
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2025

by **H Whitfield BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/25/3369662

84 Darwin Road, Welling, Bexley DA16 2EG

- 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 D Limbu against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref is 25/00711/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing ancillary structures for the construction of a new dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - highway and pedestrian safety on Darwin Road.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site relates to a detached bungalow located at the entrance onto Darwin Road. The site occupies a prominent position at the junction with Huxley Road and contains two flat roofed garages in its south-western corner, close to the highway. The garages are built adjoining the common boundary wall to the rear of properties on Westwood Lane. However, as Westwood Lane backs onto the appeal site and the garages are orientated to face Darwin Road, they are not read in the same context.
4. Darwin Road is predominately residential in character and contains a variety of mostly two-storey, detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings. On the appeal site side of the street, properties are positioned back from the highway behind front driveways and are orientated to face the road, resulting in a relatively uniform building line that responds to the curvature of the street. This provides a sense of spaciousness and regularity to the otherwise relatively dense urban grain. While there are some examples of extensions and the garages at the appeal site which project past the build line, these are subservient forms of development which do not undermine the overall rhythm and regular pattern of development.
5. The appeal scheme would replace the existing garages with a T-shaped dwelling. The dwelling would be positioned adjacent to the side boundary wall, on a diagonal alignment to No 84 and significantly forward of the established building line of the

adjacent properties on Darwin Road with very limited front garden space. While single storey and constructed in materials to assimilate with the local vernacular, the dwelling's siting, orientation and appearance would disrupt the rhythm and pattern of surrounding development. This would reduce the sense of spaciousness in the street scene and result in an uncharacteristic and incongruous form of development, the effect of which would be heightened by the site's highly prominent position. The site is not within a Conservation Area. However, the development would nevertheless fail to successfully integrate with its surroundings, adversely affecting the character and appearance of the area.

6. The appellant contends that the appeal scheme would meet the external amenity space standards set in the Development Plan and would provide space for on-site cycle and refuse storage for each property. However, No 84 would be left with an uncharacteristically small plot and limited external amenity area. This, coupled with the contrasting siting of the new dwelling and its relationship with the front and side boundaries of the site, would result in a cramped and contrived arrangement that is symptomatic of overdevelopment and would fail to relate well to the surrounding area.
7. The existing garages are of functional form and appearance, sited forward of the established building line and have a similar alignment as the proposed dwelling. However, given their reduced height, scale and massing, they read as subservient structures in the street scene. As such, they are not inherently harmful to the overall character and appearance of the area. In contrast, the appeal scheme would result in a larger, distinctly separate form of development that would directly contrast with the pattern of development and therefore would not result in any enhancement to the site. The incorporation of boundary treatments and landscaping to the site frontage would do little to mitigate the effect of the development or enhance the appearance of the area either.
8. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This is contrary to Policies SP5 and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan (2023) and Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021) insofar as they expect high quality design that enhances local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout and scale and compliment the street scene and surrounding area.

Highway and pedestrian safety

9. The existing garages are served by a dropped kerb directly off Darwin Road with an area of hardstanding to their frontages and space for on-plot parking is provided within the front garden area of No 84. There is no substantive evidence before me that the space to the front of the garages is in constant and regular use for the parking of vehicles and there was no vehicle parked there at the time of my site inspection. From my observations, most properties in the vicinity of the appeal site appeared to have on-plot parking.
10. The evidence indicates that the site is located in an area with good accessibility to public transport (PTAL level 4) as well as being within a Controlled Parking Zone.
11. The plans show the new dwelling would be served by the existing dropped kerb with one parking space to its front, at the back edge of the pavement. Due to the positioning of the dwelling, the parking space would be located on the bend of the road, at an angle to the highway and opposite the junction with Huxley Road. No space for a vehicle to turn within the site would be provided.

12. The Bexley Council Design and Development Control Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) states that sightlines should be provided for pedestrians and drivers to see each other and to ensure that a vehicle is not driven blindly onto the footway. Such sightlines should be a minimum of 2.4m x 2.4m between the vehicle hardstanding and the back of the footway. Within this sightline envelope no structure or landscaping should exceed 0.6m in height except individual items less than 0.45m wide, such as lamp columns.
13. The plans do not show any vehicular or pedestrian visibility splays. However, the appeal site is on the bend of the road and the Council contend that the brick boundary wall to the rear of 47 Westwood Lane, adjacent to the appeal site, would obstruct visibility of a vehicle rejoining the highway from the proposed parking space such that it would be over the carriageway before a driver would have any visibility of the footway. This could bring vehicles into conflict with users of Darwin Road and pedestrians using the pavement.
14. While the development is for one dwelling and would utilise an existing access, the development would likely result in the more regular and constant use of the access for parking. This would lead to an intensification of the use of this access, which appears on the evidence before me to have restricted visibility. In the absence of any substantive evidence that demonstrates appropriate visibility splays can be achieved, I am not satisfied that the appeal scheme would provide safe access without compromising pedestrian and vehicular safety.
15. The appellant suggests a condition could be imposed to require design amendments to provide adequate visibility splays. However, it is unclear whether the required splays could be achieved without necessitating alterations to land that is outside of the appellant's ownership, which could not be secured by a condition. The appellant also suggests that as the site has good access to public transport and would include on-site cycle storage, a condition could be imposed to require the development to be car-free. However, the appellant has not put forward any suggested wording for a condition or any other mechanism that would secure the development as such. Therefore, I cannot be certain that this would be reasonable, enforceable or would overcome the harm identified.
16. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that in the absence of satisfactory visibility splays, the development would be harmful to highway and pedestrian safety on Darwin Road. This conflicts with Policy DP24 of the Bexley Local Plan and Policy T4 of the London Plan insofar as they seek to ensure that proposals do not increase road danger and do not have a significant negative effect on the safety of any users, including vulnerable users of the transport network such as pedestrians and cyclists.
17. The Council refers to Policy SP10 of the Bexley Local Plan in its reason for refusal. However, as this relates to the more strategic aspirations for the transport network within the Borough it is not determinative in my consideration of this main issue.

Other Matters

18. Whilst the Council has not raised any objections to the proposal in terms of the living conditions of neighbouring and future occupiers, ecology or fire safety, compliance with the development plan or any other relevant standards in these respects is a neutral factor.

19. The appellant refers to the site as previously developed land. However, from the evidence before me the garages on the appeal site relate to No 84 Darwin Road. As the National Planning Policy Framework excludes land in built-up areas such as residential gardens from the definition of previously developed land, I have not treated it as such.
20. The development is also described as a self-build scheme in some of the supporting documents. However, there is no substantive evidence before me that demonstrates the development would meet the definition of a self-build home as set out in the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended). No mechanism has been provided to secure the development as self-build in any event. On this basis, I have not considered it as such.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

21. The proposal would make an effective use of land by delivering one dwelling in a location with good access to public transport, services and facilities. The development would therefore make a small but beneficial contribution to the choice of homes in the borough and its supply of housing land; as well as providing social and economic benefits during construction and after occupation. Additional landscaping would also provide minor biodiversity benefits. However, given the scale of the development, any social, economic or environmental benefits associated with the delivery of one dwelling would be relatively limited and would not outweigh the harm I have identified.
22. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

H Whitfield

INSPECTOR