



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ACP-323415-25

Development	Retention of extension and permission to remove side wall, apply a brick finish, and all associated site works to front of existing house.
Location	79 Park Drive Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	FW25A/0255E
Applicant(s)	Ruth Mc Evett
Type of Application	Permission and Retention
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Ruth Mc Evett
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	20 th November 2025.
Inspector	Emma Gosnell

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The appeal site, which has a stated area of 0.157ha, is located at 79 Park Drive Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15.
- 1.2. The site is adjoined to the north-east and south-west by No's 81 and 77 Park Drive Avenue respectively and it backs onto the rear garden of No. 20 Park Avenue to the south-east.
- 1.3. The site comprises of a 2-storey mid-terrace dwelling (c. 72sq.m) with a large single storey front extension (with a stated area of 7sq.m) which features a flat roof and smooth painted render facade. The as-built design of dwellings in the wider Park Drive Avenue estate is characterised by pitched roofs, red brick facades and pillared porches (which have a front-facing pitched roof profile).
- 1.4. The property is not a Protected Structure, is not listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and it does not come within an Architectural Conservation Area.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The development for which retention permission is sought comprises of:
 - (i) retention of single storey extension to front of house (previous planning reference no. FW22A/0314) which was constructed without valid commencement notice.
- 2.2. The development for which permission is sought comprises of:
 - (i) removal of side wall (as per planning condition) which houses ESB and gas boxes.
 - (ii) application of a brick finish to front of single storey extension to match existing appearance and all associated site works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Permission and Retention Permission refused on 28/07/2025 for 1 no. reason:

"1. The works seeking retention permission and permission significantly break an established building line of the terrace of houses and are incongruous with the character of the area, by reason of their scale and bulk. To permit the proposed development would materially contravene Policy SPQHP41 and Objective SPQHO45

of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, would set an inappropriate precedent for other similar development and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area”.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

1 no. planning report (dated 28/07/2025) formed the basis of the planning authority's (PA) assessment. Key points raised are:

- *Principle of Development* – permissible under site's 'RS – Residential' zoning.
- *Planning History* – front extension does not have the benefit of planning permission and is subject to ongoing enforcement action.
- *Design* – scale, bulk and material finish of extension are unacceptable (as per PA decisions FW22A/0314 (condition no.2) & FW23A/0287 (ABP-318560-23)) refusal. **Refusal recommended on this basis.**
- *Visual Amenity* – scale, height and extent of projection are excessive and would have a negative visual impact on the streetscape contrary to Section 14.10.2.1, Policy SPQHP41 and Objective SPHO45 of FDP. **Refusal recommended on this basis.**
- *Access/ Parking* – no access or parking issues arise.
- *Servicing* – no issues in respect to drainage, water supply or flood risk arise.

The report concluded by recommending a refusal of permission as detailed in Section 3.1 of this report.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Water Services Department (17/07/2025) – no objection subject to conditions.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

No submissions on file.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None received.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Appeal Site

P.A. Ref. FW23A/0287 & ABP-318560-23 – application for retention of attic conversion with dormer projecting window to rear and 2 no. velux windows to front of house; also single storey kitchen extension to rear, and single storey extension to front of house granted under planning reference no. FW22A/0314, refused by PA and on appeal by ABP on 17/06/2024 for a single reason: “1. *The front extension seeking retention permission significantly breaks an established building line of the terrace of house and is incongruous in terms of the character of the area, by reason of its scale, bulk, and material finish. To permit the front extension which is seeking retention permission would contravene Policy SPQHP41 and Objective SPH045 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*”

Enforcement Ref. 23/183B – alleged unauthorised front extension.

P.A. Ref. FW22A/0314 – application for attic conversion with dormer projecting window to rear of house, also single storey kitchen extension to rear, single storey extension proposed to front of house for new porch facility and enlargement of lounge space and all associated works, granted by PA on 28/03/2023 subject to 8 no. conditions including: “2. *The proposed front extension shall be omitted. REASON: In the interest of residential and visual amenity*”.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

The Fingal Development Plan (FDP) 2023 – 2029 applies.

Zoning

Section 13.5 (Zoning Objectives, Vision and Use Classes): The appeal site is zoned ‘RS – Residential’ with the objective to ‘Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity’. Residential (and ancillary) development is permitted in principle under the ‘RS’ zoning objective.

Extensions

Section 3.5.13.1 (Residential Extensions).

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.

Section 14.10.2.1 (Front Extensions): Porch extensions, other than those deemed to be exempted development, should be of appropriate design and scale relative to the design of the original house. The scale, height, and projection from the front building line of the dwelling should not be excessive so as to dominate the front elevation of the dwelling. The porch should complement the existing dwelling, and a contemporary design approach may be considered. Front extensions will be assessed in terms of their scale, design, and impact on visual and residential amenities. Significant breaks in the building line should be resisted unless the design can demonstrate to the Planning Authority that the proposal will not impact on the visual or residential amenities of directly adjoining dwellings. Sufficient depth to the forecourt is required to ensure off-street car parking is not impacted.

6.0 Natural Heritage Designations

The appeal site is not located within or adjoining any designated site.

The nearest European Sites in close proximity to the appeal site are as follows:

- c. 8.5km from Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC (Site Code 001398).
- c. 9km from South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (Site Code 004024).
- c. 11km from South Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000210).
- c. 12km from North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000206).
- c. 12km from North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006).

The nearest Natural Heritage Areas in close proximity to the appeal site are as follows:

- c. 800m from Royal Canal pNHA (Site Code 002103).
- c. 1km from Liffey Valley pNHA (Site Code 000128).

7.0 EIA Screening

The proposed development and development to be retained have been subject to preliminary examination for environmental impact assessment (refer to Form 1 in Appendix 1 of this report). Having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development and development to be retained and the types and characteristics of potential impacts, it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. The proposed development and development to be retained, therefore, do not trigger a requirement for environmental impact assessment screening and an EIAR is not required.

8.0 Water Framework Directive Screening

I have concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development and development to be retained 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 (refer to form in Appendix 2 for details).

9.0 The Appeal

9.1. Grounds of Appeal

A first party appeal submission was received (18/08/2025) and seeks to address the PA's reason for refusal. The grounds of appeal (GOA) can be summarised as follows:

- Appellant has sought to address the PA's concerns regarding the design and visual impact of the front extension by making changes to the materiality of same (replacing current render finish with brickwork).
- Appellant does not agree with PA's refusal reason (outlined in Section 3.1) on the basis that there are 'multiple examples' of front extensions which break the building line elsewhere in Fingal.
- Extension is needed to provide additional living space for a growing family.
- Neighbouring property owners have not raised an issue with the extension.

- PA have provided no direction as to what kind of front extension would be acceptable.

The GOA are accompanied by the following drawings:

- Site Location Map and Site Layout Plan.
- Proposed Plans.
- Existing and Proposed Streetscape and Front View.
- Existing and Proposed Front and Rear View.

A number of photographs of existing front porches and front extensions are provided in the body of the GOA and are relied on by the appellant as precedents. Whilst these appear to be of properties within the overall Park Drive residential estate, no details are provided in relation to the exact location or planning status of these developments.

9.2. Planning Authority Response

Response received 17/09/2025 notes the changes made to the materiality of the front extension but note that its excessive scale and bulk have not been addressed. The PA also note the example images of other single-storey front extensions provided in the GOA and the corresponding lack of information on the exact location or planning references/ status of same. The PA reiterate their refusal reasoning and seek that the Commission uphold their decision.

In the event that their decision is overturned by the Commission, the PA seek that, where relevant, conditions relating to the payment of a financial contribution and/or special development contribution under FCC's Section 48 Development Contribution Scheme be applied.

9.3. Observations

None received.

9.4. Further Responses

None received.

10.0 Assessment

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

- Principle of Development
- Front Extension
- Other Works

10.1. Principle of Development

- 10.1.1. The appeal site is zoned 'RS – Residential' with the objective to 'Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity'. Having regard to the nature of the uses permissible under the RS zoning, I consider the proposal for the retention of the front extension and for permission to provide a brick finish to same and to remove a side wall and to undertake associated site works to be acceptable in principle, subject to the detailed considerations below.

10.2. Front Extension

Background

- 10.2.1. The applicant was previously granted planning permission for the extension and alteration of the existing dwelling under P.A. Ref. FW22A/0314 (incl. attic conversion with dormer projecting window to rear of house, single storey kitchen extension to rear, single storey extension proposed to front of house for new porch facility and enlargement of lounge space, and all associated works). Condition No. 2 of this permission required the single storey front extension to be omitted.
- 10.2.2. The applicant subsequently carried out the extensions and alterations to the dwelling permitted under P.A. Ref. FW22A/0314 and they also constructed the single storey extension at the front of the dwelling (which was required to be omitted). As such, the existing front extension does not appear to have the benefit of planning permission.
- 10.2.3. Following enforcement action under P.A. Ref. 23/183B, the applicant applied for retention permission for their front extension under P.A. Ref. FW23A/0287 (ABP-318560-23) and was refused permission on the basis of its scale, bulk and material

finish giving rise to a contravention of Policy SPQHP41 and Objective SPHO45 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

- 10.2.4. The current proposal is for the retention of the same front extension and for permission to change its materiality from render to brick and to remove a side wall (party boundary) which houses the property's ESB and gas boxes. The PA have refused permission for same as they consider that the front extension would significantly break the terrace's established building line and give rise to visual incongruity on account of its scale and bulk, which would materially contravene Policy SPQHP41 and Objective SPQHO45.
- 10.2.5. The GOA do not consider the proposal has a negative impact on the character of the area and they refer to other front extension/ porch design precedents in vicinity which they regard as being similar.

Design and Materiality

- 10.2.6. Permission is sought to retain a single-storey front extension which comprises of an enclosed porch and extended living area and incorporates the property's front door and living room window. The full-width extension is c. 5.27m wide, 2.77m high (sitting just below the property's first floor windows) and it projects c. 1.8m from the terrace's common front building line.
- 10.2.7. I note that no changes have been made to the design or massing of the extension since the preceding planning application and refusal of permission by ABP.
- 10.2.8. FCC's policy guidance in respect to front extensions and porch extensions is set out under Section 14.10.2.1 (Front Extensions), Policy SPQHP41 and Objective SPQHO45 and requires extensions to be of an appropriate scale and design and respectful of the area. It further states that the scale, height, and projection from the front building line of the dwelling should not be so excessive as to dominate the front elevation of the dwelling (with significant breaks in the building line to be avoided) and it requires an assessment of the impact of the proposal on visual amenities and the residential amenities of directly adjoining dwellings.
- 10.2.9. A series of photographs of other front extensions in the area have been provided as part of the GOA (with no details provided as to their exact locations or planning status). These show a full-width single storey flat roofed front extension; a bay window front

extension; a pitched-roof porch extension; and, a comparatively larger square plan front extension with a flat roof. By including same, the appellant seeks to demonstrate that there is local precedent for front extensions and porch extensions breaking established front building lines. I note that one of the images submitted appears to relate to No. 59 Park Drive Avenue and that the front porch on that property does not appear to have the benefit of planning permission. Another appears to be of No. 139 Park Drive Avenue and an issue arises as to the availability of contemporary planning application data in respect to that property. I was not able to ascertain the location of the full-width single storey front extension within the estate. Notwithstanding, I note that all appeal cases are assessed and determined on their own merits having regard to the sensitivity of the receiving environment and the specifics of the proposed development.

10.2.10. Having visited the site and its surrounds and having reviewed the information on file, I consider that the design and scale of the existing front extension, which is full-width with a flat roof, is significantly at odds with the design character and architectural form of the main dwelling and neighbouring terraced properties which still feature their original red brick facades, pillared porches and as-built elevational proportions. I also consider that its scale, placement and extent of projection from the terrace's common front building line is such that it gives rise to negative impacts on residential amenity, by reason of overbearance and visual intrusion, and to visual domination of the property's front elevation. This is clear in both close range and longer-range views (i.e. extension is visible to those approaching this part of the estate along the access road to the north-west of terrace) which illustrate the extension's negative impact on the visual amenity of the streetscape of Park Drive Avenue by reason of visual incongruity.

10.2.11. The applicant seeks permission to make a change to the materiality of the front extension where the existing smooth painted render (currently dark grey) would be replaced with buff brick to better harmonise with the materiality of the property's main front elevation. Whilst I consider that this change in materiality would go some way toward lessening the extension's current visibility and visual incongruity as illustrated in my site inspection photos and the Streetscape Views drawing submitted with the GOA, given the nature and extent of the concerns outlined above in respect to the extension's overall design, scale and negative impact on the design character and

visual amenity of streetscape, I do not consider that the proposed change to the material character of the extension would be sufficient to mitigate these impacts.

10.2.12. In light of the foregoing, I am not satisfied that the extension (as existing or as proposed) complies with Section 14.10.2.1 (Front Extensions), Policy SPQHP41 or Objective SPQHO45 of the FDP and I recommend to the Commission that retention permission for the front extension and permission for the proposed change in its materiality are refused on this basis.

10.3. Other Works

10.3.1. The applicant also seeks permission for a reduction in the height of an existing front party boundary wall shared with No. 81 Park Drive Avenue from c. 1.8m to 0.9m. This wall currently accommodates the applicant's ESB and gas boxes.

10.3.2. The description of development applied for implies that alterations to this wall were previously granted and/ or conditioned under P.A. Ref. FW22A/0314 but I can find no reference to same on the submitted plans or particulars or in the conditions attached to the PA's grant of permission.

10.3.3. I note that no assessment of this element of the applicant's proposal was carried out by the PA. Notwithstanding, whilst I have no issue in principle with the proposed alteration to the height of the party wall, there are no details on file in respect to how such works would impact on the in-situ electric and gas boxes or evidence of consent for the works from the adjoining property owner has also not been submitted. On this basis, I consider that there is insufficient information on this element of the proposal before the Commission to allow a positive decision to be made on same.

11.0 AA Screening

11.1. In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development and development to be retained individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on European Sites, specifically Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC (Site Code 001398), South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (Site Code 004024), South Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000210), North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000206) and North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006), in view of these sites' Conservation

Objectives, and Appropriate Assessment (and submission of an NIS) is not therefore required.

11.2. This determination is based on:

- The relatively minor nature of the proposed development and development to be retained.
- The location-distance from the nearest European Site and lack of connections.
- Taking into account the appropriate assessment screening undertaken by PA.

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

11.4. Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

12.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission and retention permission be REFUSED for the reasons and considerations set out below.

13.0 Reasons and Considerations

1. The extension which is proposed to be retained significantly breaks the established front building line of the terrace of houses at this location and is incongruous in terms of the character of the area, by reason of its scale and bulk. The proposed development to be retained would contravene Section 14.10.2.1, Policy SPQHP41 and Objective SPQHO45 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 and would therefore be contrary to 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.

Emma Gosnell

Planning Inspector

24th November 2025

Appendix 1

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ACP-323415-25
Proposed Development Summary	Retention of extension and permission to remove side wall and apply a brick finish and all associated site works.
Development Address	79 Park Drive Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15
	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2. <input 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.	
<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 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	
<input checked="" 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)	Part 2, Class 10(b)(iv) - Urban development – 10 hectares (built-up area). Site is c. 0.157 ha.

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:** _____

Appendix 2 – AA Screening Determination

Screening the need for Appropriate Assessment: Screening Determination (Stage 1, Article 6(3) of Habitats Directive)

I have considered the proposal for the retention of extension and for permission for associated site works at 79 Park Drive Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15 in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The subject site is located:

- c. 8.5km from Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC (Site Code 001398)
- c. 9km from South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (Site Code 004024)
- c. 11km from South Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000210)
- c. 12km from North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000206)
- c. 12km from North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006).

No nature conservation concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

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:

- Small scale nature of retention works/ proposed development.
- Location-distance from nearest European site and lack of connections.
- Taking into account screening report/ determination by PA.

I conclude, on the basis of objective information, that the development to be retained 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.

Appendix 3

Screening the need for Water Framework Directive Assessment Determination

The appeal site is located at 79 Park Drive Avenue, Castleknock, Dublin 15.

The Royal Canal (Royal Canal Main Line (Liffey and Dublin Bay) which is at Good WFD Status) is located c. 800m to the north of the appeal site whilst the River Liffey (LIFFEY_180 which is at Poor WFD Status) is located c. 1.5km to its south (with a tributary of same being located c. 600m to the west on the opposite side of the M50).

The proposal comprises of the retention of an extension and permission for related works works – see Section 2.0 of Inspector's Report for further details.

No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

I have assessed the proposal for permission and retention permission (described above) on this residential site at 79 Park Drive Avenue, Castleknock and I have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface and ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration.

Having considered the nature, scale 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.

The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The de-minimus small scale nature and scale of the proposal.
- The location-distance from nearest water bodies, intervening land use and/ or lack of hydrological connections.

Conclusion

I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the development to be retained 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.