



The Secretary,
An Coimisiún Pleanála,
4 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.

Our Ref. SCA/01/26
Your Ref. ACP-324322-26
4th August 2026

Re: Substitute consent for the retention of demolition at lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor levels and the substantially constructed part two/ part three storey extension at the north elevation of the existing dwelling and a new on-site sepcan waste water treatment plant with and polishing filter, and percolation area.

Tara Hall, Balscadden Road, Howth, Co Dublin

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to your correspondence dated 28th May 2026 regarding the above application.

It is noted that this application has been made to An Coimisiún Pleanála, in accordance with Section 37L of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, for Further Development (Substitute Consent). This report has been prepared in accordance with Section 37L (12) (a) of the Planning and Development Acts, as amended.

Site Description

The application property is Tara Hall, Balscadden Road, Howth. The property comprises a large 19th century two storey over basement detached house on a 0.465 ha. site. The site includes a large garden comprising a grass lawn to the sides and rear of the site. The site is steeply sloped and is directly adjacent to sea cliffs to the north. The site is bounded by a stone wall.

Planning History

A Planning Enforcement file (ref. 24/143) is open on the site.

FS5/038/24: Two storey extension to rear. Deemed not to be Exempted Development.

F24A/1034E / ACP Ref. 321795-25: John Roe, Tara Hall, Balscadden, Howth, D13W304
Permission and Retention Permission was refused for a development comprising the demolition of part of the north-facing elevation of the existing dwelling (comprising the removal of a lower ground level wall and two rear projections on the ground and on the first floors) and the erection of a part-single, part three storey rear addition (on the northern side of the house), to be used for domestic bar purposes, as a sitting / lounge area, as a dining facility and as en-suite bathroom accommodation. The application includes all associated site works, including alterations to the existing fenestration pattern on the northern elevation of the building.

Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029

Site Designations

The subject site is located within land-use zoning objective HA, 'High Amenity' in the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, the objective of which seeks to "Protect and enhance high amenity areas".

Landscape Character – coastal, highly sensitive.

Relevant Policy

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.

14.10.2.4 First Floor Extensions

First floor rear extensions will be considered on their merits, noting that they can have potential for negative impacts on the amenities of adjacent properties, and will only be permitted where the Planning Authority is satisfied that there will be no significant negative impacts on surrounding residential or visual amenities. In determining applications for first floor extensions the following factors will be considered:

- Overshadowing, overbearing, and overlooking – along with proximity, height, and length along mutual boundaries.
- Remaining rear private open space, its orientation and usability.
- Degree of set-back from mutual side boundaries.

- External finishes and design, which shall generally be in harmony with existing

Objective GINHO56 – Visual Impact Assessments

Require any necessary assessments, including visual impact assessments, to be prepared prior to approving development in highly sensitive areas.

Objective GINHO58 – Sensitive Areas

Resist development such as houses, forestry, masts, extractive operations, landfills, caravan parks, and campsites, and large agricultural/horticulture units which would interfere with the character of highly sensitive areas or with a view or prospect of special amenity value, which it is necessary to preserve.

Objective GINHO60 – Protection of Views and Prospects

Protect views and prospects that contribute to the character of the landscape, particularly those identified in the Development Plan, from inappropriate development.

Policy GINHP28 – Protection of High Amenity Areas

Protect High Amenity areas from inappropriate development and reinforce their character, distinctiveness and sense of place.

Objective GINHO67 – Development and High Amenity Areas

Ensure that development reflects and reinforces the distinctiveness and sense of place of High Amenity areas, including the retention of important features or characteristics, taking into account the various elements which contribute to its distinctiveness such as geology and landform, habitats, scenic quality, settlement pattern, historic heritage, local vernacular heritage, land-use and tranquillity.

Objective DMSO190 – Structures Contributing to Distinctive Character

Where development is proposed for a site that contains a vernacular or historic building, 20th Century building of merit and/or structures that contribute to the distinctive character of the rural or urban areas of Fingal then the scheme should have regard to the direction in Table 14.26.

Other Relevant Policies:

- Policy HCAP9 – Re-use of Architectural Heritage
- Policy HCAP21 – Built Heritage Assets
- Policy HCAP22 – Retention and Reuse of Existing Building Stock
- Policy HCAP23 – Heritage-led Regeneration
- Policy HCAP25 – Retention of Historic Fabric

These Development Plan policies and objective acknowledge that the form, scale, materials, detailing and layout of the historic building stock of Fingal (including non-designated historic houses, vernacular structures or 20th century buildings of merit) contributes positively to the rural and urban areas of the county. These structures add architectural interest, historic character and visual amenity to the places they are located in.

Table 14.26: Direction on Development of Vernacular Buildings or Other Built Heritage Assets

- Appropriate materials and methods are to be used to carry out repairs to the historic fabric of older buildings.
- Any proposed changes need to be sympathetic to the special features and character of the existing building by respecting the existing setting, form, scale and materials.
- Proposals for extensions to vernacular buildings or the historic building stock should not erode the setting and design qualities of the original structure which make it attractive and should be in proportion or subservient to the existing building.
- Original building features or materials should be retained including windows, doors, roof coverings, boundary treatments and site features (such as stone walls, hedges, railing, gates, gate piers, cobbles and courtyards).

Objective DMSO145 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Ensure that sufficient information is provided as part of development proposals to enable Screening for Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken and to enable a fully informed assessment of impacts on biodiversity to be made.

Howth Special Amenity Area Order, 1999

The subject site is located in the Howth Special Amenity Area. The Howth Special Amenity Area Order (SAAO) (1999) designates the site as “Other areas within the Special Amenity Area.” A portion of the site is also designated as “Lands used for agriculture or forestry.”

Balscadden Road is designated with a map-based objective “to preserve views.” This route is also designated for protected views in Map B of the SAAO. Map B of the Howth SAAO indicates that the eastern portion of the site is composed of heathland and maritime grassland.

Schedule 2. Objectives for the preservation of the character or special features of the area

Objective 2.1: to preserve views from public footpaths and roads.

Policy 2.1.1: The Council will preserve views from the networks of footpaths and roads shown on Map B. Applications for planning permission must take into account the visual

impact of proposals on views from these paths and roads. Applicants must state whether there would be an impact and describe and illustrate the impact. Where there would be an impact an application for planning permission must be accompanied by a cross-sectional drawing at a suitable scale, showing the proposed development and the affected path or road. The Council will not permit development which it considers would have a significant negative effect on a view from a footpath or road. The Council, at its discretion, may require to erect a flag pole or poles on site, corresponding to the height of a proposed structure, in order to assist in the assessment of an application.

Schedule 3: Part 2. Development in Other Areas

Objective 3.4: To preserve the beauty and distinctive character of the natural, semi-natural and other open areas within the special amenity area.

Policy 3.4.1: A development control policy applies which restricts new development within an acceptable range of land uses.

Residential uses are open for consideration in this area.

Policy 3.4.2: Design guidelines apply to new development.

An extension to an existing building should generally match the character of the existing structure. New buildings should be as inconspicuous as possible. This effect may be achieved by using a combination of appropriate elevational treatments, using suitable materials and colours and by sensitive planting. Substantial engineering to reconfigure the profile of a landform is not an acceptable form of mitigation.

Roofs of dwellings and outhouses, which should preferably have a symmetrical A-frame cross-section, should be constructed of materials which blend with the local landscape, e.g. salvaged old slates.

Planning Assessment

Principle of development and compliance with the County Development Plan and the Howth SAAO

The principle of an extension to an additional dwelling is generally considered to be acceptable in principle subject to an appropriate design and compliance with the policies and objectives of the Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029. Residential extensions are 'open for consideration' in Other Areas of the Special Amenity Area. Having regard to the zoning objective for the 'HA' zoning, the design and siting of any such extension are particularly relevant considerations.

In this instance there are concerns regarding the proposed retention of demolition works at lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor levels and the substantially constructed part two/part three storey extension at the north elevation of the existing dwelling, with

the development considered to contravene both the Fingal Development Plan and SAAO policy as discussed further below.

Policy 3.4.2 of the SAAO requires that residential extensions in Other Areas should generally match the character of the existing structure. Tara Hall is an attractive and distinctive 19th century house. The interventions made to the prominent historic building of Tara Hall, that is also sited within the Howth Special Amenity Area and a High Amenity Area, are not acceptable as they have stripped the building of the historic fabric of its roof, walls and windows, altered the detailing and inserted inappropriate materials. The size and materiality of the extension to the rear is not acceptable.

The view of the Planning Authority as set out in its report on application Reg. Ref. F24A/1034E, in relation to the inappropriate nature of the interventions to the external elevations, still apply as do the relevant Fingal Development Plan policy and objectives for the historic building stock

The documentation submitted for this Substitute Consent Application includes an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) which makes no reference to the above Fingal Development Plan policy and objectives. The description of the building in the AHIA does not refer to the changes that have been made to the appearance of the building, such as the removal of historic fabric and distinctive elements, and how this has affected the character of the historic house. Tara Hall, prior to the changes, was a historic building of interest with an attractive architectural composition that is prominently located with all elevations visible to full or partial view from the public road or public areas. It is visible from the upper deck of the East Pier and views over Balcadden Bay from the western section of Balcadden Road, as well as views from the road directly in front of it and on approach from the west and east. It featured as a landmark building in the background of historic photographs and postcards of Balcadden Bay.

Please see appendix 1 for further commentary on conservation issues.

Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

An Coimisiún Pleanála are the competent authority with regard to the assessment of these documents although some of the comments of Fingal Council have been provided below.

The AA report (Screening report and NIS) is not considered to have robustly assessed the impact on individual attributes noted in the conservation documents including but not limited to the following:

- Physical structure: functionality and hydrological regime.
- Vegetation structure: zonation.

- Vegetation composition: negative indicator species.

Other shortcomings of the assessment which require further clarity and information relates to the following areas:

- level of assessment and surveys for Kittiwake as well as other bird species known to nest on the sea cliffs along the northern boundary of the development site, including species associated with surrounding SPAs.
- The in-combination assessment section of the AA Screening does not clearly describe or assess the potential risks to European sites and their QI/SCI.
- Limitation of the project description including how works will be undertaken is considered inadequate to fully assess potential impacts.
- Biodiversity / Ecological Concerns as no assessment of local biodiversity, including rare species or those protected under the Wildlife Acts and other legislation has been undertaken and potential for light spill into the surrounding environment
- Based on the information submitted, the main concerns raised relate to the long-term use of the proposed development. These include the potential for negative impacts on Qualifying Interest habitats and species from the wastewater treatment and percolation system and any inappropriately designed internal and/or external lighting.

Please see appendix 2 for further commentary on AA issues.

Conclusion

It is the view of the Planning Authority that the development subject to this application is at odds with the policies and objectives of the Fingal County Development Plan and the Howth Special Amenity Area Order and is not considered to be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Furthermore, there is additional information required from the applicant to address the shortcomings in the information submitted, given the site is directly adjacent to the Howth Head SAC and to vegetated sea cliffs which form a Qualifying Interest of the SAC.

Yours sincerely,



Deirdre Fallon
Senior Planner

Date: 5th August 2026

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL INTERNAL CONSULTEE

PLANNING REPORT

Report of the Ecologist Officer Section

Register Ref: SCA/01/26

Area: Howth Malahide

Development: Substitute Consent for the retention of demolition at lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor levels and the substantially constructed part two/part three storey extension at the north elevation of the existing dwelling and a new on-site septic waste water treatment plant with sand polishing filter, and percolation area.

Location: Tara Hall, Balscadden Road, Howth, Co. Dublin

Applicant : MR John Roe

Application Type : Substitute Consent Application

Report

The planning pack contains a Remedial Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Remedial Natura Impact Statement on which the following comments are largely based. It is understood that the current application deals with the retention of demolition works, extension and a new on-site Sepcon wastewater treatment plant with sand polishing filter and percolation area.

1. Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]

Table 2 of the AA Screening Report rules out wastewater/foul water pathways to Howth Head SAC (000202) by noting *"Presently, there is no pathway via foul water drainage as the WwTP does not discharge to the marine environment"*. The Qualifying Interest habitat of Howth Head SAC *"Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]"* is contained within the site redline boundary immediately adjacent to the stonewall demarcating the northern extent of the garden, as illustrated in Figure 3, 4 and 5 of the NIS. The site-specific conservation objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of this habitat however it is noted that the overall conservation status is assessed as 'Unfavourable - Inadequate' ([NPWS, 2025](#)).

The Annex I habitat 'Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]', is located 4.2m from the WWTP percolation area, as shown in the site layout plan by DaCaD Design, Drawing Number 24-1471-02. The wastewater system appears to be designed to allow wastewater to discharge via percolation into the ground. It is unclear what the quality of discharge will be at this point (discharge to percolation area) and if there is adequate depth of soil available to complete the treatment process, and if the soil itself is suitable in type, nature and depth to treat the effluent. Based on EPA mapping *Rock is at or Near Surface* (EPA, <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>, accessed 02/07/26). Additionally, the Remedial AA Screening Report notes stone walls demolished onsite were used to "make up ground for the percolation area". This potential pathway for wastewater treated to an unknown standard, to seep/move downslope during the lifetime of the project towards the cliff face approximately 4.2m away north of the percolation area, is considered to present a risk to the Annex I Vegetated sea cliffs habitat which therefore requires further clarification and/or assessment. A hydrogeological and potentially a hydrological assessment should ideally inform the ecological assessment regarding potential impacts and risk.

Based on the above points raised, the AA reports (Remedial Screening report and NIS) are not considered to have robustly assessed the impact on individual attributes noted in the conservation documents including but not limited to the following:

- **Attribute - Physical structure: functionality and hydrological regime. Target - No alteration to natural functioning of geomorphological and hydrological processes, including groundwater quality, due to artificial structures.**

No hydrological or hydrogeological information has been provided to assess the potential impact on quality of water (pH, hydrocarbons, silt etc) and quantity of surface and groundwater reaching the sea cliffs from the development. This includes rerouting surface water to the wastewater outfall, thereby reducing infiltration rates and also the reduction and increase in groundwater flows through the creation of artificial barriers including the building but also pipe laying works, installation of a wastewater treatment plant and installation of a sand polishing filter and percolation area for wastewater into ground, 4.2m from the top of sea cliffs as shown in the site layout plan by DaCaD Design. As noted above, particular concern is raised regarding the quality of effluent entering the ground and the ability for the soil to treat and allow infiltration due to "Rock at or Near Surface" as demonstrated by EPA ([EPA, online mapping accessed 02/07/26](#)).

- **Attribute - Vegetation structure: zonation. Target - Maintain range of sea cliff habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession.**

A report by FitzGerald Ecology (2023) on Vegetated Sea Cliffs Survey of Howth Head, Co. Dublin refers to the different zones types of sea cliffs and the importance of wetland features and vegetation as part of this habitat type. The report notes "*the flushes along sea cliffs below Balscadden Road are of particular interest as these areas previously harboured a variety of rare plant species which are now generally in decline due to disturbances to their water sources upstream (Doogue 2019).*" The AA reports do not assess if the alteration of hydrology and hydrogeology will negatively impact upon the Annex I sea cliff habitat within and connected to the property. Separately, it is unclear if any of these rare plant species are present within the application boundary or along the sea cliffs connected to the property as no botanical surveys were undertaken.

- **Attribute - Vegetation composition: negative indicator species. Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover.**

It is noted that the AA documents report no invasive species were recorded onsite from the site visit, however it is unclear if this specifically refers to Schedule 3 species listed under the Habitat Regulations or species recorded in the Howth area that are aggressive invaders such as *Carpobrotus edulis* which are referred to within the Conservation Objectives document for the site and noted to be a threat to this habitat (NPWS, 2016). Specific measures for invasive species are referred to in the Howth Head SAC and Howth Head Cost SPA 2025-2035 Management Plan (MKO, 2025) highlighting the level of threat they pose to this habitat type. Gardens along Balscadden Road (the location of the proposed development) are highlighted with reference made to additional non-native invasive plant species *Veronica × franciscana*, *Echium pininana* and how private landowners need to provide appropriate stewardship.

Additionally, no information has been provided regarding landscaping works which are referred to within the AA documents, including movement of soil and species to be used in vegetation planting including those proposed as part of the SUDS measures. The risk of introducing potentially non-native species that would be invasive and potential risk to the QI habitats, has not been considered or assessed.

- The surface water system proposes to use existing clay pipes previously used to transport wastewater for discharge over the sea cliff. It is unclear if a condition assessment of these pipes has been undertaken to ensure they do not leak, are broken and will operate as intended, once it is ensured that their operation will not negatively impact on the QI habitat. This includes the alteration of percolation of surface water to groundwater and discharge from within the sea cliff habitat itself, as shown in Figure 5 of the NIS.

2. Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

- Kittiwake are the Special Conservation Interest species of Howth Head SPA with site specific conservation objectives to 'restore' the favourable conservation status of this species. The NIS report notes "*Kittiwake was not recorded onsite or within the vicinity of the site during the 2025 site visit by Altamar Ltd.*" and continues by noting "*Kittiwake has been recorded within the NBDC 10 and 2km grid squares*". On review of the National Biodiversity Data centre online mapping platform, 546 Records of Kittiwake including confirmed breeding and wintering were noted from the 10km square (O23) with records from the 2km, 1km and 100m squares within which the majority of development is located.
- The site visit by the consultant ecologist was undertaken on the 28th October 2025, outside of the breeding bird season. No breeding Kittiwake would have been present during the site visit due to the seasonal timing of the visit even if the site was used annually for breeding. As Kittiwake winter at sea a single site visit during the wintering season would also not be considered appropriate to assess the use of the site or surrounding area by Kittiwake. No breeding bird survey was undertaken to inform the AA Screening and NIS assessment; therefore, it is currently undetermined if Kittiwake use the sea cliffs to the north of the site for breeding. The lack of sufficient field data raises concerns regarding the validity of the NIS conclusion.
- Due to the lack of field and desk-based evidence regarding the usage of the area by this species, the level of assessment regarding potential impacts from the proposed development is not deemed adequate to rule out adverse impacts on this species. This includes potential impacts from in appropriately designed internal and any external lighting. In addition, no detailed assessment has been undertaken on other bird species known to nest on the sea cliffs along the northern boundary of the development site, including species associated with surrounding SPAs.

3. Incombination Assessment

- The incombination assessment section of the AA Screening does not clearly describe or assess the potential risks to European sites and their QI/SCI. It is recommended that further information and analysis be provided.

4. Other Non-AA Related Biodiversity / Ecological Concerns

- No assessment of local biodiversity, including rare species or those protected under the Wildlife Acts and other legislation has been undertaken. This includes lizards, bats, lepidoptera etc.
- It is noted that the site partially overlaps Howth Head Coast SPA (004113) and approximately 70m from North-West Irish Sea cSPA (004236). Concern is raised regarding potential impacts from inappropriate lighting on breeding and migrating bird species and also Annex IV species such as all bat species, all species of dolphins, whales and porpoises and marine turtles, including Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* a QI species of Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC.
- Inappropriate lighting (too bright, badly directed, wrong colour, light spill, glare etc.) is known to result in negative impacts on many species and their behaviour including but not limited to bats, migrating birds, alteration of feeding patterns of birds and natural rhythms of fish and mammals but also on bryophytes and other vegetation. It is noted that a large proportion of the development is glass and consideration must therefore be given to the potential for light spill or appropriate lighting escaping into the surrounding environment with potential for negative impacts on habitats and species.

Conclusion

Based on the information submitted as part of the planning pack, the main concerns raised relate to the long-term use of the proposed development. These include the potential for negative impacts on Qualifying Interest habitats and species from the wastewater treatment and percolation system and any inappropriately designed internal and/or external lighting.

Officer: Joanne Allen-Hamilton

Endorsed: Deirdre Fallon

Date: 30/07/26

Date: 31/7/2026

PLANNING REPORT

Report of the Conservation Officer Section

Register Reference: SCA/01/26

Registration Date: 20-May-2026

Development: Substitute Consent for the retention of demolition at lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor levels and the substantially constructed part two/part three storey extension at the north elevation of the existing dwelling and a new on-site septic waste water treatment plant with sand polishing filter, and percolation area.

Location: Tara Hall, Balscadden Road, Howth, Co. Dublin

Applicant: John Roe

Application Type: Substitute Consent Application

Report

The Conservation Office was asked to comment on documentation submitted relating to a Substitute Consent Application for the retention of development to a mid-19th century historic house of Tara Hall, Balscadden Road, Howth. There is a concurrent Substitute Consent Application (ACP Ref. SCA/02/26) for the completion of the development at this property. Planning permission for the retention and completion of the development of Tara Hall has been refused by Fingal County Council under Ref. F24A/1034E and refused on appeal to An Bord Pleanála (Ref ABP-321795-25).

The comments of the Conservation Office are similar to those issued in their report on SCA/02/26 and reflective of the opinion and comments of the Conservation Office as raised in its report for F24A/1034E. The works undertaken are considered inappropriate and do not adhere to relevant Fingal Development Plan policy and objectives for the historic building stock and the direction given in Table 14.26 of the Development Plan.

- Policy HCAP9 – Re-use of Architectural Heritage
- Policy HCAP21 – Built Heritage Assets
- Policy HCAP22 – Retention and Reuse of Existing Building Stock
- Policy HCAP23 – Heritage-led Regeneration
- Policy HCAP25 – Retention of Historic Fabric
- Objective DMSO190 – Structures Contributing to Distinctive Character

These Development Plan policies and objective acknowledge that the form, scale, materials, detailing and layout of the historic building stock of Fingal (including non-designated historic houses, vernacular structures or 20th century buildings of merit) contributes positively to the rural and urban areas of the county. These structures add architectural interest, historic character and visual amenity to the places they are located in. The historic house Tara Hall

(originally called Kilrock House) was a distinguished historic residence on a very visible prominent site. The submitted Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) that forms part of the SCA makes no reference to the above Fingal Development Plan policy and objectives. The description of the building in the AHIA does not refer to the changes that have been made to the appearance of the building, such as the removal of historic fabric and distinctive elements, and how this has affected the character of the historic house. Tara Hall, prior to the changes, was a historic building of interest with an attractive architectural composition that is prominently located with all elevations visible to full or partial view from the public road or public areas. It is visible from the upper deck of the East Pier and views over Balcadden Bay from the western section of Balcadden Road, as well as views from the road directly in front of it and on approach from the west and east. It featured as a landmark building in the background of historic photographs and postcards of Balcadden Bay. The two-storey canted bay on the north elevation is an early addition to the historic house and formed part of the historic plan of the building for well over a hundred years. It respected the original form and scale of the house, and was not overly dominant but contributed to the character of the property with its distinctive shape, becoming an integral part of the building.

Under Policy HCAP23 of the Fingal Development Plan it is required that adaptive re-use of older buildings adheres to best conservation practice and principles. The works undertaken at Tara Hall have stripped the exterior of the house of its historic character, which is not appropriate and does not follow best conservation practice, does not adhere to the policy of the Fingal Development Plan relating to works to the historic building stock, and does impact the built heritage within the Howth Special Amenity Area. All the historic up-and-down two-over-two timber sliding sash windows have been removed and replaced with top hung one-over-one windows that are not timber. They are possibly aluminium but could be uPVC (the material is not stated on the drawings). The replacement windows are not appropriate for a mid-19th century house. The natural slate roof has been replaced with a uniform black slate that emphasises the newness of the alteration. The slate looks like it is man-made rather than natural (again the materials are not outlined in the drawings or in the AHIA). The distinctive two-storey canted bay on the north elevation has been demolished and replaced with contemporary glazed ground and first floor extensions. The historic extension was respectful of the scale of the building and replicated the canted bay of the entrance porch and regular quoins while being subservient in scale to the north elevation. The new extension is not a sensitive addition to the property and can be seen in westward views of the house at its location on Balcadden Road and in longer distance views from the west end of Balcadden Road and the upper deck of the East Pier of Howth Harbour. While the historic overlight, door surround and timber front door though have been retained, the characterful 'margin light border' to the sash windows in the projecting front porch have been removed. The details of the external render have been changed. Originally there was a regular quoin detail to the corners of the building, this has been replaced with irregular quoins. The banding and cornice detail to the parapet of the projecting porch have been changed, altering the proportions of the porch. As stated in the Conservation Office report for F24A/1034E

"The cumulative impact of the stripping of original finishes and features from the exterior (i.e. the changes to the windows and roof) lead to a sterile and sanitised exterior that reads more as a new build interpretation of a historic house, rather than it being an actual historic property."

The Conservation Office's comments relate to the overall changes to the property and not solely to those on the north elevation. The alteration of detailing of the external render affects the

building's proportions and symmetry. The changes to the historic fabric and detailing impact all elevations (front, rear and sides), which are visible from the public footpath and roads, and this does impact on views and does not adhere to the previously mentioned policies of the Fingal Development Plan.



Changes to windows, roof, and render



Changes to windows, roof material and quoin detailing to corners of building



Changes to glazing pattern and material of windows, different quoin detailing and demolition of distinctive extension that respected the form and features of the existing house



Changes to windows and cornice detail of projecting porch

No detailed description is set out in the AHIA of all the changes made to the building or an evaluation of this from an architectural heritage or architectural conservation perspective. No comparison photographs are provided in the documentation to show the level of alteration undertaken and character removed. There has been no consultation with the Conservation Office in relation to the works carried out or any additional proposed changes.

The Conservation Office deems the interventions made to the prominent historic building of Tara Hall, that is also sited within the Howth Special Amenity Area and a High Amenity Area, to not be acceptable as they have stripped the building of the historic fabric of its roof, walls and windows, altered the detailing and inserted inappropriate materials. The size and materiality of the extension to the rear is not acceptable.

Signed:

Helena Bergin

**Senior Executive Architectural
Conservation Officer**

Position:

Date:

08/07/2026
