



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-500758-DF-26

Development	Attic conversion with dormer to rear roof, rooflights to front and all associated ancillary works.
Location	37 Rahillion Drive, Donabate, Co. Dublin
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	F25A/1050E
Applicant(s)	Anna McGrath.
Type of Application	Permission.
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Anna McGrath.
Observer(s)	N/A.
Date of Site Inspection	16 th of March 2026
Inspector	Stephanie Farrington

1.0 Site Location and Description

1.1. The appeal site, with a stated area of 0.027ha, is located at no. 37 Rahillion Drive, Donabate, Co. Dublin. The site consists of an existing two storey, semi-detached dwelling located on the northern side of Rahillion Drive, a residential cul de sac. The gross floor area of the existing dwelling is noted as 160 sq.m.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development seeks permission for the following:
- an attic conversion with dormer to rear roof
 - access stairs to attic conversion as non-habitable storage space
 - roof windows to front and associated ancillary works.

The gross floor area of the proposed works is stated as 38.6 sq.m.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

Fingal County Council issued a notification of decision to grant permission for the development subject to 5 no. conditions. The following conditions attached to the decision are of note:

Condition 2:

The development shall be carried out as follows:

- (a) The external width of the dormer extension shall be no more than 3.5m.
- (b) The metal cladding shall be brown or dark grey in colour, or a colour otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

Planner's Report (26/08/25):

The planner's report recommends a grant of permission. The following provides a summary of the key points raised:

- The proposed development is located within an area zoned RS within the Fingal Development Plan. Section 3.5.13.1 Residential Extension and Section 14.10.2.5 Roof Alterations including Attic Conversions and Dormer Extensions support alterations to existing houses. The development is deemed acceptable in principle.
- The report outlines that the dormer is proposed to be 4.1m in width internally which is considered to provide a dominant scale; inconsistent with development plan guidance (Section 14.10.2.5). A dormer of reduced scale would be more acceptable. This can be dealt with by means of condition.
- The report outlines that due to the distance between the dormer window and the boundary wall it would face it is considered that the development would not give rise to issues of separation distance and overlooking.
- The proposed roof window on the front (southern) slope is considered acceptable having regard to the size of the window and precedent for solar panelling in the area.
- Overall, the development is not considered to have a negative impact on the residential and visual amenities of the area.
- In terms of Environmental Impact Assessment, the report outlines that the development is not listed in Schedule 5 (Part 1 or Part 2) and does not meet the thresholds for sub-threshold EIA.
- An Appropriate Assessment Screening is carried out within the planner's report. This outlines that the site is located south of the Rogerstown Estuary SAC, the Rogerstown Estuary SPA and west of the North Irish Sea SPA. The AA Screening outlines that the project site is not connected with any European (Natura 2000) site and that there is no likelihood of significant

effects on European sites during the construction or operation of the proposed project. It is considered that the project, individually or in combination with another plan or project, will not have a significant effect on any European sites.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

None.

3.4. Third Party Observations

None.

4.0 Planning History

Appeal Site:

4.1.1. None on site.

Within vicinity:

4.1.2. The following planning history relates to properties within the vicinity.

No. 13 Rahillion Way, PA Ref: F25A/0389E: Planning permission granted for conversion of attic and dormer window with 2 no. windows to the rear and rooflights to front at 13 Rahillion Way in August 2025. Condition no. 2 of this permission outlined that: *The dormer roof extension hereby approved shall not exceed 4metres in width, and shall be setback 2m from the edge of the roof on either side. The dormer shall be set down from the ridge and setback from the eaves as per the submitted drawings.*

No. 12 Rahillion Way, PA Ref: F25A/0387E: Permission granted for conversion of existing attic space to a play room, home office, study, and two store rooms, comprising of modification of existing structure, new access stairs, a dormer structure with two windows to the rear, and 2. no. skylight windows to the front elevations in August 2025. The dormer roof extension hereby approved shall not

exceed 4 metres in width, and shall be setback 2m from the edge of the roof on either side. The dormer shall be set down from the ridge and setback from the eaves as per the submitted drawings.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029

Zoning

- 5.1.1. The site is zoned for Objective RS – Residential purposes within the Fingal Development with an objective to *“provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity”*. The vision for this zoning objective seeks to: *“ensure that any new development in existing areas would have a minimal impact on and enhance existing residential amenity”*.
- 5.1.2. The site is located within the Donabate LAP Area LAP 7.A. The Development Plan outlines that the Council will continue to implement the LAPs currently in place at the time of adoption of the Development Plan. The operational LAPs for Fingal County Council are listed in Table 2.15 of the Plan and include Donabate LAP 2016, extended to 2026 (LAP 7.A).
- 5.1.3. The following provisions of the Plan are of relevance:
- Policy SPQHP41 – Residential Extensions seeks to: *Support the extension of existing dwellings with extensions of appropriate scale and subject to the protection of residential and visual amenities.*
 - Objective SPQHO45 – Domestic Extensions: Encourage sensitively designed extensions to existing dwellings which do not negatively impact on the environment or on adjoining properties or area.
- 5.1.4. Development Management Standards are set out within Chapter 14 of the Development Plan. Section 14.10.2 of the Development Plan relates to residential extensions and outlines that:
- “The need for housing to be adaptable to changing family circumstances is recognised and acknowledged and the Council will support applications to amend*

existing dwelling units to reconfigure and extend as the needs of the household change, subject to specific safeguards. In particular, the design and layout of residential extensions must have regard to and protect the amenities of adjoining properties, particularly in relation to sunlight, daylight and privacy. The design of extensions must also have regard to the character and form of the existing building, its architectural expression, remaining usable rear private open space, external finishes and pattern of fenestration. Additionally, careful consideration should be paid to boundary treatments, tree planting and landscaping. The following section provides guidance in relation to, front extensions, side extensions, rear extensions, first floor rear extensions, roof alterations including attic conversions and dormer extensions”.

5.1.5. The following guidance is of relevance to the proposal:

14.10.2.5 Roof Alterations including Attic Conversions and Dormer Extensions Roof alterations/expansions to main roof profiles, for example, changing the hip-end roof of a semi-detached house to a gable/‘A’ frame end or ‘half-hip’, will be assessed against a number of criteria including:

- *Consideration and regard to the character and size of the structure, its position on the streetscape and proximity to adjacent structures.*
- *Existing roof variations on the streetscape.*
- *Distance/contrast/visibility of proposed roof end.*
- *Harmony with the rest of the structure, adjacent structures and prominence.*

Dormer extensions to roofs will be evaluated against the impact of the structure on the form, and character of the existing dwelling house and the privacy of adjacent properties. The design, dimensions, and bulk of the dormer relative to the overall extent of roof as well as the size of the dwelling and rear garden will be the overriding considerations, together with the visual impact of the structure when viewed from adjoining streets and public areas.

Dormer extensions shall be set back from the eaves, gables and/or party boundaries and shall be set down from the existing ridge level so as not to dominate the roof space.

The quality of materials/finishes to dormer extensions shall be given careful consideration and should match those of the existing roof.

The level and type of glazing within a dormer extension should have regard to existing window treatments and fenestration of the dwelling. Regard should also be had to extent of fenestration proposed at attic level relative to adjoining residential units and to ensure the preservation of amenities.

Excessive overlooking of adjacent properties should be avoided.

Donabate Local Area Plan 2016

- 5.1.6. The appeal site is located within with the Donabate Local Area Plan boundary. The Local Area Plan outlines that the LAP lands comprise approx. 138 hectares (340 acres) in four land parcels at Corballis (c. 65 ha), Ballymastone (c. 50.2 ha), Rahillion (c. 5.5 ha) and at Turvey (c. 16 ha). The LAP proposes to establish a framework for the planned, co-ordinated and sustainable development of undeveloped lands.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

The site is not located in or adjacent to a European site. The nearest designated sites to the appeal site include the Rogerstown Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and proposed Natural Heritage Area (p NHA) (Site Code 000208) and the Rogerstown Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) (004015) which are located c.430m north of the appeal site.

6.0 EIA Screening

- 6.1. 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.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

A first party appeal was submitted in respect of Condition 2(a) and 2(b) Fingal County Council's notification of decision to grant permission for the development. The following provides a summary of the grounds of appeal:

Condition 2 (a)

- The applicant does not accept the rationale provided for Condition 2(a). The appeal outlines that the rear dormer is entirely consistent with Section 14.10.2.5 of the Development Plan, maintaining a scale that is proportionate to the existing roof.
- Due to the rear facing orientation of the dormer there is no perceived impact on the streetscape.
- The proposed 1 m reduction suggested by the PA is deemed to be unwarranted and would be to the detriment of the building's symmetry, creating an awkward architectural finish. There is no justification for the claim of negative visual impact.
- The development is considered a high quality and appropriately scaled attic conversion whilst also being cognisant of the existing level of amenity and privacy enjoyed by neighbouring residents.
- It is stated that the proposed development has been informed by immediate site surroundings, various precedents in the area and has been designed to prevent any undue loss of existing visual amenities.
- The dormer is below the ridge line of the roof and is comparable to the permitted dormers at nos. 12 and 13 Rahillion Way.
- Reducing the dormer will reduce visual interest of the dormer and limit storage space, negatively impacting on the amenity of the dwelling.
- The dormer is within 50% linear width of the total width of the rear roof and set down from the ridge line.

Condition 2 (b)

- The appeal outlines that following consultation with their building provider, the requirement to utilize metal cladding for the exterior finish is fundamentally unsuitable given the sites immediate proximity to Rogerstown Estuary.
- It is requested that the cladding requirement be substituted with concrete brick (in brown or dark grey). The appeal outlines that the material offers superior performance in estuarine microclimate in terms of resilience and aesthetic.
- Resilience: Concrete brick is chemically inert and unaffected by sea spray or moisture laden winds.
- Aesthetic: the proposed palette of brown or dark grey would harmonise with roof tiles, ensuring a unified architectural form.
- The proposal is in accordance with precedents in Rahillion including no. 12 and 13 Rahillion Way.
- To enforce metal cladding would be inconsistent with previous grants of permission in the area.
- Metal cladding is unsuitable in a coastal and estuarine environment due to Corrosion Risk and rapid deterioration.

Conclusion

- The appeal outlines that Condition 2(a) and (b) are unjustified and the Commission is requested to omit/ amend these conditions and grant permission for the development as proposed.
- The proposal represents a high quality design and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7.2. Planning Authority Response

- 7.2.1. Fingal County Council provided a response to the grounds of appeal. This outlines that the planning authority has no further comment to make in respect of the appeal. An Coimisiún Pleanála is requested to uphold the decision of the Planning Authority.

8.0 Assessment

- 8.1. This is a first-party appeal 'specifically' against Condition no. 2 of Fingal County Council's notification of decision to grant permission. Having regard to the nature

and scale of the proposed development and the content of Condition no. 2 it is considered that the determination by the Commission of the application, as if it had been made to it in the first instance would not be warranted. Therefore, the Commission should determine the matters raised in the appeal only, in accordance with Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

8.2. I have reviewed the proposed development and the correspondence on the file. I am satisfied that the proposed development is acceptable in principle, in accordance with the zoning objective of the site. The main issue for consideration is Condition no. 2.

8.3. Condition no. 2

8.3.1. The proposed development seeks alterations to an existing semi-detached dwelling at no. 37 Rahillion Drive, Donabate to include an attic conversion and dormer window and roof windows to the front. Fingal County Council issued a notification of decision to grant permission for the development subject to 5 no. conditions. The first party appeal relates to Condition no. 2 as follows:

Condition 2:

The development shall be carried out as follows:

- (a) *The external width of the dormer extension shall be no more than 3.5m.*
- (b) *The metal cladding shall be brown or dark grey in colour, or a colour otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.*

Reason: In the interest of clarity and in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

8.3.2. Condition 2 (a) relates to revisions to the external width of the dormer window as seeks to reduce the external width of the dormer from 4.1m as proposed to a maximum of 3.5m. The planner's report which informs the decision of FCC to grant permission for the development sets out a rationale for the inclusion of this condition on the basis that the proposed dormer was considered to provide a dominant scale which is inconsistent with the guidance set out within Section 14.10.2.5 of the Fingal Development Plan. The report outlines that a dormer of reduced scale would be more acceptable.

8.3.3. The first party appeal requests the omission/ alteration to Condition 2 (a). The appeal outlines that the proposed reduction of the dormer is unjustified and would be detrimental to the symmetry of the structure and the residential amenity of the dwelling by reducing available storage space. The appeal outlines that the rear dormer is entirely consistent with Section 14.10.2.5 of the Development Plan, maintaining a scale that is proportionate to the existing roof. The dormer is below the ridge line of the roof and is within 50% linear width of the total width of the rear roof. The appeal outlines that the development reflects existing precedent within the estate and is comparable to the existing permitted dormers at nos. 12 and 13 Rahillion Way. Furthermore, it is stated that due to the rear facing orientation there is no impact on the streetscape.

8.3.4. Section 14.10.2.5 of the Fingal Development Plan relates to Roof Alterations including Attic Conversions and Dormer Extensions Roof and outlines that: *alterations/expansions to main roof profiles, for example, changing the hip-end roof of a semi-detached house to a gable/'A' frame end or 'half-hip', will be assessed against a number of criteria including:*

- *Consideration and regard to the character and size of the structure, its position on the streetscape and proximity to adjacent structures.*
- *Existing roof variations on the streetscape.*
- *Distance/contrast/visibility of proposed roof end.*
- *Harmony with the rest of the structure, adjacent structures and prominence.*

Dormer extensions to roofs will be evaluated against the impact of the structure on the form, and character of the existing dwelling house and the privacy of adjacent properties. The design, dimensions, and bulk of the dormer relative to the overall extent of roof as well as the size of the dwelling and rear garden will be the overriding considerations, together with the visual impact of the structure when viewed from adjoining streets and public areas.

Dormer extensions shall be set back from the eaves, gables and/or party boundaries and shall be set down from the existing ridge level so as not to dominate the roof space.

The quality of materials/finishes to dormer extensions shall be given careful consideration and should match those of the existing roof.

The level and type of glazing within a dormer extension should have regard to existing window treatments and fenestration of the dwelling. Regard should also be had to extent of fenestration proposed at attic level relative to adjoining residential units and to ensure the preservation of amenities.

Excessive overlooking of adjacent properties should be avoided.

- 8.3.5. The dormer window as proposed has an external width of 4.1m. Fingal County Council deemed the scale of the dormer to be overly dominant and contrary to the provisions of Section 14.10.2.5 of the Development Plan. On review of the provisions of the Development Plan, I note that no set quantitative restrictions are set out for the scale of dormer windows. The guidance set out in Section 14.10.2.5 relates to the size and bulk of the dormer relative to the overall *extent of roof and considerations including the size of the dwelling and rear garden together with the visual impact of the structure when viewed from adjoining streets and public areas*". In this regard, I note that the dormer is located to the rear of the dwelling and not visible from the streetscape on Rahillion Drive. In terms of the scale of the dormer, I note that the proposed dormer is set below the ridge line of the roof and is less than 50% of the width of the roof. In this regard I do not consider the scale of the dormer to be dominant relevant to the existing roof profile or contrary to the provisions of Section 14.10.2.5 of the Development Plan.
- 8.3.6. The first party appeal refers to precedent cases within the area wherein dormer extensions have been permitted including no. 12 and 13 Rahillion Way. I refer the Commission to Section 4 of this report which includes details of the relevant permissions under PA Ref: F25A/0387E (no.12 Rahillion Way) and PA Ref: F25A/0389E (no.13 Rahillion Way). In both instances a condition was attached to these permissions outlining that the dormer roof extension shall not exceed 4 metres in width. The principle of a 4m width dormer extension has therefore been accepted by FCC within the vicinity of the appeal site. The dormer window as proposed has an external width of 4.1m.
- 8.3.7. Having regard to the residential land use zoning for the site, and to the pattern of development in the area, I consider that the proposed dormer window, by reason of

its limited scale, nature and design, and its location with respect to adjoining properties, would not detract from the character of the dwelling and would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity.

8.3.8. I therefore recommend Condition 2 (a) of FCC's notification of decision to grant permission for the development is AMEDED as follows:

FROM:

(a) The external width of the dormer extension shall be no more than 3.5m.

TO:

(a) The external width of the dormer extension hereby approved shall not exceed 4.1 metres in width and shall be set down from the ridge and setback from the eaves as per the submitted drawings.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

Condition 2 (b)

8.3.9. Condition 2 (b) relates to the proposed finishes of the dormer window and outlines that *"The metal cladding shall be brown or dark grey in colour, or a colour otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority"*. The reference to metal cladding within Condition 2 (b) is consistent with the details illustrated on Drawing no. PLAN-01 00 submitted in support of the application.

8.3.10. The appeal requests revisions to the finish of the proposed dormer and outlines that the use of metal cladding is unsuitable given the sites immediate proximity to Rogerstown Estuary. The appeal requests that the cladding requirement be substituted with concrete brick (in brown or dark grey) similar to developments permitted at no. 12 and 13 Rahillion Way. I have no objection to the proposed amendments to the finish of the dormer as suggested by the applicant and I consider that the development would remain consistent with the existing pattern of development in the area.

8.3.11. I recommend the rewording of Condition 2 (b) as follows:

FROM:

The metal cladding shall be brown or dark grey in colour, or a colour otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

TO:

The proposed dormer shall be finished in concrete/brick tiles in brown or dark grey colour, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

9.0 Appropriate Assessment

- 9.1. I have considered the proposed domestic extensions in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The subject site is located in a well-serviced suburban settlement c. 430m from the closest European sites at Rogerstown Estuary SAC and SPA. The development relates to minor works to an existing dwelling. No nature conservation concerns were raised within the planning authority's decision.
- 9.2. Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because it could not have any effect on a European Site. The reason for this conclusion is as follows:
- The limited scale and nature of works
 - The location of the site within an established, serviced residential area
 - Lack of connections to nearest European sites
- 9.3. 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. Likely significant effects are excluded and therefore Appropriate Assessment (under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000) is not required.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

- 10.1. No surface water features are evident within the vicinity of the site on EPA mapping. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning application or appeal. I have assessed the proposed development, on an established residential site 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 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.

10.2. 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.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. Having regard to the nature of the condition the subject of the appeal, the Commission is satisfied that the determination by the Commission 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 AMEND condition number 2 as follows:

Condition 2:

The development shall be carried out as follows:

- (a) The external width of the dormer extension hereby approved shall not exceed 4.1 metres in width and shall be set down from the ridge and setback from the eaves as per the submitted drawings.
- (b) The proposed dormer shall be finished in concrete/brick tiles in brown or dark grey colour, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and visual amenity.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the residential land use zoning for the site, and to the pattern of development in the area, it is considered that the dormer window, by reason of its scale, nature and design, and its location with respect to adjoining properties, would not detract from the character of the dwelling and would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity or be contrary to the provisions of Section 14.10.5.2 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 . The planning authority's Condition 2 (a) requiring the reduction in scale of the proposed dormer window is, therefore, not warranted. Furthermore, the revisions to the finish of the dormer extension as proposed by the applicant within the first party appeal are deemed to be acceptable and in accordance with the visual amenity 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 me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

Stephanie Farrington
Senior Planning Inspector

18th of March 2026

Appendix 1:

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ACP-500758-DF
Proposed Development Summary	Attic conversion with dormer to rear roof, rooflights to front and all associated ancillary works.
Development Address	37 Rahillion Drive, Donabate
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed	

<p>type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994.</p> <p>No Screening required.</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold.</p> <p>EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold.</p> <p>Preliminary examination required. (Form 2)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)</p>	

<p>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)?</p>	
<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)</p>

Inspector: _____ Date: _____