



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2025

by **J Heppell BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/25/3372834

81 Holly Hill Road, Erith, Bexley DA8 1QB

- 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 Moore against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref is 25/01044/FUL.
 - The development proposed is hip to gable loft conversion with rear dormer with 3 no. roof lights to the front pitch, 3m single storey rear extension, and to facilitate the change of use from class C3 - Dwelling house to C4 6-person HMO.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for hip to gable loft conversion with rear dormer with 3 no. roof lights to the front pitch, 3m single storey rear extension, and to facilitate the change of use from class C3 - Dwelling house to C4 6-person HMO at 81 Holly Hill Road, Erith, Bexley DA8 1QB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/01044/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal was accompanied by a Fire Safety Strategy which satisfied the Council's requirements, as a result of which it did not defend the reason for refusal relating to fire safety. I find no reason to take a contrary view to the Council on this matter.

Main Issue

3. In light of the above, the main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the concentration of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

Reasons

4. The proposal is to convert and extend the dwelling to a HMO. Holly Hill Road and the immediately surrounding streets of Riverdale Road, Filston Road and Athol Road are characterised by semi-detached and terraced properties, many of which are subdivided, either being purpose-built maisonettes or having been split into flats or HMOs. The Council has referred me to existing HMOs at 13 and 62 Holly Hill Road and eight shared properties in Riverdale Road, and reference is made to 100 registered HMOs within a 100m radius of the site, although there is no evidence on their actual location.

5. The Council's concerns are derived from the concentration of HMOs in the area, which they consider have led to adverse impacts on the street scene through the spread of waste bins and increased parking, and cumulatively changed the area's character.
6. The properties in the area typically have small front gardens/forecourts, as a result of which visible bin storage is common, including on pavements. The Council has highlighted this as a particular issue in relation to HMOs. However, my inspection of the area indicated that visible bin storage is a common feature, and not necessarily related to whether properties are shared. An additional HMO is therefore unlikely to make a noticeable difference to visible bin storage in the area. This is particularly the case in relation to this appeal, as the proposal includes enclosed bin storage, meaning that bins would be screened from view.
7. The appeal was accompanied by a Transport Statement which indicated that local amenities are within walking distance, and that the site is accessible by bus and train. A parking survey using the Lambeth Methodology found that between 40 and 45 parking spaces were available overnight within 200 metres of the appeal site. These findings, together with the proposed on-site cycle storage, lead me to conclude that the proposal would not materially affect on-street parking locally.
8. The appellant has drawn my attention to recent planning permissions for HMOs in Holly Hill Road¹ and Riverdale Road² respectively, where the Council concluded that the proposals would not result in an overconcentration of HMOs. The appellant has also referred me to an allowed appeal for a HMO in nearby Pembroke Road³. Accordingly, the weight of evidence from the Council's own decisions, together with that of my Inspector colleague, demonstrates that presently there are limited adverse impacts arising from existing HMOs, and that an additional conversion would not lead to an unacceptable level of harm to the street scene. My site visit confirmed that the environmental concerns are overstated.
9. I conclude that the proposal would not result in an overconcentration of HMOs and would not harm the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would accord with policies DP5 and DP11 of the Bexley Local Plan date of adoption 26 April 2023 (BLP), which together require high quality design by offering support for HMOs which will not have an adverse impact on the local area and propose an appropriate quality of accommodation. The proposal would accord with the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that developments should function well and be visually attractive.

Other Matters

10. The proposed ground floor rear extension would be of a similar size to the extension on the adjoining dwelling. The roof extension, whilst large, would not overshadow the adjoining dwelling nor result in a greater degree of overlooking than would upper floor windows on a conventional two storey dwelling. The change in the roof shape from a hip to a gable would alter the rhythm of the row of semi-detached properties of which the appeal site is a part, but would reflect the appearance of the houses opposite.

¹ LPA reference 23/01373/FUL

² LPA reference 23/00453/FUL

³ PINS reference APP/D5120/W/24/3358101

11. There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal would block access for emergency or refuse vehicles, or place refuse collection arrangements under additional strain.

Conditions

12. The Framework sets out that conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. I have assessed the suggested list of conditions on this basis.
13. It is necessary to confirm the standard time limit for the development, and to specify the approved plans and drawings, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of certainty.
14. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, external materials should match those used on the existing dwelling.
15. For the reasons I have set out above, it is essential that appropriate bin and cycle storage is provided and retained in perpetuity.
16. It is not necessary to limit the number of occupiers to six since there is a licensing regime in place for HMOs.

Conclusion

17. The proposal would accord with the development plan, when read as a whole. Material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Heppell

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings listed below.

Existing Location Plan OS Map	EX-L003
Existing Ground Floor Plan	EX-P001
Existing Loft Plan Plan	EX-P002
Existing Roof Plan	EX-P003
Existing Front Elevation	EX-E001
Existing Rear Elevation	EX-E002
Existing Side Elevation 1	EX-E003
Existing Side Elevation 2	EX-E004
Existing Section AA	EX-S001
Existing Section BB	EX-S002
Proposed Block Plan	PR-L002
Proposed Ground Floor Plan	PR-P001
Proposed Loft Floor Plan	PR-P003
Proposed Roof Plan	PR-P004
Proposed Front Elevation	PR-E001
Proposed Rear Elevation	PR-E002
Proposed Side Elevation 1	PR-E003
Proposed Side Elevation 2	PR-E004
Proposed Section AA	PR-S001
Proposed Section BB	PR-S002

- 3) The external materials of the extensions hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.
- 4) Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, the refuse and recycling store shown on the approved plans shall be brought into use and permanently maintained thereafter.
- 5) Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, full details of secure cycle storage, including cycle racks and security measures, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall be brought into use prior to occupation and permanently maintained thereafter.

End of schedule