



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2025

by **L C Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17TH July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/25/3359548

**Former Royal British Legion Club, Queensmead Road, Loudwater,
High Wycombe HP10 9XA**

- 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 Livingstones Accountants against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/07275/FUL.
 - The development proposed is change of use from hall or meeting place (Class F.2) to provide a mixed-use development comprising ground floor storage and distribution (Class B8), first and second floor office/commercial/business (Class E) and learning and non-residential institution (Class F.1) with insertion of roof lights, erection of single storey rear cycle store extension and detached bin store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Permission was granted in 2023 for the change of use of the building to a similar scheme¹. The appeal proposal sought external design changes from the permitted scheme, along with the conversion of the second floor for use as a training academy, incorporating 13 roof lights and solar panels.
3. I was able to see on my site visit that the works had been undertaken, and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The change of use has already been established, alongside a number of external alterations under the 2023 planning permission. The reason for refusal in regards to this appeal related to the external materials used for the building and the resultant effect on the character and appearance of the area.
5. As such, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal building, now named Plutus House, is a detached two-storey building located next to a surgery in a mixed residential and commercial area. The property lies adjacent to an area designated as green space, within which is located a Grade II listed War Memorial.

¹ 22/07679/FUL

7. The building line of the neighbouring Cherrymead Surgery is set forward of the appeal property, which limits its visual impact from the approach to Station Road from Queensmead Road. However, due to its positioning in proximity to the green space, the building occupies a prominent position within the street scene when viewed from Station Road and its junction with Queensmead Road. There are several large trees located on the green space adjacent to the appeal site which partially screen the building from viewpoints along Station Road. However, during the winter months, when the trees have reduced foliage, the building would be visually prominent.
8. There is a diverse mix of building types, styles and designs in the vicinity with no single architectural style dominating. However, the surrounding buildings are generally characterised by a limited palette of red and brown brick work and white render. It is this combination of commercial and residential uses with similar building material palettes that contribute to the character of the area. In contrast, the appeal building comprises a mix of grey and yellow vertical cladding stripes with a pink band running through.
9. The aim behind the design was to evoke bar graphs and a profit and loss graph to symbolise the robust financial performance and market presence of the appellant. Design can be a subjective issue, and my attention has been drawn to case law which highlights that decisions should not be made solely on subjective opinion. Nevertheless, the National Planning Policy Framework is clear that development that is not well designed should be refused. In this instance, rather than contributing positively to a dynamic urban fabric, the cladding contrasts sharply with the more muted tones of surrounding buildings. The building does not integrate well, but appears as a visually jarring, obtrusive and incongruous intrusion within the street scene when viewed in the context of neighbouring buildings of more traditional materials. As such, it does not relate to its surroundings and fails to respond to local character and identity.
10. The proposal, with regard to the external cladding, would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policies DM35 and DM37 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019) which seek to ensure that development improves the character of the area and respects the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Other Matters

11. The site is located in proximity to Loudwater War Memorial, which is Grade II listed. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to give special regard to preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The granite War Memorial, which is in the form of a Celtic Cross with a sword in relief, was unveiled in 1923. Its significance, as it relates to this appeal, lies in its historic interest as a witness to the tragic impact of war on the local community, and the sacrifices made in conflict.
12. The war memorial is located within a small green space, with nearby seating allowing for reflection, and amongst attractive planting which enhances its setting and allows for the significance of the memorial to be appreciated. The memorial is located close to shops and residential properties, at the heart of the community to which it belongs.

13. The proposed development would preserve the setting of the listed building. It would not encroach upon the adjoining green space, nor lead to a loss of landscaping. The intervening green space, landscaping and mature trees would ensure that the proposed development would be viewed separately from the war memorial, that it would not diminish the ability to appreciate its historic interest, and that the memorial's attractive setting would be preserved. I note that the local authority did not consider that the proposal would impact upon the listed building's setting, and I see no reason to disagree. A finding of no harm in this regard is a neutral matter, and does not alter my conclusion in respect of the main issue regarding the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
14. The building has seen the revitalisation of a neglected property, and the business has brought economic benefits and provided employment. However, permission has previously been granted for the change of use of the building, and as such, these matters do not have any significant bearing upon this appeal.
15. The Highway Authority confirmed that the appeal proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the safety of the local network, no issues were raised regarding flooding, and ecological enhancements have been secured on the site. However, these are requirements of planning policy and they do not weigh in favour of the proposal.
16. The appellant has suggested that an alternative form of external material treatment to the southern elevation could be considered, with the eastern and northern elevations being retained. However, I have not been provided with any details of alternative materials and I have determined the appeal on the basis of the information and submitted plans before me.

Conclusion

17. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and material considerations do not indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
18. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

L C Hughes

INSPECTOR