



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2025

by SJ Desai BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/D/25/3373971

27 Ely Close, Erith, Bexley DA8 2EA

- 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 I Stoica against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref is 25/01385/FUL.
 - The development proposed is formation of vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. I have amended the description of development in the banner heading to that used on the Decision Notice, Appeal Form and appellant's statement. This is a more accurate description of development than that given on the application form and ensures that it captures the scope of the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area; and,
 - the effect upon highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property lies on the southern side of Ely Close, a short residential cul-de-sac where soft-landscaped front gardens, grassed frontages, and generally open forecourt spaces collectively establish a coherent and visually unified character. Dropped kerbs are present within the street but these predominantly provide pedestrian access to the side of properties.
5. The existing frontage at the appeal site aligns with this established pattern. Its grassed area and unobtrusive arrangement reinforce the consistent rhythm and spatial quality of front gardens along Ely Close. Even where boundary treatments vary the common presence of open, soft-landscaped, frontages ensure visual cohesion and a settled character.

6. The proposal would introduce a vehicular access and replace a substantial proportion of the soft-landscaped frontage to provide for off-street parking. This would fundamentally disrupt the prevailing arrangement, undermining the positive contribution made by the continuity of open soft frontages.
7. The resulting frontage, dominated by vehicle parking and its associated surface treatment, would appear stark, intrusive and incongruous when set against the softer, more permeable front gardens that characterise the surrounding dwellings. Its visual impact would be heightened by its prominence within a short cul-de-sac where changes are readily perceived.
8. The appellant suggests that additional planting and details of surface treatment could be secured by condition. However, no indicative plan has been provided, and in the absence of any alternative or illustrative scheme I cannot conclude that such planting or surface treatment would effectively mitigate the harmful visual effects identified. More fundamentally, discrete pockets of planting would not overcome the dominant presence of vehicle parking or reinstate the lost openness of the current frontage.
9. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would conflict with Policies SP5 and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan (2023) (BLP), which require high-quality design and respect for local character.

Highway safety

10. The submitted plans do not demonstrate that a vehicle of standard dimensions could be safely accommodated or manoeuvred, including by way of the parallel-parking arrangement advanced by the appellant, without requiring encroachment onto, or overhang of, the footway. In practice, reversing manoeuvres would necessarily occur across the full width of the proposed access, heightening the risk of conflict with pedestrians, including vulnerable users. This arrangement is not comparable to typical on-street parallel parking, which does not require vehicles to cross the footway or undertake manoeuvres within a constrained private frontage.
11. Although Ely Close is a cul-de-sac with lower levels of through-traffic, this does not remove the potential for conflict. The proposal lies adjacent to a narrowing of the carriageway and near an area of established on-street parking, conditions which, when coupled with reduced visibility caused by adjacent parked vehicles, create an environment where there would be an increased risk of accidents to pedestrians, particularly to vulnerable users, and increased danger to road users.
12. The appellant's reference to an absence of recorded accidents associated with nearby crossovers does not provide compelling evidence of safety. The fact that no incidents have been recorded does not equate to the conclusion that risk is negligible or that new access points will operate safely. Each proposal must be judged on its merits, and in this case the limited manoeuvring envelope and interaction with the footway collectively indicate an unacceptable level of risk.
13. The proposal would result in the loss of one on-street parking space. However, this could be offset by the off-street parking space proposed. Notwithstanding, based on the availability of on-street parking I observed on site and in the absence of any parking survey data before me to suggest otherwise, the development would not result in competition for parking that could be considered unduly harmful to traffic

flow or highway safety. I find no conflict with Policy DP23 of the BLP in this regard. I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact upon highway safety due to the availability of on-street parking.

14. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above, the development would harm highway safety associated with vehicles accessing the appeal property and footway users passing by it. For these reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with Policy DP24 of the BLP, which requires development not to have a significant negative effect on the safety of highway users.

Other Matters

15. I acknowledge that securing sustainable development is a well-established objective of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework); however, in this case, the limited benefits advanced by the appellant attract only limited weight and are significantly outweighed by the harm and conflict with the development plan I have identified.

Conclusion

16. The proposal does not accord with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with it.
17. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

SJ Desai

INSPECTOR