane and that the roofscape of the subject dwelling forms an intrinsic part of the character the Protected Structure. I consider that the proposed dormer window would negatively impact on the character of the roofscape and is contrary to policy HER 8 which seeks to protect buildings listed on the Record of Protected Structures from any works that would negatively impact their special character and appearance.
- 7.2.13. I further note that the subject dwelling is one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings. The adjoining dwelling, No. 11 Alma Road, is also a Protected Structure. The submitted AHIA outlines that the pair of dwelling were originally one house which was subsequently subdivided to create 2 no. dwellings. I therefore consider that the pair of Protected Structures form a 'set piece' on the street. I consider that the proposed dormer represents an alteration of one of a pair of semi-detached Protected Structures which would be visible from the public realm, and which would be harmful to the overall visual appearance, thereby having a negative visual impact on the adjoining Protected Structure and a significant effect on the character and setting.
- 7.2.14. I consider that the proposed dormer window on the side roof plane would constitute a significant alteration in the character and appearance of the distinctive roofscape of the Protected Structure which would adversely affect the character of this Protected Structure. The proposal also represents the unilateral alteration of one of a pair of semi-detached Protected Structures which would be visible from the street and would negatively impact on the composition of the pair of Protected Structures. I therefore consider that permission should be refused.

7.3. Local Precedent

- 7.3.1. First party grounds of appeal refer to a dormer window on the north facing side roof plane of a nearby property to the south, at No. 13 Alma Road, which the first party considers to be a precedent for the proposed development.
- 7.3.2. I note that there is no recent relevant planning history pertaining to No. 13 Alma Road. Notwithstanding, the existing dormer on the side roof profile of No. 13 Alma Road has the appearance of a much older construction. The dormer at No 13 Alma Road is fully contained between 2 no. chimney stacks, aligns with the eaves of the building and largely conforms to the architectural language of No.13 Alma Road.
- 7.3.3. Notwithstanding, I do not consider it a comparable example in terms of proportion, architectural language or position of the dormer on the roof plane. Furthermore, I consider it unlikely that such development would be granted permission presently, having regard to the policies contained within the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028. I therefore do not consider the existing dormer at No. 13 Alma Road to be a planning precedent in relation to the current proposal.

8.0 AA Screening

- 8.1. The proposed development comprises alterations to a domestic dwelling in an established suburban area. No nature conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 8.2. Having considered the nature, small scale and location of the project, and taking account of the screening determination of the planning authority, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any European Site.
- 8.3. 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. Appropriate Assessment, therefore, is not required.

9.0 Water Framework Directive

- 9.1.1. The subject site is located in an established residential area which adjoins the Irish Sea – Dublin Bay IE_EA_090_0000 and Brewery Stream IE_EA_09B130400. The subject site is located c. 188 metres to the southwest of Dublin Bay and c.526 metres to the west of Brewery Stream.
- 9.1.2. The proposed development comprises of alterations of an existing dwelling.
- 9.1.3. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 9.1.4. I have assessed the proposed alterations of the dwelling and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the small scale and nature and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.
- 9.1.5. Conclusion

I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

10.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission be REFUSED for the development.

11.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 1. Having regard to the protected structure status of this building, it is considered that the proposed dormer window on the north facing side roof plane, by virtue of the level of intervention on the roofscape of the dwelling, would have a detrimental and irreversible impact on the essential qualities of this structure,

thereby materially affecting its character. The proposed development represents the unilateral alteration of one of a pair of semi-detached Protected Structures, which would be visible from the public realm, thereby materially altering the composition of the pair of Protected Structures. The proposal would adversely affect the character and setting of the Protected Structure and would, therefore, seriously injure the visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to Policy Objective HER 8 of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028 and 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.

Carol Smyth
Planning Inspector

11th September 2025

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	322715-25
Proposed Development Summary	The modification of an existing velux rooflight on the northern roof pitch, into a dormer roof window, together with localised making good works. These works are an amendment to the previously approved application D24/0316.
Development Address	Gortnadrew, 9 Alma Road, Monkstown, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
	In all cases check box /or leave blank
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	State the Class here
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	State the Class and state the relevant threshold
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	State the Class and state the relevant threshold

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____