



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-500181-DR

Development	Retention of change of use from bakery to residential, permission for roof alterations, both with associated works.
Location	59, Main Street, Blackrock, Dublin, A94R6E5
Planning Authority	Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	D25A/0615/WEB
Applicant(s)	Michael McWeeney
Type of Application	Retention
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Retention
Type of Appeal	First Party Normal Planning Appeal
Appellant(s)	Michael McWeeney
Observer(s)	
Date of Site Inspection	3rd February 2026
Inspector	Suzanne Kehely

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. No.59 Main Street Blackrock is a Victorian mid terrace redbrick two bay house on the south side of the street formerly known as Newtown Avenue and is an extension of the village core main street to the west. It is part of a predominantly commercial triangular block formed by the Main Street (formerly Newtown Avenue) to the north and Temple Road to the south which meet at a point at the junction with Rock Hill/ Main street and Carysfort Avenue to the west. Church Path connects these two roads at the eastern end of block.
- 1.2. The house plot is small and irregular in shape with a 5.9m frontage and narrows to around 2m to the rear over a depth of 10m. It is primarily a residence with a ground floor reception/kitchen area which has been opened up to include the former hall into a single space. It has been extended from the original ground floor of the house into the triangular yard to the rear where a small outhouse/shed formerly stood.
- 1.3. There is an ensuite bedroom at first floor level and c. 7.5 sq.m. terrace to the rear over the ground level kitchen. At 2nd floor/attic level there is a storage/utility area in place of a former bathroom and there is a small balcony off to the rear. This level has been extended by way of a dormer window spanning the width of the plot and beyond the hip ridge to the side. This dormer is the subject of the appeal. A spiral stairs provides access to the first floor from ground level, while a capsule lift provides access to all levels.
- 1.4. My photographs include views from the street and from the rear attic balcony in addition to internal photographs.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. Permission is sought for retention of alterations to the premises at no.59 as part of its refurbishment as a single dwelling and provision of habitable accommodation and ancillary storage for the entire property. The documentation explains the history of the premises as a residential use with ancillary bakery which ceased on the bakers' retirement while she continued to reside in her family home.

- 2.2. The submitted floor plans include the layout prior to the refurbishment work: The ground floor comprising a bakery to the front and connected to the kitchen to rear (in the order of 6-8sq.m respectively) and hallway with stairwell to attic level, two bedrooms at first floor level and a bathroom at attic level.
- 2.3. Permission is specifically sought to
- change the use of the former ground floor bakery to residential use (16 sq.m.)
 - Retention of ground floor rear extension and permission for amendments to the ground floor extension to provide a small open yard for external bin storage.
 - Retention of terrace at first floor level and amendments to provide for yard below.
- 2.4. The application is accompanied by an Architectural Heritage Assessment prepared by Cathal Crimmins, Grade 1 Conservation Architect.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

By Order dated 30th September 2025, the Planning authority issued notification of decision refuse permission for the stated reason:

The development to be retained and additional works proposed which encompasses a range of modifications including rear extensions and dormer to an original building within Blackrock cACA is considered contrary to section 11.4.2.6 Policy Objective HER18 Development within a Candidate Architectural Conservation Area, Section 11.4.3.2 Policy objective HER20 Buildings of Vernacular and Heritage Interest and section 11.4.3.3 Policy Objective HER21 Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Buildings, Estates, Features of the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028 as it is considered that the alterations would compromise the character of the building. Furthermore, the dormer window /roof extension does not accord with section 12.3.7.1 (iv) Alterations at Roof/Attic Level of the development plan by reason of the scale of the dormer on the rear slope. Accordingly, to permit the retention of the proposed development would be contrary to the aforementioned polices and to the proper planning sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Report: The planning authority notes the clarification of the use of the building and in particular the ceasing of commercial use in the 16 sqm. at ground floor since 1987 and is satisfied with the status of the premises as a residential use in this District Centre zone where residential development is acceptable. Furthermore, the pattern of ground floor use is noted and the proposed is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the vibrancy of the street. In terms of residential amenities, the 7.5sq.m. terrace and bin store to the rear are considered acceptable.

The primary issue of concern relates to the alteration at roof level. This is primarily in relation to the dormer scale and extent and also the balcony at this level. The concerns of the conservation officer are reiterated, and this is the basis for refusal of permission.

The attic level is noted to be substandard in terms of floor to ceiling height at 2.06m and while the use as a storage/laundry area is acknowledged, there is concern that the balcony would encourage a bedroom use. The balcony should be omitted to prevent this use

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Conservation Office: The main area of concern is the modified roof profile and dormer extension which can be partially viewed from the street. We consider that these alterations would compromise the character of the building and would be contrary to Policy Objectives HER20 and HER21 and would set a poor precedent for adjoining buildings in the cACA. The dormer is also considered to be contrary to Section 12.3.7 (iv) Alterations at Roof/Attic Level (referenced above) and the inclusion of slate cladding to conceal the dormer does not mitigate the impact of the structure on the roofscape. The development to be retained including the modified roof profile and dormer extension to the mid-19th century structure within Blackrock Village cACA is not considered to be sympathetic to the original character of the building and therefore would be contrary to Policy Objectives HER18, HER 20 and HER21 and Section 12.3.7 (iv) Alterations at Roof/Attic Level.

Recommendation: The development to be retained including the modified roof profile and dormer extension to the mid-19th century structure within Blackrock Village cACA is not considered to be sympathetic to the original character of the building and would be contrary to the development plan objectives - as cited.

EHO: No comment

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

No submissions

4.0 Planning History

D25A/0074 refers to refusal of permission for alterations to no.59 for two reasons. The first is similar to the subject case relating to alterations of roof profile in a cACA and the second reason relates to unauthorised use and change of use from retail to residential considered contrary to retail objectives RET 6 and 11 in terms of loss off retail in a district area zoned DC. An invalid appeal was lodged. (file attached)

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Ministerial Guidelines - Architectural Heritage Guidelines to planning authorities (2011)

- 5.1.1. Section 3.7 of the Architectural Heritage Protection guidelines (2004, 2011) sets out criteria with respect to Development Control in Architectural Conservation Areas.
- 5.1.2. Section 3.10 sets out criteria for Assessing Proposals within an Architectural Conservation Area. In relation to retention it states: Proposals for retention permission in an ACA should be considered as any other application. Applications for the retention of a development that conflicts with any policies for the area or that would set an undesirable precedent might be made acceptable by imposition of conditions or by requiring the removal and/or replacement of certain elements or details. In such cases the applicant could be asked to submit a visual impact assessment or to revise the proposal in full or with regard to specific details. If it is

decided to refuse the retention of significant replacement elements such as windows or doors, it is important that enforcement action be undertaken.

5.2. **Legislative provision for Architectural Conservation Areas**

- 5.2.1. Section 81 of the PDA2000 provides for the designation of an ACA in order to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights.

5.3. **Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028**

- 5.3.1. The site is located in a District Centre zone where it is an objective 'To protect, provide for and/or improve mixed-use district centre facilities' and where residential use is permitted in principle. In relation to Blackrock District Centre, the overall strategy is 'To support the ongoing redevelopment of the Blackrock and Frascati Shopping Centres and the consolidation of Blackrock Main Street as a mixed-use centre in accordance with an approved Local Area Plan. Any retail expansion should be limited and proportionate to the current percentage share of the overall net retail floorspace in the core retail area, as indicated in the Local Area Plan.'

- 5.3.2. It is within a candidate ACA as listed in Appendix 4 of the written statement. Relevant objectives for Built Heritage including ACAs generally are set out in chapter 11. Relevant objectives include:

- Policy Objective HER18: Development within a Candidate Architectural Conservation Area: It is a Policy Objective that development proposals within a candidate Architectural Conservation Area will be assessed having regard to the impact on the character of the area in which it is to be placed.

All proposals for new development should preserve or enhance the established character of the buildings and streetscape.

- Policy Objective HER20: Buildings of Vernacular and Heritage Interest: It is a Policy Objective to:
 - i. Retain, where appropriate, and encourage the rehabilitation and suitable reuse of existing older buildings/structures/features which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and streetscape

in preference to their demolition and redevelopment and to preserve surviving shop and pub fronts of special historical or architectural interest including signage and associated features.

- ii. Encourage the retention and/or reinstatement of original fabric of our historic building stock such as windows, doors, roof coverings, shopfronts, pub fronts and other significant features.
- iii. Ensure that appropriate materials be used to carry out any repairs to the historic fabric

- Policy Objective HER21: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Buildings, Estates and Features: It is a Policy Objective to:

- i. Encourage the appropriate development of exemplar nineteenth and twentieth century buildings, and estates to ensure their character is not compromised.
- ii. Encourage the retention and reinstatement of features that contribute to the character of exemplar nineteenth and twentieth century buildings, and estates such as roofscapes, boundary treatments and other features considered worthy of retention.
- iii. Ensure the design of developments on lands located immediately adjacent to such groupings of buildings addresses the visual impact on any established setting.

5.3.3. Development Management for domestic extensions: Section 12.3.7.1 (iv) sets out criteria for alterations at roof/attic level as a form of domestic extension. It specifically addresses roof alterations/expansions to main roof profiles - changing the hip-end roof of a semi-detached house to a gable/ 'A' frame end or 'half-hip' for example – will be assessed against a number of criteria including:

- Careful consideration and special 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, i.e. to the front, side, and rear, will be considered with regard to impacts on existing character and form, and the privacy of adjacent properties.

The design, dimensions, and bulk of any roof proposal relative to the overall size of the dwelling and gardens will be the overriding considerations. Dormer extensions shall be set back from the eaves, gables and/or party boundaries. Dormer extensions should be set down from the existing ridge level so as to not read as a third storey extension at roof level to the rear. The proposed quality of materials/finishes for dormer extensions will be considered carefully as this can greatly improve their appearance. The level and type of glazing within a dormer extension should have regard to existing window treatments and fenestration of the dwelling. However, regard should also be had to size of fenestration proposed at attic level relative to adjoining residential amenities. Particular care will be taken in evaluating large, visually dominant dormer window structures, with a balance sought between quality residential amenity and the privacy of adjacent properties. Excessive overlooking of adjacent properties should be avoided

5.4. Blackrock Local Area Plan

5.4.1. This LAP was extended to March 2025 and current status is not stated however it provides background to the designation of the cACA as delineated in Map8 of that plan. This cACA designation is seen as a tool to both protect the essential historic character of the village core and act as a vehicle for promoting high quality development in the future. Related objectives include:

- BV1 It is an objective of the Council to protect, enhance and promote Blackrock's built heritage through the possible designation of Blackrock village core as a candidate Architectural Conservation Area as part of the forthcoming review of the County Development Plan. An indicative boundary for the proposed cACA is shown on Map 8.
- BV2 It is an objective of the Council to promote the sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and re-use of the 19th century historic building stock of Blackrock village core and to encourage the retention of the original fabric such as windows, doors, roof covering, shop fronts and pub fronts.

5.5. Natural Heritage Designations

Not applicable

5.6. EIA Screening

Not applicable – see form 1 appended.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1. It is submitted that the planning authority has taken an overly stringent approach which is based on a very general assessment by the Conservation office regarding the modified roof profile. In refutation of the general criticism of the roof alterations, the appeal refers to

- the limited visibility of the dormer in the streetscape and
- its context of the rear elevation, which is dominated by commercial uses
- the architectural legibility of no.59 and scale and extent of works that are sensitive, proportionate and respect of the historic context
- functional viability
- modifications of dormer by replacing glazing with slate to the side
- absences of clarity on 'candidate' status and character assessment for such.

6.1.2. The grounds of appeal are appended with

- an architectural heritage Impact Assessment prepared by a Grade 1 Conservation Architect
- letter from the applicant providing context for residential use

6.1.3. In conclusion, it is submitted that the roof alterations do not conflict with heritage objectives and are non-intrusive in a commercial zone. Contrary to the negative assessment, in overall terms, the proposal promotes sustainable use of historic property in accordance with good conservation practice and ultimately aligns with 'District Centre' zoning objective supporting sustainable urban living in a manner that is in keeping with the immediate environs.

6.2. Planning Authority Response

- No further comment

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Issues

- 7.1.1. This appeal relates to partial change of use and minor alterations to a Victorian property of character in the Main Street of Blackrock village. Having reviewed the reason for refusal, submissions on file, the provisions of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028 and inspected site, I consider the substantive issue relates to impact of the roof profile in a candidate Architectural Conservation Area.

7.2. Impact of roof

Residential context of roof extension

- 7.2.1. In the first instance, to put in context, the original house as shown in the submitted plans was of extremely modest proportions for a two and half storey dwelling. While the gross internal original ground floor area was less than 24 Sq.m, the layout provided interconnecting rooms with a net floor areas in the order of just under 6 and 9 sq.m as a consequence of the stairwell and hallway and wall thickness and chimney breasts combined to significantly encroach on the ground floor space.
- 7.2.2. The size of the house is unusual in the terrace of two bay elevations and at odds with its deceptive 5.9m wide frontage which conceals the narrowed triangular plot tapering to less than 2m. The layout sought to be retained maximises the habitable area by opening up the ground floor in its entirety with small wc to the rear and a proposed small yard where a shed previously stood. This will provide external bin storage. Access to the upper floor is provided by a spiral stairs and small capsule type lift which addresses the mobility issues of the occupant and so provides access to the attic level (original bathroom location) which is needed for storage and laundry which I note cannot reasonable be provide for downstairs or at bedroom level. I consider the particular constraints of the site justify some flexibility in providing ancillary space at upper levels when considering residential room sizes and amenities in current guidance – (the most recent being the Design Standards for Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2025 which set out minimum widths of living space at 3.3m and minimum double bed at 11.4 sq.m. for example) in addition to storage facilities) and the overall functionality of the property.

Roof Profile

- 7.2.3. The extension of the roof level floor area and insertion of the one-man capsule lift in the place of the stairwell has necessitated some head room generally and to the rear of spiral stairwell and rear of the property. The dormer design comprises two elements. Firstly the rear slope is completely altered by extending the dormer from the ridge across the width of the plot to the rear building line. Secondly, given the hipped profile on the western side of the roof, the width and profile extends beyond the hipped profile in the street elevation.
- 7.2.4. In terms of visual impact, I inspected the elevation from Main Street from a number of vantage points in the public realm and the visibility was imperceptible. This is partly recessed location and also to the roof profile of no.59 relative to the particular terrace arrangement. No.59 along with the adjacent premises to the east bookends a composite terrace within the overall street terrace. Along with a row of properties to the west and one to east, it forms part of a cohesive design in terms of windows design, brick detailing, corbelling among other unifying details. The bookends are stepped forward by a marked stepping in building line and the roofs are hipped at the junction with the intervening terraced properties which have a shared gabled double pitched roof. While ridge heights are matched, there is a slight gap due to the sloped hip. The dormer partly bridges this mid terrace gap but at a set back from the front slope. The light emitted from the window briefly highlighted the roof at a limited viewpoint from down across the street but the replacement of glazing in the front elevation with slate to match the roof will obscure this. While I accept there is some limited visibility, it is relatively imperceptible from the main street - an important viewpoint and which forms part of the eastern end of the cACA – the site being at the fringe and its rear elevation on its boundary. The alteration to the roof profile in this case does not I consider adversely impact on the existing character and form of the terrace of which it forms a part.
- 7.2.5. With respect to the visibility of the rear elevation, views are extremely restricted. The roof is not visible from the Temple Road to the south. There is a private service passageway from which I viewed the site and from this vantage point the dormer is visible but harmonious in its use of dark materials and finishes. As this a commercial service area with limited access and comprising large scaled modern properties and various venting and plant appendages and with restricted views generally of the rear

of the properties, architecturally there is no adverse impact on visual amenities. Nor is overlooking likely to be an issue.

- 7.2.6. In view of the foregoing, I consider the roof modifications to substantially meet with the criteria of Section 12.3.7.1 (iv) of the development plan.

Overall impact

- 7.2.7. In terms of overall impact on building character and streetscape, the refurbishment of the property has many positive features that contribute to the protection of the historic character of area. I note the description in the appraisal in the report by Cathal Crimmins Grade 1 Conservation Architect which describes the terrace of houses with brick upper floors and segmental arched one and two-pane sash windows that have mostly been inappropriately altered whereas I note number 59 still retains its features in the street elevation and is reasonably described as 'intact'. All façade details have been restored to a visually high standard as is noted in the multiple statements of support appended to the appeal. The original bakery shopfront name and window in addition to the doorway features, fanlight, render and brick pointing retain the elements that are intrinsic to the character of the terrace. The bakery shop sign also provides a social link to its former and possible future uses. Noting the objectives in the Local Area Plan in which the candidate ACA was delineated (with an indicative boundary at that time) and objective BV2 to promote the sympathetic maintenance, adaptation and re-use of the 19th century historic building stock of Blackrock village core, its contribution to the streetscape in terms of restoring and retaining many highly visible original features of the terraces composition of which it forms a shared part, could I consider be described as exemplary in many respects in meeting with the heritage objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2028.
- 7.2.8. In terms of the balcony at attic level, I note the concerns about its use potentially supporting a bedroom. I note that a bathroom was previously at this level and has been relocated to a first floor – a habitable space by current standards and is therefore preferable. I consider the provision of a storage /utility area at attic level is reasonable for the plot size and configuration. Its use as a bedroom is an enforcement issue. Its use as a laundry area is however, I consider more likely. With regard to impact on neighbouring properties, I note the generally utilitarian area of

the immediate predominantly commercial environs and the issues of overlooking or disturbance does not arise. I further note the balcony design incorporates the down pipe from the roof valley of the mid terrace properties and also provides a means of access and surveillance for same. I further note the balcony also incorporates a ladder/ladder rail and thereby provides a means of escape in the event of lift failure or fire and has a practical purpose. I see no benefit in seeking its removal as recommended by the planning authority.

7.2.9. Accordingly, I consider on balance the overall external refurbishment of the property by its retention of the historic retail elements of the façade, in addition to the restoration of the windows and highly visible façade features, contributes positively to the streetscape and character of the area and that the alterations to the rear of the roof subject to removal of the dormer window in its the north elevation and replacement with slate will be imperceptible and will harmonise with the streetscape.

7.2.10. Accordingly, I do not consider the development to conflict with the development plan heritage objectives HER 18, HER20 and HER21 for such areas.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1. I recommend a grant of permission based on the following reasons and consideration.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the nature and minor scale of the works comprising of alterations and extensions to be retained and proposed to an existing dwelling and its façade treatment which retains the original shopfront design, it is considered that the development proposed to be retained and the proposed, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, would not detract from the streetscape or architectural character of the area which is included as a candidate Architectural Conservation area under the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028, and would not conflict with policy objectives HER18, HER20 and HER21 or seriously injure the visual or residential amenities of the area. It is, therefore, considered that the development to be retained and proposed would be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

10.0 Conditions

1.	<p>The development shall be retained, carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority and the development shall be retained, carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.</p> <p>Reason: in the interest of clarity.</p>
2.	<p>The external finishes of the roof shall be completed in matching slate tiles, details of which are to be agreed with the planning authority.</p> <p>Reason: in the interest of visual amenity and to ensure an appropriate high standard of development.</p>

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.

Suzanne Kehely

Senior Planning Inspector

10th February 2026

Appendix 1 - Form 1

EIA Pre-Screening

[EIAR not submitted]

An Coimisiún Pleanála Case Reference			
Proposed Development Summary	Retention and completion of minor works		
Development Address	59 Main Street Blackrock		
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		
	No	No further action required	
2. Is the proposed development of a class specified in Part 1 or Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and does it equal or exceed any relevant quantity, area or limit where specified for that class?			
Yes		Class.....	EIA Mandatory EIAR required
No			Proceed to Q.3
3. Is the proposed development of a class specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) but does not equal or exceed a relevant quantity, area or other limit specified [sub-threshold development]?			
		Threshold	Comment (if relevant)
			Conclusion
No		N/A	No EIAR or Preliminary Examination required
Yes		Class/Threshold.....	Proceed to Q.4

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted?

No		Preliminary Examination required
Yes		Screening Determination required

Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____