



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2023

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 September 2023.

Appeal Ref: APP/U3935/D/23/3321732

2 New Farm Cottages, The Ridgeway, Chiseldon, SN4 0HT

- 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 P Butler against the decision of Swindon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref S/HOU/22/1757/JAAB, dated 23 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single-storey rear extension, two-storey side extension, hip to gable conversion and to demolish existing detached garage and rebuild with double attached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application was amended with revised plans altering an originally proposed gabled roof to a hip end. My consideration of the appeal is based upon the revisions that were made.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is one half of an originally symmetrical two-storey, semi-detached pair of cottages that stand alone and close to the roadside along a rural lane. No 2 has previously been extended to the side at first-floor over an original side projection. The proposal would project the hipped roof form of the existing dwelling sideways at two-storey and with a double-width attached garage to the side. A single-storey extension is also proposed to the rear, spanning the combined width of the existing side extension and the proposed two-storey extension.
5. Despite only a marginal recess at first-floor level, and a minor step down from the ridge to the main dwelling, the existing side extension to No 2 appears proportionate and well-balanced, even if not symmetrically arranged with No 1. It has a degree of subservience which allows the original form of the building to remain dominant.

6. The proposed two-storey side extension would follow the height and recess of the existing extension but would create a combined addition almost comparable in size at first-floor level to the width of the original dwelling. The linked garage, with a ridge height rising up to the first-floor eaves, would be a further dominant addition that would add more emphasis to the resulting building's disproportionate width.
7. By extending more than half the width of the original dwelling's principal elevation at first floor, the combined form of the side extensions would conflict with one of the guiding principles for all side extensions within the Council's *Residential Extensions & Alterations Supplementary Planning Document 2011* (SPD). The SPD expressly recognises that an oversized side extension can cause significant disruption to the balance of a host building and cause harm to the character and appearance of the house and general street scene. It also recognises the need for extensions to be, amongst other things, in scale and proportion and with a vertical or horizontal emphasis in character with the existing dwelling. Whilst I accept that the SPD offers only guidance, the circumstances and context of No 2 indicate to me that the appeal proposal represents the size and type of side extension the SPD advises against.
8. By reason of the combined width of the side extensions at first-floor level, and the excessive width of the side extensions overall, the proposal would fail to display any reasonable degree of subservience. The overall result would be one half of a semi-detached pair that would appear disproportionately wide in relation to its attached neighbour. Its over-exaggerated horizontal emphasis would appear incongruous and out of keeping with the modest proportions of the original semi-detached pair of cottages. This would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building and the wider street scene.
9. The position of the extension to the rear would be dependent upon the extensions to the side of the existing dwelling and therefore, by association, would be part of the over-wide additions that would lead to the harm that I have identified.
10. The appellant has referenced a planning permission granted for an allegedly similar extension to No 1 (Ref S/10/1730). However, I have not been provided with any details of the extensions that were approved and at the time of my visit I saw that No 1 was un-extended to the side. I am therefore unable to draw any comparisons between the appeal proposal and any extensions that may have previously been permitted at No 1. Neither have I been presented with any substantive evidence to support the appellant's assertion that the past permission has not lapsed and remains extant. Moreover, I have considered the appeal based upon the individual merits of the case and having regard to current guidance and development plan policy. Based upon the information I have available to me, the past circumstances at No 1 carry little weight in support of the proposal at No 2.
11. I note there is some dispute between the parties over the percentage figure increase in proposed floorspace over the original building. However, this has not been instrumental in my reasoning.
12. The appellant has suggested that the proposed garage could be detached from the side extension and separated from it by 1m. However, that is not before me and would represent a materially different proposal. I am bound to deal with the proposal as it was submitted to, and determined by, the Council.

Conclusions

13. For the reasons given, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. By failing to respect the context and existing built characteristics of the appeal site and its surroundings, the proposal would be contrary to Policy DE1 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026, adopted in 2015, which requires high quality design in all development.
14. I recognise that there were no neighbour objections and that the Parish Council supported the proposal, but these factors do not alter my conclusions. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR