

*Hendrik W van der Kamp, MScEng, FIPI, MIEI*  
*Town Planner*  
*1, Woodstown Court*  
*Knocklyon*  
*Dublin 16*

*Tel: 087 2020387 E-mail: hendrikwvanderkamp@outlook.com*

**Planning Report Proposed Attic Conversion and Extension at 33,  
Orchardstown Avenue, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.**

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## 1 Introduction

This report sets out the planning considerations relevant to provide an attic conversion and extension at a detached house on Orchardstown Avenue, Rathfarnham. The proposed development takes into account the results of a pre-planning consultation with the planning authority and addresses the reason for refusal of a previous proposed attic conversion.

## 2 Site Description

No. 33, Orchardstown Avenue is a detached house which has been extended to the side. While the house and site are substantial in size, the rear garden is very limited and private amenity space is predominantly provided to the side of the dwelling. The site area is 0.0510 hectares.

## 3 South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028

The site is zoned 'RES' - 'To protect and/or improve Residential Amenity' in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028.<sup>1</sup>

The planning authority design guide for house extensions gives guidance for attic conversions and dormer windows. The design guide states that dormer windows should be located below the ridge of the roof.<sup>2</sup>

## 4 Planning History

The planning authority made a decision in September 2021 to refuse permission for an attic conversion. The single reason for refusal states the following: *... "Having regard to the proposed attic conversion, which significantly breaches the existing ridge line of the dwelling and comes off the back wall of the dwelling giving the appearance of a three storey structure, the proposed development would be visually obtrusive, would contravene the zoning objective (to protect and/or improve the amenities of property in the vicinity) and contravene the Councils House Extension Design Guide (by creating a higher ridge level than the roof of the main house). Thus, the proposed development would contravene the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and the pattern of development in the area."*<sup>3</sup> The decision was not appealed.

In 2000 an application was made to extend the house in western direction. Permission was granted for the two storey extension which has been completed.<sup>4</sup>

Permission was refused in 2018 for sub-division of the existing house into two semi-detached houses, with previously approved extension (S00B/0079) forming the new two

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<sup>1</sup> South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028, Map 6.

<sup>2</sup> *House Extension Design Guide*, South Dublin County Council, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Planning ref. SD21B/0443.

<sup>4</sup> Planning ref. S00B/0079.



storey house, with additional ground and first floor level extension to fore and site and modification of front elevation of house with new site access and associated site works.<sup>5</sup>

## 5 Pre-application Consultation

The planning authority determined in the previous refusal decision that a breaking of the roof ridge line in the manner as proposed was not acceptable. This was related to two problems with breaking the ridge line: firstly, the amount that the ridge line was proposed to be raised: 1.41 m and secondly the fact that it would give the appearance of a three storey structure by coming of the back wall of the dwelling.<sup>6</sup> However, the planner's assessment also made reference to specific circumstances of the existing house in terms of: (i) detached nature of the house, (ii) the proximity of the library building which is of contemporary design and (iii) the corner location of the site.<sup>7</sup>

A revised proposal was submitted for pre-planning advice where the roof ridge line would be raised by only 0.794 m, the mono pitch roof design removed and instead the existing slope of the roof would be maintained. In response, the planning authority considered that this revised design would not overcome the previous reason for refusal: *... "It is not considered that the revised design would address the previous reason for refusal in that the ridgeline of the roof is broken and given the sites prominent corner location, the side elevations provide for a rear dormer that is dominant and over scaled. To address these concerns the applicant might consider raising the ridgeline of the entire roof, to provide a uniform appearance, and the provision of two dormers on the rear elevation. This is likely to be more acceptable in terms of visual amenity."*<sup>8</sup>

## 6 Proposed Development

The proposed development takes into account the reason for refusal in the previous planning application as well as the pre-planning consultation advice. While raising the ridgeline of the entire roof has been considered, the applicant proposes to provide two dormers on the rear elevation, as advised, while maintaining the existing roof ridge line.

## 7 Planning Issues

With regard to an attic conversion there are three issues to be considered:

- Visual amenity
- Residential amenity of adjoining properties
- Internal ceiling height.

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<sup>5</sup> Planning ref. SD18A/0137.

<sup>6</sup> Planner's report pl. ref. SD21B/0443, p. 3 and refusal reason pl. ref. SD21B/0443.

<sup>7</sup> Planner's report pl. ref. SD21B/0443, p. 4

<sup>8</sup> Pre-planning consultation pl. ref. PP 038/22.

#### *Visual amenity*

With regard to the visual amenity, the planning authority has determined that a breaking of the roof ridge line in the manner as proposed in the previous application, is not acceptable. However, the planner's assessment in relation to the previous planning application did make reference to specific circumstances of the existing house in terms of: (i) detached nature of the house, (ii) the proximity of the library building which is of contemporary design and (iii) the corner location of the site. It is considered that the provision of two dormer windows as proposed is acceptable in planning terms having regard to the distance to the side elevation of the house and the fact that the slight slope of the dormer windows will not be visible from the Orchardstown street frontage.

#### *Overlooking*

In view of the lack of backgarden space and the resulting proximity of any dormer window to the rear of the house to adjoining gardens of houses on Orchardstown Villas, potential overlooking of garden space and rear bedroom windows must be considered. In the previous application this was addressed by confining the attic conversion part of the building to that facing the side wall of the adjoining house on Orchardstown Villas. In the current proposal the dormer windows do not extend beyond the rear building line of the houses on Orchardstown Villas and as a result there will not be any overlooking of adjoining gardens.

#### *Internal Ceiling Height*

A room internal ceiling height in accordance with building regulations, i.e. 2.4 metres, is achieved for most of the area of the converted attic.

## **8 Conclusions**

- **The proposed design has addressed the refusal reason in the previous decision pl. ref. SD21B/0443 because the existing ridge line of the dwelling is not breached and because by creating two dormer windows at the rear that do not come off the back wall of the house, the appearance of a three storey structure at the rear is avoided.**
- **The proposed design has followed advice obtained through pre-planning consultation to provide two dormers on the rear elevation.**