

ANDREAS GEORGIOU T/A GIAD

Dear Jessica Werrett;

13th April 2023

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Appeal by Pershing Properties Limited
Site Address: 73 Victoria Road, Ruislip Manor, HA4 9BH

Your Ref: APP/R5510/W/22/3307666

I refer to your letter, dated 3rd April, with which you attached a copy of the LPA's Statement and copies of three third party (neighbour) comments in respect of the above appeal. I would respond as follows.

Regarding the third party comments, it is understood that neighbours are frequently opposed to change which they believe would affect the status quo, by resulting in noise disturbance and other perceived impacts (including visual) on their living conditions.

Specific mention has been made, in this case, to the proposed refuse and cycle storage provision. While every effort has been made to locate these facilities so as to minimise any inconvenience or disturbance I do understand the concerns raised. That said, as argued in our Statement, this is a town centre location where noise and disturbance is, to a degree, to be expected and I do believe that any issues arising would be likely to be resolved amicably (as they usually are) between the residents, old and new. I note too that the LPA has suggested that the provision of refuse and cycle storage should be made the subject of conditions should the Inspector allow this appeal. I think this is a sensible idea and we would be happy to accept such conditions.

The neighbours at 73A have also mentioned loss of privacy, in particular to the bedroom window. This could be resolved by including an obscure glazed panel or door, adjacent to the proposed cycle store, to preclude any views towards the window of bedroom 1 in flat 73A.

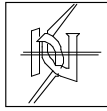
Concern has also been raised about potential loss of sunlight resulting from the proposed development. Given the existence of a taller building immediately to the south east of the appeal site, and the north easterly aspect of the rear of the appeal property I believe any loss of sunlight, attributable to the development, would be very minimal.

Regarding the LPA's Statement,

May I first of all comment on the question raised by the LPA concerning the matter of whether the proposal is "affordable housing". In paragraph 2.5 of the LPA Statement, the officer wrongly accuses the appellant of making a misleading statement in referring to the proposal as affordable housing (Referring to paragraph 6.5 in the Appellant's Statement). In justifying the accusation, the officer refers to a section on the planning application form which seeks further information about a proposal. The appellant correctly answered "No" to the question regarding whether the application should be Fast tracked because it was for "Affordable housing".

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That section of the application form clearly is concerned with applications involving "affordable housing" provided by, for example, a Registered Social Landlord (i.e. Social Housing). The appeal proposal in this case is for a relatively low cost flat which would, in the commonly used sense of the word, be considered to be affordable. It is clear, from various references to the word "affordable" within the Appellant's Statement (not least in the preceding paragraphs 6.3. and 6.4 of our Statement) what is meant, and I am therefore surprised, and disappointed, that the officer has accused us of making a misleading statement.

Turning to the section of the LPA's Statement commenting on the Appellant's Statement, the officer has incorporated various selected excerpts from our Statement to illustrate the broad thrust of our case, with which the LPA, inevitably, disagrees.

I stand by the substantive arguments made in our Statement that, while accepting that the proposed development will, of course, be visible to neighbours and that they would likely prefer it not to be there, any harm which may be considered attributable to the proposed development would be minimal, within the context of town centre living, and would be outweighed by the benefits to the wider community of providing an additional unit of residential accommodation, for which there is an acknowledged huge demand.

The LPA Statement makes reference (para 2.4) to the Council being able to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, but that rather misses the point that there remains a vast shortage of residential accommodation in our towns and cities, including in Hillingdon. That shortage is particularly severe for smaller households and, in particular, for the younger sectors of the population. As pointed out in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 of the Appellant's Statement the London Plan and the NPPF both recognise this and both refer to the need for more low cost residential accommodation within town centres (eg above shops) yet the LPA (and Hillingdon is not alone in this) still has no policies to address such a need. The end result, as noted in our Statement, is that LPA's continue to assess proposals for accommodation above shops (such as the appeal proposal) using policies which are not entirely fit for that purpose. They are more suited to extensions within "normal" suburban housing.

As argued within our Statement, I believe planning applications should be considered on their individual merits, taking into account all material factors, including location.

I stand by the views expressed in our Statement that this proposal represents an opportunity to provide a good residential flat in a good town centre location without causing significant material harm to the locality or to neighbours.

Once again, we ask the Inspector to consider all of the factors involved and to grant planning permission.

Kind regards
Andreas Georgiou

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