



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report PL-501378-DF-26

Development	Permission is sought for a two-storey extension to the front and also an attic conversion to include realignment of the hipped roof profile to a gable roof, with a dormer window extension to the rear roof surface and 3 no. flat windows to the front roof surface. Application to include window alterations to the front and side gable walls with 3 additional windows to the side gable wall.
Location	12 Riverwood Green, Castleknock, Dublin 15, D15 K3K0
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	FW26A/0086
Applicants	Joanne Cullinane and Kevin Macken
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	To grant permission with conditions
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellants	Joanne Cullinane and Kevin Macken
Observers	None
Date of Site Inspection	16 th July 2026
Inspector	Trevor Rue

Table of Contents

1.0 Site Location and Description	3
2.0 Proposed Development	3
3.0 Planning Authority Decision	4
4.0 Planning History.....	5
5.0 Policy Context.....	7
6.0 EIA Screening.....	8
7.0 The Appeal	9
8.0 Assessment	10
9.0 AA Screening.....	12
10.0 Water Framework Directive	12
11.0 Recommendation	13
12.0 Reasons and Considerations	13
 Appendix A: Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening	 15

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The application site is about 2 kilometres to the south of the centre of Blanchardstown. It has a stated area of 0.0261 hectares and comprises the curtilage of a two-storey, hipped-roofed semi-detached dwelling on the western side and at the northern end of a cul-de-sac known as Riverview Green. The ridge height of the dwelling is 8.117 metres. It has an existing single-storey rear extension.
- 1.2. The northern, side boundary of the site is bounded by vegetation, beyond which is an area of open space. The western, rear boundary of the site adjoins the driveway of 4 Riverwood Way, which is at the eastern end of a cul-de-sac that runs at right angles to Riverview Green. The surrounding area is mainly residential.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. It is proposed to:
 - construct a two-storey extension to the front of the dwelling;
 - reduce the size of an existing first-floor front window;
 - add a flat window in the front of the existing roof over a first-floor bedroom;
 - insert three new windows in the existing side gable wall;
 - alter the hipped roof to a gable roof;
 - insert two flat windows in the front roof slope;
 - construct a rear dormer window; and
 - convert the attic to a store/office.
- 2.2. The proposed dormer structure would be 3.0 metres in width, about 3.2 metres in depth and about 1.9 metres in height. The two-pane window would be 1.5 metres wide. The dormer would be set back by 1.905 metres from the side wall of the dwelling and by 1.08 metres from the boundary with the adjoining semi-detached dwelling, 11 Riverview Green. The top of the structure would have a flat roof aligned with the ridge of the new pitched roof to provide internal headroom of 2.2 metres. The dormer would have a rendered finish to match the existing dwelling.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. On 28th April 2026, Fingal County Council decided to grant permission, subject to 10 conditions. Condition 1 required accordance with the submitted plans, particulars and specifications. Condition 3 required the entire premises to be used as a single dwelling. Condition 4 stated that the permission relates solely to that detailed in the statutory public notices. Condition 5 prohibited the use for human habitation of any attic floor space which does not comply with habitable standards. Condition 6 required all external finishes to harmonise with the existing premises. Conditions 7 and 8 dealt with surface water disposal. Conditions 9 and 10 concerned construction works.

3.1.2. Condition 2 reads in full thus:

The applicant shall amend the design of the proposed development to accord with the following:

(a) The dormer structure shall be set down a minimum of 300mm from the ridge of the roof of the dwelling and shall be centrally located on the roof plane.

REASON: In the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. A **planning officer's report** typed on 23rd April 2026 provided the reasoning for the authority's decision. The relevant points were as follows:

- Having regard to the site context and visual envelope, the proposed front extension is acceptable. The proposed front elevation window arrangement and detailing are appropriate, as are the proposed three roof lights on the front roof slope. The three new windows on the northern (side) elevation would serve internal landing areas and front on to open space, avoiding overlooking. There is precedent for hip-to-gable roof extensions within the streetscape.
- The width of the proposed dormer window and the proposed materials are appropriate. The dormer would front on to the Riverwood Way roadside, which would not result in overlooking concerns. The ridge of the dormer should be

set below that of the dwelling and the dormer should be centrally positioned on the roof slope. Due to its floor-to-ceiling height, the attic would not be suitable for habitation but the proposed office/store use would be appropriate.

3.2.2. The Council's **Water Services Department** had no objection subject to conditions.

3.2.3. The Council's **Transportation Planning Section** had no objection subject to conditions.

4.0 Planning History

4.1. Application Site

4.1.1. None

4.2. Adjacent Site

4.2.1. **FW16B/0019:** On 23rd May 2016, permission was granted for alterations and extensions to a dwelling, including an attic conversion, a rear dormer and a change of the roof profile from pitched to gable end, at 6 Riverwood Green. The approved south-facing elevation shows the roof of the dormer set down 300 millimetres from the ridgeline of the dwelling.

4.3. Comparison Sites Cited by the Appellants

4.3.1. **FW12B/0015:** On 21st May 2012, permission was granted for an attic conversion with dormer to rear of a dwelling at 105 Burnell Park Lawn, about 600 metres to the south east of the present application site. The approved side elevation shows the top of the roof of the dormer aligned with the ridgeline of the dwelling.

4.3.2. **FW20B/0070:** On 28th July 2020, permission was refused for an attic conversion to include a dormer window structure at 43 Burnell Park Avenue due to dominance and negative impact on the character of the dwelling. The proposed western elevation showed the top of the roof of the dormer aligned with the ridgeline of the dwelling. On 9th December 2020, following an appeal (**308013**), An Bord Pleanála granted permission but attached a condition requiring the width of the dormer to be reduced to a maximum of 3 metres.

- 4.3.3. **FW20A/0090:** On 29th July 2020, permission was granted for development that included a dormer window extension at attic floor level to the rear roof surface at 63 Burnell Park Avenue. The proposed northern elevation showed the top of the roof of the dormer aligned with the ridgeline of the dwelling. A condition was attached requiring the proposed dormer feature on the rear roof plane to be omitted and replaced with a roof light (if desired). On 14th December 2020, following an appeal **(308013)**, An Bord Pleanála directed the Council to remove that condition. The Board considered that the dormer window would be subordinate to the main roof plane and would not result in a negative impact on the existing character and form or on the privacy of adjacent properties.
- 4.3.4. **FW22B/0106:** On 27th January 2023, permission was granted for an attic conversion to include a dormer window structure to the rear and realignment of main roof structure to replace the hipped design with a new gable design at 52 Laverna Way, about 830 metres to the east of the present application site. The approved north-eastern elevation shows the top of the roof of the dormer aligned with the ridgeline of the dwelling. The planning officer's report quoted Objective DMS41 of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023, then in effect, which stated that consideration may be given to dormer extensions proposed up to the ridge level of a house and shall not be higher than the existing ridge height of the house.
- 4.3.5. **FW25A/0028:** On 29th March 2025, permission was granted for a dormer window extension to the rear of 23 Burnell Park Green. The proposed northern elevation showed the top of the roof of the dormer aligned with the ridgeline of the dwelling. A condition was attached requiring the dormer to have a maximum width of 3 metres, to be centrally placed on the roof plane and to be set down a minimum of 300 millimetres from the ridge of the roof of the dwelling. On 22nd July 2025, following an appeal **(322288)**, An Coimisiún Pleanála directed the Council to remove that condition. The Commission considered that, by reason of its limited scale, nature and design, and its location with respect to adjoining properties, the proposed dormer extension would not detract from the character of the dwelling and would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Development Plan

- 5.1.1. Sheet 13 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 indicates that the application site is subject to a RS – Residential zoning, whose objective is to provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity. The vision for this zoning, set out in Section 13.5 of the Plan, is to ensure that any new development in existing areas would have a minimal impact on and enhance existing residential amenity.
- 5.1.2. Section 3.5.13.1 of the Plan states that the need for people to extend and renovate their dwellings is recognised and acknowledged. Extensions will be considered favourably where they do not have a negative impact on adjoining properties or on the nature of the surrounding area. Policy SPQHP41 is to support the extension of existing dwellings with extensions of appropriate scale and subject to the protection of residential and visual amenities. Likewise, Objective SPQHO45 is to encourage sensitively designed extensions to existing dwellings which do not negatively impact on the environment or on adjoining properties or area.
- 5.1.3. Section 14.10.2 of the Plan states 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.
- 5.1.4. Section 14.10.2.5 states that 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.

5.1.5 Section 14.10.2.5 goes on to say that 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.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

5.2.1. The application site is not within any Natura 2000 European site of nature conservation importance. The nearest Natura 2000 sites to the site are:

- Rye Water Valley/ Carton Special Area of Conservation (SAC), about 6.4 kilometres to the west of the site, designated for petrifying springs and whorl snail;
- South Dublin Bay SAC, about 13 kilometres to the south east, designated for mudflats and sandflats, annual vegetation of drift lines, annuals colonising sand and mud and embryonic shifting dunes;
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area [for birds] (SPA), about 11 kilometres to the east; and
- North Bull Island SPA, about 14 kilometres to the east.

5.2.2. The application site is not in, or within 15 kilometres of, any Natural Heritage Area (NHA). There are nine proposed NHAs in Fingal, which are identified on Green Infrastructure Map 2 (Sheet 15) of the Development Plan. The nearest of these areas to the application site are Royal Canal and Liffey Valley.

6.0 Environmental Impact Assessment 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 (or Part V of the 1994 Roads Regulations). 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

7.1.1. The grounds of appeal may be summarised as follows:

- The appellants live in the dwelling with their growing family. In order to ensure the continuing viability of their home, they require additional floor space at attic level for non-habitable use as a work-from-home office and store room. The proposed attic room would be a separate zone, away from the busy family environment on the ground and first floors.
- The attic currently has a hipped-roof profile and is compromised by the roof sloping on three sides instead of two. Conversion of the attic with a raised gable wall and a new dormer structure would resolve the appellants' needs.
- The existing attic height is exceptionally low. It is possible to stand upright only in a small section in the central zone under the apex. Extra headroom would create a viable space where occupants could easily walk around. The need to ensure reasonable headroom by aligning the dormer with the existing ridgeline was alluded to on the architectural drawing accompanying the application.
- Even when the proposed dormer is constructed, the attic room would not be compliant with minimum requirements for habitable space but stores and offices are not considered to be habitable rooms.
- The appellants wish to appeal Condition 2(a) of the Council's decision. It would not be possible to complete the attic conversion if the roof of the dormer were set down from the ridgeline by 300 millimetres. People would be unable to stand upright in the dormer area and the development would be pointless.
- The Development Plan does not put any limitations on the size of dormer structures and they are assessed on a case-by-case basis. It is accepted that the dormer should not be taller than the ridgeline. The appellants did not propose that, even though it would have been beneficial. If the flat roof of the

dormer were the same height as the ridge, it would not be visible from the front of the house and it would not upset the ridgeline when viewed from the street. The dormer would be visible from neighbouring gardens, which is normally acceptable. A reduction in height by 300 millimetres would not improve the dormer's appearance and the gap between the roof of the dormer and the ridge would not be visible from the ground.

- There are many precedents for similar attic conversions locally and within the overall Castleknock and Dublin 15 area. Attention was drawn to the sites and proposals referred to in Section 4.3 of this report. The planning authority has been inconsistent in its decision making and this needs to be fixed.
- The appellants propose to increase the habitable residential space by means of a two-storey front extension to the dwelling. That development was deemed acceptable by the planning authority and is not the subject of this appeal.

7.2. Planning Authority Response

- 7.3.1. The planning authority commented that a dormer set down of 0.3 metres from the ridge of the dwelling is required in the interest of visual amenity. Section 14.10.2.5 of the Development Plan specifically requires dormers to be set down from the existing ridge level so as not to dominate the roof space. The planning application was individually assessed with proper consideration. The Commission is requested to uphold the authority's decision.

8.0 Assessment

- 8.1. Having inspected the site and considered in detail the documentation on file for this first-party appeal, it seems to me that the sole planning issue is whether the requirements of the planning authority's Condition 2 are justified.
- 8.2. I am satisfied, having regard to the nature of Condition 2, that determination by the Commission of the application as if it had been made to it in the first instance would not be warranted. It seems to me that, pursuant to Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, the Commission has discretion to give to the planning authority such directions as it considers appropriate relating to the attachment, amendment or removal of Condition 2.

- 8.3. Section 14.10.2.5 of the Development Plan requires dormer extensions to be set back by unspecified distances from the eaves, gables and/or party boundaries and set down, again by an unspecified distance, from the existing ridge level so as not to dominate the roof space. It seems to me that in evaluating the acceptability of the proposed dormer, the main focus should be on whether the underlying purpose of that provision – to ensure that dormer extensions do not dominate the roof space – would be achieved. Section 14.10.2.5 describes the bulk of the dormer relative to the overall extent of roof and the visual impact of the structure as overriding considerations.
- 8.4. Every planning application site has unique characteristics. Assessments of visual impacts call for site-specific judgements. I consider that comparisons with permissions granted on other sites are of little assistance in assessing the visual effects of the development proposed in the present application.
- 8.5. The appellants' dwelling has an unusually shallow roof pitch, which I estimate to be about 33°. I accept their argument that without reasonable headroom, the proposed store and office in the attic would be unusable. The proposed dormer structure, whose north-facing elevation would be about 5.7 square metres in size, would occupy only about one third of the extended rear roof area (which I estimate would be about 17.4 square metres). Its distances from the eaves, the new gable and the existing party boundary with No. 11 would, in combination, ensure that the dormer extension would not dominate the roof space.
- 8.6. The proposed dormer structure would be visible from the back garden of the appellants' property and from those of neighbouring properties, especially No. 11. At the time of my site inspection, which took place at the height of summer, the appellants' roof was barely visible from Riverwood Way to the west due to the presence of a large tree in the curtilage of No. 4, the last property in that cul-de-sac. In wintertime, the proposed dormer would be more visible but there would the view would still be filtered. The proposed dormer would not be seen at any time from the open space area adjacent to Luttrell Park Close to the north of the application site due to dense vegetation. In my judgement, the dormer would not be unsightly or incongruous in appearance when seen from the limited vantage points from which it would be visible.
- 8.7. Section 14.10.2.5 states that dormer extensions will also be evaluated against the privacy of adjacent properties. Having regard to the size of the proposed structure, its

juxtaposition with neighbouring properties and the existence of filtering vegetation, I am satisfied that it would not give rise to undue overlooking or loss of privacy.

- 8.8. While the dormer structure as proposed in the application would not comply with one of the requirements set out in Section 14.10.2.5 of the Development Plan, in my opinion the underlying purpose of those requirements, taken together, would not be impaired. I consider that the appellants' proposal is broadly consistent with Section 14.10.2.5 read as a whole. I therefore conclude that Condition 2 was not justified and should be removed.

9.0 Appropriate Assessment Screening

- 9.1. Having considered the nature, location and small scale of the proposed development, the nature of the receiving environment as a built-up urban area, the nature of the foreseeable emissions therefrom, the availability of public piped services to accommodate the foul effluent arising therefrom, the distance from the nearest European site and the absence of any known hydrological link between the application site and any European site, I am content on the basis of objective information that the development is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. I therefore conclude that the carrying out of an appropriate assessment under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 is not required.

10.0 Water Framework Directive

- 10.1. The application site is located about 330 metres from the Royal Canal. The proposed development comprises a two-storey extension to a dwelling and an attic conversion. No water deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.
- 10.2. I have assessed the development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 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.

- 10.3. The reasons for this conclusion are the nature and small scale of the works, the distance from nearest water body and the lack of hydrological connections.
- 10.4. I conclude 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. I recommend to the Commission to make the following direction:

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 Fingal County Council under subsection (1) of section 139 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 to REMOVE condition number 2 and the reason therefor.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

- 12.1 Having regard to the provisions of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, including Section 14.10.2.5 which pertains to dormer extensions, and to the nature, form, scale and design of the proposed development, it is considered that in the absence of Condition 2, the development would not seriously injure the visual or residential amenities of the area and would be in accordance with 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 me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.



TREVOR A RUE

Planning Inspector

22nd July 2026

Appendix A: Form 1 – EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	PL-501378-DF-26
Proposed Development Summary	Two-storey extension to a dwelling and an attic conversion
Development Address	12 Riverwood Green, 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)	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q2.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☒ 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?	
☒ 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.
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)?	
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3).

Inspector: 

Date: 22nd July 2026

TREVOR A RUE