



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 December 2023 by Max Webb BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/U3935/D/23/3330589

32 Beaufort Road, Wroughton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN4 9HE

- 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 Laura Bright against the decision of Swindon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref S/HOU/23/0814/JAAB, dated 10 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is side, ground floor and first floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) on 19 December 2023. Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this appeal are the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; the living conditions of the occupiers of 30 Beaufort Road, with particular regard to outlook and light; and highway safety.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

5. The area is characterised by pairs of generally modest semi-detached bungalows of various styles, set back from the road with largely open frontages. The appeal site and its attached neighbour are typical of this area and sit on angled plots that result in a sizeable gap to the neighbouring dwellings either side.

6. The area contains a variety of properties and alterations and there are garages between many properties. However, gaps between pairs, particularly at roof level, form an important part of the character of the area in the vicinity of the appeal site, giving it a spacious appearance.
7. The proposal would follow the angled boundary with the neighbouring property, so would be wider at the front than at the rear. It would be level with the principal elevation of the property, with the same ridge height. Combined with the large dormers proposed, this would give the extension considerable bulk and significantly alter the scale and proportions of the existing modest bungalow. Consequently, it would result in an incongruous addition to the existing dwelling and harm the character of the area.
8. The existing pair is already somewhat unbalanced because only No 32 has a front dormer. Nevertheless, they remain typical of the modest, simple bungalows that characterise the area. The scale and bulk of the proposal would exacerbate the lack of balance across the semi-detached pair and significantly reduce the gap to No 30, particularly at roof level. This would diminish the spacious appearance of the area. Consequently, the proposal would not respect the context and character of the area.
9. Other properties in the area have been altered and extended to the side, including 46 Boness Road. However, No 46 leaves a substantial gap to the neighbouring property, so does not cause the same harm to the built characteristics of the area as the appeal proposal would. In any case, I have not been provided with the full details for this nearby development, such as when it was built, whether it was considered under the same policy context, and the reasons why it was considered acceptable. It is therefore not comparable to the appeal proposal and does not justify the harm identified.
10. Overall, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policy DE1 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (adopted March 2015), insofar as it requires a high standard of design which considers existing built characteristics, context and character. It would also go against the aims of the Residential Extensions & Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (adopted October 2011), which, in relation to side extensions, explains the importance of gaps between buildings to ensure a spacious, open appearance to an area.

Living conditions

11. No 30 has side windows at ground floor level and in the gable serving bathrooms and a landing, some of which are obscure glazed. Light and outlook from the ground floor windows are currently affected by the garage of No 32.
12. The proposal would reduce the gap to No 30 at roof level, resulting in a blank gable end and the sides of two dormers facing the neighbour. As the extension would be taller than the existing garage, there would be some reduction in outlook and light to the facing windows in No 30. However, as these do not serve habitable rooms, this would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 30. The proposal would not therefore conflict with Policy DE1 of the Local Plan insofar as it relates to amenity, including with respect to light and outlook.

Highway safety

13. The Council advises that to comply with the Swindon Parking Standards for New Development February 2021, dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms in this location would require a minimum of three parking spaces. This is to ensure that new development does not prejudice highway safety through a lack of parking provision. The addition of another bedroom as part of this proposal would not move the property into a higher bracket within the Council's parking standards, so does not require additional parking spaces to be provided.
14. From my site visit, it was evident that the site frontage allows for cars to be parked off-street and that the existing garage is an inadequate size to act as a parking space. Therefore, the proposal would not result in a loss of parking spaces and would not affect the safe usage of the highway compared to the existing situation.
15. As a result, the proposal would not cause harm to highway safety and would not conflict with Policy TR2 of the Local Plan, which states that parking provision should be in accordance with the adopted parking standards.

Other Matters

16. The existing garage is in poor condition but is typical of the area and does not significantly detract from the character and appearance of the area. If it poses a health and safety issue for the homeowner, this could be demolished separately from this appeal proposal. I therefore accord this matter limited weight, which does not outweigh the harm identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

17. The proposal would conflict with the Local Plan and national policy, and there are no material considerations that justify granting planning permission in conflict with the development plan. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Max Webb

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

18. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and I agree with their reasoning and recommendation. On that basis the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR