
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2021

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U3935/W/20/3260867
66 Beaulieu Close, Swindon SN5 8AH

- 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 A Bains against the decision of Swindon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref S/20/0712/CHHO, dated 18 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is to convert the house to three flats with a side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The area is made up of residential properties, many with the distinctive mono-pitch roofs and set in short terraces. The gaps between these terraces allow for views through the dwellings and contribute to a sense of openness.
4. The proposal is to convert the house to three flats, although this would include a two storey side extension. The proposed extension would reflect the character and roof form of the existing house and be set back from the existing frontage to give a staggered appearance.
5. However, the two storey extension would be built up towards the side boundary with the neighbouring property at No 65 Beaulieu Close. There is a single storey flat roof garage to the side of No 66 which abuts the boundary with No 65, but this low profile structure still allows for a visual break between the two adjacent terraces, with views to the trees towards the rear for example. The proposed two storey extension would erode this characteristic feature with the remaining gap being so narrow as to likely give the impression that the terraces were connected.
6. The proposed extension would be subservient to some extent when contrasted visually with the existing dwelling at No 66. However, the proposed extension would still be a sizable extension with a ridge line not far below the existing ridge of No 66 for example. Therefore, the degree of subservience is not sufficient to address this issue of the loss of the visual gap between terraces.

7. The proposed extension would thereby close off much of the gap between the two terrace rows which is currently a positive and characteristic feature on this distinct street scene. There are some longer terraces, but the gaps between are important features, providing some visual relief in an otherwise high density housing area.
8. On this basis the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, thereby being contrary to policy DE1 of the Swindon Local Plan (2015). This policy requires development to be of a high quality design which respects the context and character of the existing built characteristics, amongst other things. The suggested conditions would not overcome this harm.
9. I am aware that the proposal would provide for additional dwellings towards Swindon's housing land supply, but the harm as described above would significantly and demonstrably outweigh this and all other associated benefits, especially considering the proposal would be for only a net increase of two flats.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, in considering all matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

Steven Rennie

INSPECTOR