



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 August 2019 by Scott Britnell MSc FdA

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/U3935/D/19/3228799

153a Beechcroft Road, Swindon, SN2 7RS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr M Rawlings against the decision of Swindon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref S/HOU/19/0308/TB, dated 22 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is proposed garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area, including its effect on the adjacent tree.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is located on the north side of Beechcroft Road, occupying a wedge shaped plot with large front garden. The site sits opposite the junction with Meadowcroft and adjacent an area of public open land, giving it prominence within the street scene. The proposed garage would be located towards the south west corner of the site to the front of the host dwelling.
5. The surrounding area is residential in character, although there are a number of shops to the south west. There is also a large tree adjacent the site in close proximity to the boundary fence to the west. The stretch of Beechcroft Road to the east of the appeal site is characterised by semi-detached properties with spacious front gardens. In conjunction with the open spaces opposite and to the west of the site, this provides the area with a sense of openness.
6. Due to its position forward of the host property, in close proximity to it and at an angle to its front elevation, the new garage would result in an awkward addition that would detract from its character and appearance. Moreover, it would be a prominent and incongruous addition to the street scene. The contribution that the host property and appeal site make to the character and

appearance of the area would be diminished as a result of the proposal. I note the appellant's assertion that garages in front gardens are not uncommon, however no examples of similar structures have been provided and I did not observe anything similar within the immediate area on my site visit. This matter carries very little weight in my consideration of this appeal, and in any event, each case must be considered on its own merits.

7. The tree on the opposite side of the boundary fence to the appeal proposal occupies a prominent location opposite the junction with Meadowcroft and can be seen from a number of public vantage points. As a large and attractive specimen, it is an important feature in the street scene that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
8. The proposal would sit close to the western boundary of the appeal site, in close proximity to the tree and its branches, some of which overhang the appeal site. The appellant states that the proposal would sit on the existing concrete slab with the roof line below the tree crown. However, as the new garage would be constructed of brickwork¹, there is a high probability that foundations would need to be constructed for it. In the absence of an arboricultural assessment and/or details of the construction of the garage, it is unclear whether or not the proposal would result in works or damage to the tree which could affect its health and longevity, and the likely effect this may have on the character and appearance of the area.
9. In light of the foregoing, I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area. There is also insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposal could be undertaken without causing harm to the adjacent tree. I find conflict with Policies DE1 and EN4 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 which seek, among other things, to ensure that development responds to the context and character of a site and its surroundings and protects and enhances biodiversity.

Conclusion and Recommendation

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Scott Britnell

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR

¹ As stated on the planning application form