



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2025

by CL Humphrey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/25/3370257

11-17 Victoria Road, Ruislip, HA4 9AA

- 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 Perl Equity (Ruislip) 4 Limited against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application reference is 72104/APP/2025/1096.
 - The development proposed is erection of ground floor rear extension and three-storey extension (with top floor set-in) above existing commercial parade to provide 7 residential units (2 x 1 bed, 2 person units, 4 x 2 bed, 3 person units and 1 x 3 bed, 5 person unit).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Revised plans were submitted with the appeal. These omit the originally proposed rear terrace and door leading from the double bedroom of flat 1 and replace it with a Juliet balcony and window. The revised plans would not involve a substantial difference or fundamental change to the application. However, given the nature of the changes proposed and the proximity with neighbouring residential properties, accepting the revised plans would deprive those who were entitled to be consulted on the application the opportunity to make any representations on the scheme as amended. Therefore, I have determined the appeal based on the scheme and the plans which were before the local planning authority when it made its decision.

Main Issues

3. These are:
 - whether the appeal proposal would achieve a well-designed development in terms of local context, movement and safety; andthe effect of the appeal proposal on:
 - the living conditions of neighbouring occupants at 9a Victoria Road with regard to outlook and sense of enclosure;
 - trees and green infrastructure; and
 - air quality.

Reasons

Design

4. The site currently comprises a short single storey parade of commercial units topped by a strong red brick parapet. The proposed development would be built above and to the rear of this parade, effectively reading as an extension of the adjacent three-storey pitched roofed red brick terrace.
5. The neighbouring Ruislip Manor Underground Station is a locally listed modernist red brick flat roofed building dissected by a railway bridge, with the upper floors set back behind a parapet at ground floor level. The surrounding area is characterised by three and four storey blocks with a mix of pitched and flat roofs.
6. In some respects, the appeal proposal would respond positively to local context. The first and second floors would be set well behind the ground floor parapet, retaining its prominence in the street scene. The front elevation would step back from the adjacent terrace, echoing the articulation on the existing block. Continuing the eaves height of the neighbouring building above No.11 would provide visual consistency, and the step down above No.17 would follow the fall in level along the street. Although different to the pitched roof above the adjacent terraced block, the proposed flat roof design would reflect surrounding development and successfully bridge the transition to the distinctive flat roofed form of the underground station. The proposed top floor flat would be positioned well back from the parapet eaves line and appear recessive. Use of red brick would match the existing bricks on site and in the adjoining building.
7. However, the adjacent terrace has a strong, vertical emphasis accentuated using stone quoins and a repeating pattern of tall narrow windows set close together. By contrast, the front elevation of the proposed development would feature several wide windows interspersed by smaller openings set within sizeable expanses of solid brick wall. This fenestration pattern and solid-void ratio would create a jarring horizontal emphasis out of keeping with the architectural rhythm and balance of the neighbouring building.
8. Turning to the matter of movement and safety, the sole pedestrian access to the proposed development would be via the rear shared service yard which does not benefit from delineated pedestrian routes or street lighting. Therefore, pedestrians using the space may come into conflict with vehicle movements and would be less visible, especially at night. The fact that the proposed access route is the same as that already utilised by the occupants of existing flats does not justify sanctioning an intensification of this unsatisfactory arrangement.
9. The door to the flats would be positioned in a blind corner of the yard, to the side of an existing block of outbuildings and largely screened from the rear windows of the existing and proposed flats due to the form and layout of the development. It would thus be secluded, with limited natural surveillance, creating opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. For these reasons, the appeal scheme would not provide a safe and secure environment for occupants and visitors.
10. I have no evidence that it would not be feasible to create a residential entrance core directly from the Victoria Road frontage. Whilst this would entail the loss of a modest area of commercial floorspace, I note the Council's Conservation and Design Officer is supportive of this approach.

11. Overall, the appeal proposal would not achieve a well-designed development in terms of local context, movement and safety. Consequently, there would be conflict with the primary aims of Policies BE1, DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the Hillingdon Local Plan (Local Plan), Policies D3, D4 and D11 of the London Plan and Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), which seek to create high quality buildings and achieve safe, well-designed places.

Living conditions

12. The proposed terrace to the rear of flat 1 would be adjacent to the boundary with existing residential development and screened by a fence extending slightly into the 45-degree sight line taken from the bedroom window of 9a Victoria Road.
13. However, there is a solid enclosure around the terrace to the rear of this property, and the proposed terrace boundary would be only marginally higher. Moreover, precise details of boundary treatment could be controlled by planning condition. Consequently, the appeal proposal would not result in a loss of outlook or a sense of enclosure.
14. Living conditions of neighbouring occupants at 9a Victoria Road would therefore be satisfactory and there would be no conflict with Local Plan Policies BE1 and DMHB 11 or the Framework.

Trees and green infrastructure

15. Two trees are located within hard surfacing at the rear of the site: a semi-mature silver birch (T1) adjacent to neighbouring buildings and a young sycamore (T2) behind the commercial unit at 17 Victoria Road. The application plans indicate that T1 would be retained, but the Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted with the appeal proposes that both T1 and T2 are removed.
16. Based on my observations on site and the submitted evidence, the trees are in fair condition. However, the canopy of T1 is rather sparse and T2 has multiple stems at ground level. Moreover, their constrained environment will restrict long term growth and life-expectancy. Neither is visible from Victoria Road and, individually and collectively, they contribute little to the landscape quality of the site and area.
17. There is a group of trees adjacent to the site which is visible in the wider area. The submitted evidence demonstrates that the proposed development would not affect their root protection areas. They may be at risk from construction activity, however, suitable protective measures and working methods could be secured by condition.
18. The proposed development would incorporate a sizeable green roof. Details of this and other landscaping features could be secured by condition. Therefore, despite the loss of two low quality trees, it would be feasible for the scheme to achieve modest green infrastructure gains in terms of landscaping and biodiversity and thus satisfy the expectations of Policies BE1 and DMHB 14 of the Local Plan and Policy G1 of the London Plan.
19. The Council's third reason for refusal also refers to Local Plan policy DMHD 1; this relates to alterations and extensions to residential dwellings and so is not directly relevant to the appeal proposal.

Air quality

20. The Council's fifth reason for refusal states that the proposed development is located within the Hillingdon Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). However, it is common ground between the main parties that the site is not in the AQMA but is situated in the Ruislip Town Centre Air Quality Focus Area.
21. The submitted Air Quality Statement (AQS) confirms that the proposed heating systems would rely on renewable energy, such as photovoltaic panels or air source heat pumps, rather than combustion processes and so would meet the building emissions benchmark. The scheme would be car free and, as deliveries, servicing and taxi trips are excluded from calculations, it would be assumed to meet the transport emissions benchmark. Therefore, the appeal proposal would be air quality neutral.
22. The baseline assessment of local air quality data in the AQS indicates that air quality objectives are not currently exceeded at the appeal site. However, to minimise occupants' exposure to air pollution, it proposes that air intakes in the building are located on non-road facing facades or higher floor levels. These mitigating design measures could be secured by condition.
23. The proposed development would actively contribute to air quality improvement by including a green/sedum roof, which could be secured by condition.
24. Therefore, the appeal proposal would satisfy the requirements of Policy DME1 14 of the Local Plan and Policy SI1 of the London Plan.

Other Matters

25. The appeal proposal would create seven flats, including a 3-bed family home, in a sustainable town centre location. There is no dispute that the Council can demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The contribution of seven new residential units and the modest attendant social and economic benefits would therefore carry limited weight.

Conclusion

26. The appeal proposal would not achieve a well-designed development in terms of local context, movement and safety. The adverse impacts arising from the design of the proposed development would be considerable. Although there would be no harm in terms of neighbouring occupants' living conditions, trees and green infrastructure or air quality, the proposal would not accord with the development plan. There are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

CL Humphrey

INSPECTOR