
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2025

by H Whitfield BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/W/25/3373208

32 Fowler Road, Hainault, Redbridge, Ilford IG6 3UT

- 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 Roy Karir of P. Roy Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref is 1547/25.
 - The development proposed is a partial change of use from B2 to Class E(b).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the site is a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to relevant development plan policies for development in Strategic Industrial Locations.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is situated within a designated Strategic Industrial Location (SIL). Policy E5 of the London Plan (2021) states, amongst other things, that SILs should be sustained as London's largest concentrations of industrial, logistics and related capacity for uses that support the functioning of London's economy. Policy E4 of the London Plan also goes on to state that the retention of industrial capacity within SILs should be prioritised.
4. Policy LP14 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015-2030 (the RLP) seeks to promote business and employment and maintain the viability of key employment sites by protecting industrial activity within the SILs as the prime locations for Class B1, B2 and B8 use development. Proposals for uses falling outside of such uses will be resisted. This is consistent with Policy E5 of the London Plan which states that development proposals in SILs should be supported where the proposed use fall within the industrial-type activities set out in Part A of Policy E4 and that proposals should not compromise the integrity or effectiveness of SILs.
5. The appeal scheme proposes the change of use of approximately 35sqm of the ground floor of the industrial unit from Class B2¹ use to a café under Class E(b)². The appellant contends that this would only account for approximately 10% of the total floor space of the unit and would be temporary and reversible. However, the application has not been advanced as a temporary planning permission. Even if it

¹ General industrial

² Use for the sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises

had, the scheme would still result in the loss of a proportion of industrial floor space within the SIL for a use that is not supported in principle by Policy LP14 of the RLP or Policy E4 of the London Plan.

6. The appellant argues that the café would provide a complementary use that would provide a beneficial service to the surrounding workforce of the SIL, increase consumer choice, reduce off-site car trips and in turn improve the efficiency and functionality of surrounding businesses. However, even if this were so, this fails to recognise that the proposed café use would result in the loss of industrial floorspace capacity. Although point D of Policy E5 requires proposals not to compromise the integrity or effectiveness of existing industrial activity within the SIL, this objective is not exclusive of point C of the Policy which directs to the industrial-type activities supported in these locations. As such, it does not provide the flexibility envisaged by the appellant and I have not been directed to any other relevant policy of the current development plan that supports such complimentary ancillary facilities within SILs.
7. The café would employ four full-time staff which the appellant states would double the on-site employment of the existing business and improve the employment capacity of the SIL. However, I have no substantive evidence that an alternative SIL-compliant use within this unit could not deliver similar benefits through industrial intensification. Such opportunities would be compromised if the floorspace capacity of the unit was reduced because of its sub-division and conversion to a non-compliant use.
8. Even though the scheme relates to a small proportion of the unit, its subdivision to allow for operation as an independent café to serve surrounding businesses would still result in the loss of industrial floorspace from the SIL, which would conflict with the aims of its designation. It could also lead to a shortage of suitable industrial floorspace capacity going forward. This would therefore undermine the strategic objectives of the SIL by failing to protect its integrity and effectiveness and ability to support capacity for a variety of SIL-compliant uses. Any amenity or welfare benefits to local workers would be decisively outweighed by these clear policy conflicts.
9. My attention has been drawn to other food outlets and examples³ which the appellant contends have not undermined the strategic role of the SIL. In the Roebuck Road⁴ case, I note the development was assessed against previous development plan policies which supported complementary uses needed for the SIL to function effectively for employment purposes without compromising the employment status of the area. The appellant has made several references to these policies⁵, however, they have since been superseded. While there is limited information before me in this respect, there was clearly a reason the development plan was amended to omit support for such ancillary facilities within the SIL. Therefore, notwithstanding the approach of these previous policies, as they no longer form part of the development plan, they are not determinative in my consideration of this appeal.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude that the site would not be a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to relevant development plan policies for development in Strategic Industrial Locations. This is contrary to Policy LP14 of the RLP and Policies E4 and E5 of the London Plan, which in part, seek to protect, strengthen and intensify Strategic Industrial Locations.

³ Council Ref. 4407/17

⁴ Council Ref. 2055/15

⁵ Policy 2.17 of the London Plan (2016) and Policy B1 of the Redbridge Borough Wide Primary Policies DPD (2008)

Other Matters

11. The appellant draws comparisons of the effects of using part of the unit as an in-house canteen with the appeal scheme and argues that by providing a centralised café the proposal could reduce the need for duplicated in-house catering across the SIL. However, as this appeal proposes an independent café that would be accessible to the public it is not directly comparable to an in-house canteen. Moreover, the evidence indicates that other examples of catering options exist within this SIL, and there is nothing substantive before me to suggest that an absence of additional catering services or consumer choice within the Hainault Business Park is undermining its ability to function effectively.
12. I appreciate that the proposal has some local support, and no objections have been received from statutory consultees, however, these matters do not alter my conclusions on the main issue. I also note the appellant's concerns over the Council's handling of the application, which I am advised has been amended to address the Council's concerns. However, this has no bearing on my consideration of this appeal, which I have determined on its planning merits.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

13. The appeal scheme would result in additional employment opportunities within the area, provide a service offering benefits to local employees and increase consumer choice within the SIL. The development could also support other economic, social and environmental objectives of the RLP and London Plan. However, given the modest scale of the development, any associated benefits would be relatively limited and would not outweigh the harm that I have identified in respect of the site being an unsuitable location for the proposed development, having regard to relevant development plan policies for development in Strategic Industrial Locations.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

H Whitfield

INSPECTOR