
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 July 2020

by S. Rennie BSc (Hons), BA (Hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/U3935/D/20/3251449

11 Swanbrook, Covingham, Swindon SN3 5AJ

- 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 Colin Reason against the decision of Swindon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref S/HOU/20/0271/LZWI, dated 21 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is a side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a side extension at 11 Swanbrook, Covingham, Swindon SN3 5AJ, in accordance with the application Ref: S/HOU/20/0271/LZWI, dated 21 February 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, reference 3091/1.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

Reasons

3. No 11 Swanbrook is a relatively modern dwelling in a residential area of Swindon. The area is characterised by semi-detached houses, with there being many examples of side extensions (both single and two storey) evident on houses. Indeed, No 13 Swanbrook has a two storey side extension up to the boundary with No 11.
4. The proposal is for a two storey side extension which would extend almost to the boundary with No 13, to the side of this neighbour's existing side extension, leaving only a small gap.

5. The Council have an adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled 'Residential Extensions and Alterations', which states that side extensions should extend no more than half the width of the principle elevation and also that terracing of properties is resisted, amongst other requirements. In this case, the proposed extension would be more than half of the width of the original front elevation. However, I observed several examples within the street and wider residential area of extensions up to the side boundaries which would be over half the width of the principle elevations. These examples are numerous to the extent that the proposed extension and its width would not appear out of keeping with the character of the area. Furthermore, No 11 is not a particularly wide property and so I do not regard it as excessive for the side addition to extend to the width proposed in this circumstance.
6. The small gap that would remain between the extensions of Nos 13 and 11 would be such that there would be no real visual space evident between the buildings. It may even appear like the extensions are connected. However, the proposed extension would be a subservient addition, being set back from the front elevation at first floor and also set down from the ridge line (similar to the existing extension to No 13) and so it would clearly appear like an extension rather than part of a purposefully designed terraced row. The view through to the rear of the property would be closed off, but this is not a view of any significant importance, with this being a view of the rear of other similar houses primarily.
7. Furthermore, there are side extensions at the houses of Nos 15 and 17 Swanbrook. There is more of a gap between these properties, although this is narrow and provides little visual gap between the buildings. I also note the extensions in the wider residential area of extensions being built up close to the boundaries, similar to that proposed. These may have been built some time ago, maybe before the adoption of the SPD, but nonetheless they are evident locally and now contribute to the character of these streets.
8. Whilst I acknowledge that the Council seeks to resist side extensions of excessive width and the terracing of properties, for the reasons outlined above, there would be no harm to the character and appearance of this street scene as a result of this proposed development. Any visual effect would not be such that it would significantly change the prevailing character of this street. Furthermore, if the extension as proposed were to be set in slightly more from the boundary I am not of the opinion that this would have any material benefit when viewed from within the street scene compared to that now proposed in these circumstances.
9. For these reasons, the proposal would not harm either the character and appearance of the existing house or the street and is therefore in accordance with policy DE1 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 which requires development to be of a high quality design which respects existing building characteristics, amongst other things. Furthermore, the proposal is in general accordance with the design policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Conditions

10. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council against the requirements of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the Framework.

11. I have attached the standard time limit condition and a 'plans' condition as this provides certainty. I have also added a condition concerning materials to ensure a satisfactory appearance.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the appeal is allowed, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 1 above.

S. Rennie

INSPECTOR