



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2025

by V Goldberg BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/25/3367268

Rear of 38 Old Farm Avenue, Sidcup, Kent DA15 8AF

- 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 M Catton against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref is 25/00462/FUL.
 - The development proposed is new self-build 1 bedroom bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address on the application form refers to the existing dwelling on site as opposed to the land to the rear of it. The decision notice and appeal form refer to the appeal site as rear of 38 Old Farm Avenue, therefore the site address in the banner heading above has been amended to correlate with these documents, as this best reflects the address of the appeal site.
3. Amended plans have been submitted as part of the appeal, indicating a minor adjustment to the location of the proposed off-street parking space and vehicle access. This alteration does not constitute a fundamental change to the proposal. The Council's Highway Officer and interested parties have had the opportunity to review the revised plans during the appeal. Accordingly, I am satisfied that it would be procedurally fair to accept them. The Council confirms that it has no objections to the revised parking area and vehicle access and on this basis the second reason for refusal has been addressed.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located to the rear of 38 Old Farm Avenue and is accessed via Old Farm Road East. Old Farm Avenue is predominantly characterised by two-storey semi-detached dwellings featuring two-storey projecting bays. Similar properties are found along Old Farm Road East, although the surrounding area includes a mix of detached and terraced houses. Despite some variation in architectural style, the dwellings generally face the road, have a vertical emphasis, comparable widths, and are set behind small front gardens. This consistent arrangement contributes to a coherent and established suburban character which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area.

6. Despite the design of the proposal being altered and reduced in scale from a previous scheme, and it benefits from a larger area of private amenity space, the overall design and proportions remain at odds with the prevailing character of the area. This is because the proposed bungalow would be notably lower and wider compared to neighbouring dwellings. While the surrounding context includes a mix of property types, they share common characteristics, such as a vertical emphasis and consistent scale that the proposal would lack. Although the scheme would not constitute overdevelopment and would maintain adequate separation from adjacent dwellings, it would nonetheless appear incongruous within its setting and fail to integrate successfully with the established pattern of development.
7. Policy D3 of the London Plan promotes a design-led approach to optimising site capacity. While the proposal would make efficient use of the land, it has not been demonstrated that this could not be achieved through an alternative scheme that better reflects and integrates with the established pattern of development. The efficient use of land, although desirable, must be balanced with the need for proposals to respond positively to their context and contribute to local character. In this case, the design fails to achieve that balance.
8. While the proposal would not adversely impact neighbouring residential amenity and would utilise complimentary materials while providing residential accommodation of a compliant standard, this does not override the need for the design of the proposal to protect the character of the area.
9. For the above reasons, the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies SP5, and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan 2023 and Policy D3 of the London Plan. Amongst other things, these policies seek proposals to be design led and contribute positively to the local environment.

Other Matters

10. Whilst there have been no objections to the scheme, this would not imply that the proposal complies with the development plan.
11. The appeal scheme is detailed as self-build in the description of development, but a self-build exemption claim form has not been submitted, the appellant has not demonstrated that he is on the self-build register and there is no mechanism to ensure that the proposal would be constructed or used in this manner.
12. Whilst the proposal is a small windfall site which would positively contribute to the supply of homes, given the quantum of development, this benefit would be limited and should not come at the expense of the harm identified. Accordingly, the harm would not be outweighed by the benefits.

Conclusion

13. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it, accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

V Goldberg

INSPECTOR