



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 October 2025

by **P H Wallace BSc (Hons) DipMS MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/25/3370489

30 Bourne Road, Bexley DA5 1LU

- 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 B Barry against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref is 25/00929/FUL.
 - The development proposed is formation of vehicular crossover and hardstanding to front of property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading is taken from the application form and for clarity, also incorporates wording used by the Council, which more precisely reflects the nature of the proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would achieve a safe and suitable access.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey end-of-terrace house in a row of similarly designed dwellings on the west side of the road. These are set behind shallow front gardens with low boundary walls abutting the pavement. Several frontages incorporate mature shrub planting and bin storage; the shrubbery partially screens some frontages from view when approached along the road. In contrast, the terrace houses on the opposite side have open paved forecourts capable of perpendicular parking, with parallel parking evident further along that frontage.
5. The appeal proposal involves the formation of a vehicular crossover, the removal of the front boundary wall, and the installation of a hardstanding designed to accommodate a parallel parking space with an electric vehicle (EV) charging point.
6. In front of the site, Bourne Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit, which reduces to 20mph a short distance to the south. It is covered by a 'no-waiting' restriction between 08:30 and 18:30, Monday to Saturday, and serves a number of regular bus routes. At the time of my site visit I observed a steady flow of traffic along Bourne Road, with vehicles generally accelerating immediately south of the site on leaving the nearby 20 mph zone. I also observed pedestrians using the pavement immediately adjacent to the site.

7. Bourne Road is designated as a London Distributor Road (LDR) under saved Policy G18 of the Bexley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2004, which seeks to manage the borough's roads according to their function. Section 5 of the Council's Design and Development Control Guidelines (DCG) to the UDP identifies LDRs, excluding Strategic Roads, as among the borough's most significant traffic routes.
8. To safeguard their key function as routes for traffic movements, the DCG sets out a presumption against new vehicular access onto specified LDRs, including Bourne Road. The proposed creation of a parking space and crossover would not comply with this guidance. However, the DCG does allow for new accesses onto other LDRs subject to defined criteria. In assessing this appeal for a single access, I have had regard to these factors insofar as they are relevant. These include the provision of a turning area within the property, the avoidance of any hazard likely to result in an accident, such as inadequate sight lines, and the provision of a minimum hardstanding area (4.8m long by 2.4m wide) laid out to ensure no part of a parked vehicle overhangs the public highway.
9. The plot width of the appeal site is approximately 4.9m (measured between the mid-points of the side boundaries) and the front garden depth varies between about 3.6m and 4.5m; the side boundaries are formed by a low wall and a wall with railing insets. Although the garden space could, in theory, accommodate a vehicle parked parallel to the house, there would be very little space to manoeuvre. Taken together with the boundary features at either end, the access angle and the likely need to accommodate bin storage, the submitted dimensions do not demonstrate that a vehicle could conveniently enter and leave the proposed hardstanding in forward gear. As a result, parallel parking would be likely to require multiple manoeuvres, some of which could obstruct the carriageway or footway.
10. Because of the lack of manoeuvring space, there is a real risk that drivers would park diagonally across the frontage or reverse onto the highway when departing, both of which could result in the footway being blocked or constricted. This could pose a safety risk to pedestrians, who may step off the pavement and onto the well used road to avoid a parked or manoeuvring vehicle. The risk would be of particular concern for more vulnerable pedestrians (such as children, people with prams, wheelchair users and those who are visually impaired).
11. The constrained forecourt geometry and its likely effect on how vehicles would park and exit, together with screening from adjacent foliage, would reduce drivers' ability to obtain a clear view of approaching traffic on Bourne Road when leaving the site. Northbound drivers, transitioning from the 20 mph to 30 mph zone, are likely to be focused on maintaining progress within the traffic stream and may not expect sudden manoeuvres into or out of a short, partly screened forecourt where west-side front-court parking is largely absent. In this context the anticipated use of the access would be likely to result in a risk to highway safety.
12. I acknowledge the appellant's argument that the provision of an EV charging point would contribute to the transition towards electric vehicles and support wider carbon reduction objectives. These are material considerations. However, they do not outweigh the identified harm to highway safety.
13. The appellant has referred to locations nearby where off-street parking takes place with and without dropped kerbs in place. While these examples are presented as precedents, no evidence, such as planning permission references, have been

provided. I am therefore unaware of the circumstances by which those came to be built. Each case must be assessed on its own merits, and it has not been demonstrated that the specific circumstances at these locations are comparable to the development before me.

14. For the reasons given, the proposed development would fail to provide a safe and suitable access and would result in harm to highway safety, contrary to saved Policy G18 and Design and Development Control Guideline 5 of the UDP (2004), as well as saved Policy CS15 of the Bexley Core Strategy (2012), which, amongst other things, emphasise the importance of maintaining a safe and effective highway network.

Other Matters

15. The Council is satisfied the development would not cause harm to the living conditions of neighbours or the character and appearance of the area. I have no reason to disagree with these conclusions, noting that the physical changes to the frontage would be very modest in the context of the wider street frontage. Compliance with the development plan in these respects is a neutral factor.
16. An interested party has raised concerns about potential damage to a sewer beneath the site. While this is capable of being a material issue, as I am dismissing the appeal, I have not considered this matter further. Other issues raised relating to harm to private property and loss of property value are matters of private law and are not, in themselves, normally a material planning consideration.
17. I have noted the appellant's concerns regarding the Council's handling of the application, including the pre-application advice given. However, such matters are not for me to consider in the context of a section 78 appeal. I appreciate that the appellant may have incurred costs in pursuing the application, including in response to advice received. However, I am required to assess the planning merits of the scheme against the development plan and other material considerations. Based on the evidence provided and my observations on site, I have found the scheme to be unacceptable for the reasons given.

Conclusion

18. I conclude the proposal would conflict with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

PH Wallace

INSPECTOR