
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2025

by **Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/25/3366405
117B Northend Road, Erith, Bexley DA8 3PZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr I. Sandu against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref is 24/02763/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a new house to the side of the existing house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - whether the proposal would provide adequate living conditions for the future occupiers, with particular regard to the internal layout; and
 - whether the proposal would provide adequate fire safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The proposed dwelling would occupy a plot at the end of an established short terrace block which currently mirrors a corresponding terrace to the north of the site, creating a balanced and uniform built form. The introduction of a dwelling on this constrained plot would disrupt this symmetry, eroding the distinctive rhythm and balance of the paired terraces.
4. The appellant has referred to other dwellings along Northend Road positioned closer to the highway, and to the presence of varied building lines along the street. However, whilst there are dwellings with different orientations and plot configurations, these properties do not sit within a matched pair of terraced blocks in the same way as the appeal site and therefore have no bearing on the visual impact of the proposal.
5. It is also noted that the appellant draws attention to the fact that the principal entrance would face Northfield Road. While this reflects the pedestrian access arrangement of the existing terrace, it does not mitigate the harm arising from the building's massing and proximity to Northend Road. The narrowness of the plot,

together with the extended footprint, would still result in a development that appears cramped and discordant within the immediate context, particularly from public views along Northend Road.

6. For these reasons, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policies SP5 and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan (2023) insofar as they seek to ensure proposals are of high-quality design, respect surrounding character and context, and contribute positively to the street scene.

Living Conditions

7. Policy D6 of the London Plan (2021) requires all new dwellings to meet the nationally described space standards and to provide adequate internal and external living conditions for future occupants. For a two-storey, two-bedroom, three-person dwelling, the required gross internal area is 70 sqm. The appeal scheme would provide only 60 sqm, falling significantly below the standard for its type.
8. According to the Council, the smaller of the two bedrooms would measure only 6.8 sqm, below the minimum 7.5 sqm required for a single bedroom. This deficiency would materially reduce the functionality of the space, undermining its suitability for long-term occupation. While the appellant emphasises that the property would have adequate private garden space to the front and rear, the provision of external amenity does not offset the harm arising from substandard internal space. Adequate external amenity is a separate requirement and does not justify non-compliance with minimum internal standards.
9. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to provide an adequate internal layout and would thus harm the living conditions of the future occupants. It would conflict with Policy DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan (2023) and Policy D6 of the London Plan (2021) insofar as they seek to ensure developments are well-designed and provide adequately sized rooms with comfortable and functional layouts.

Fire Safety

10. Policy D12 (Part A) of the London Plan (2021) requires all development proposals to be supported by a Fire Safety Strategy. No such strategy has been submitted. The purpose of Policy D12 is to ensure that fire safety is integrated into the design at an early stage, not addressed retrospectively. The absence of this information means compliance cannot be verified and the safety of the future occupants cannot be ensured.
11. Given this, the proposal would not provide adequate fire safety. It would therefore conflict with Policy D12 of the London Plan which seeks to ensure that development proposals achieve the highest standards of fire safety.

Other Matters

12. The appellant has referred to the contribution that the proposal would make towards housing delivery and the potential benefits of developing a small site. While such matters align with the general aims of the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework to boost the supply of housing, the delivery of a single dwelling would make only a modest contribution in numerical terms. These benefits would not outweigh the significant harm identified to the character

and appearance of the area, the failure to provide adequate living conditions, and the lack of compliance with fire safety requirements.

13. The appellant also states that the proposal would meet the latest building regulations and be accessible to disabled users and wheelchairs. However, compliance with building regulations is a separate matter from planning and is dealt with under different legislation. Furthermore, the internal layout and substandard bedroom size identified earlier would limit the overall quality and functionality of the accommodation, irrespective of any building regulations compliance.

Conclusion

14. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
15. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

INSPECTOR