



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2025

by **N Bowden BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/25/3362220

Upper Floors and Rear of 122-124 High Street, Ruislip HA4 8LS

- 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 Golds Leisure Ltd against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref is 11894/APP/2024/1734.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of part of the rear of the building and upper floors from Class E to C3, and new upwards extension to create nine residential dwellings alongside associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - 1) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Ruislip Village Conservation Area (RVCA),
 - 2) whether the proposed development would be air quality neutral,
 - 3) the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbours with particular regard to the sense of enclosure and overlooking,
 - 4) whether the proposed development would provide satisfactory living conditions for the future occupants with particular regard to outlook and access to amenity space,
 - 5) whether the proposed development would provide adequate refuse and recycling storage facilities, and
 - 6) whether the proposed development would provide a sufficient standard of fire safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is located within the RVCA and is positioned along the boundary with character areas 2 and 3 as is set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The High Street presents as a commercial/shopping area formed of two and three storey buildings. Commonly these present with Art Deco and Arts and Crafts styles such as decorative panelling, flat roofs, mock Tudor facing and steeply sloping

tilled roofs. Character area 3 is of a more suburban garden suburb style and, equally, features many Arts and Crafts elements. The significance of this to the heritage asset are these design features, along with the layout, which are typical of the Metroland styles that are highly characteristic of this part of London.

4. The building at 122-124 is an example of this, featuring an Art Deco façade to the High Street, albeit this being in need of some care. This impression is, however, heavily diluted to the rear which has had been the subject of a large and blocky upward extension including a lift overrun to one corner. Therefore, whilst the front of the building makes a positive contribution to the RVCA, the rear makes a negative one.
5. The proposal comprises the remodelling of this rear element together with its increase in height to accommodate an additional storey. This would be in the form of a mansard and crown roof with dormer windows inserted to all elevations. The already large and bulky element of the building would therefore be enlarged and increase its prominence within the RVCA. Although this would be unlikely to be disenable from most, if any, aspects from the High Street, it would remain a highly prominent feature when viewed from the rear. This is especially the case along Poplars Close where the already large structure would loom over the much more diminutive, mainly one and two storey homes in this cul-de-sac.
6. The use of the mansard design with dormer windows would, further, appear as a pastiche imitation of the Arts and Crafts design features in the area. The scale and form of the roof structure as proposed would not respect the scale and proportions of this otherwise traditional roof form. I do accept that this would soften the blocky appearance of this element of the building as it appears at present. Even so, the increase in bulk and height would offset this moderate enhancement.
7. I have had regard to the other examples of dormer windows in the area. Numbers 156 and 127 High Street demonstrate clear differences in proportions to this proposal with much smaller dormer windows relative to the roof size. I accept some similarities with the dormers at 73 and 74 High Street, and even the much more modern 61 High Street. However, my main concern here rests with the overall increase in height and dominance of the building and the dormer windows are only one element of the design features here.
8. As such, I find that the roof extension would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the RVCA. It would cause moderate detriment to the area through its increase in height, bulk and form and cause less than substantial harm to the heritage asset.
9. In reaching my conclusions here I have considered the statutory duty in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. I am also mindful of the provisions of paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which sets out that any less than substantial harm to a heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
10. I do recognise that the provision of nine new dwellings is a benefit and that it represents a good use of an under-utilised structure within an established urban area and in a sustainable location. Although nine dwellings is not a large number

in the context of the Borough's overall land supply requirement, it is nonetheless not insignificant. Moreover, the re-use of the building in this manner would no doubt assist in restoring the important elements of the building that address the High Street and aid in rectifying the apparent elements of disrepair that the building suffers from. Taken together, these factors do carry weight.

11. Even so, there is still a detriment to the character and appearance of the RVCA which would not preserve its significance. Moreover, it has not been clearly shown that this is the only manner that the building can be brought back into its optimum viable use and this dilutes the weight that I can attach to these benefits. Accordingly, on balance, I still find that the harm to the designated heritage asset outweighs the benefits offered in this proposal.
12. It follows, therefore, that the proposal conflicts with policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 Strategic Policies 2012 (HLPSP), policies DMHB1, DMHB4, DMHB11 and DMHB12 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 Development Management Policies 2020 (HLPDMP), policies HC1, D1, D3 and D4 of the London Plan 2021 (LP) and provisions of the Framework. This is insofar as the proposal would fail to harmonise with the character and architectural composition of the surrounding properties.

Air quality

13. The air quality assessment provided with the application nominated a number of measures to minimise or mitigate emissions from the development. This included modern boilers for the flats, and I further recognise that the proposal would be a car free development.
14. The Council requested £7,819 to deliver its air quality local action plan and the appellant has not challenged this request or justified the non-provision of it. No planning obligation has been provided with the appeal. Accordingly, I therefore cannot be certain that these contributions would be deliverable.
15. The proposal thus conflicts with policy DMCI7 of the HLPDMP, the Hillingdon Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2014), policy DF1 of the LP and Framework insofar as it would not mitigate impacts of the development.

Living conditions – neighbours

16. The Council's decision notice expressed concern in relation to the proposal appearing overbearing and resulting in a sense of enclosure. This is in addition to concerns relating to overlooking. However, the officer's report did not expand upon the concerns in relation to the appearance of the building from neighbours' perspective. In the interests of completeness, I have, however, considered both aspects here.
17. The existing building, at the rear element, is a three storey structure. It is set immediately adjacent to the comparatively diminutive bungalows at 12 and 14 Poplars Close and is visible from the perspective of 8 and 10 Poplars Close. Whilst the proposed upward extension to the building would not relate particularly well to these neighbouring buildings, I must recognise that the existing building already possesses this relationship.
18. There would be no direct views of the building from 12 and 14 Poplars Close whilst the aspect from 8 and 10 would be oblique and largely unchanged by the upwards

extension. Therefore, whilst the increase in height would appear jarring in relation to the effects of the character of the area, as discussed above, I am unable to find that this would result in a loss of outlook or appear overbearing from these neighbours aspects.

19. The use of the building for residential purposes, as opposed to the present use, would result in a change to the nature of potential overlooking. This is especially the case, and may be perceived as such, given the amount of time these elements of the building have been vacant. Even so, the existing and proposed new windows do not offer any direct vantage towards these immediate neighbours.
20. The windows to the building look over the roofs of 12 and 14 and are not angled towards 8 and 10. In any case, the views presented would be to fairly small front garden areas and these could not realistically be regarded as providing notable private amenity areas given their small size.
21. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal would not result in an intrusive or overbearing effect when viewed from neighbouring properties. Moreover, windows in the building would not result in a material increase in overlooking. The proposal therefore complies with policies with policy BE1 of the HLPSP, policy DMHB11 of HLPDMP and Framework in that it would not adversely impact on the amenity, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties and open space.

Living conditions – future occupants

22. Flats 1 and 4 have partial aspect to the north, toward 120a High Street. The outlook from the rooms facing this direction is unlikely to offer a particularly inspiring view however there would be a reasonable outlook with opportunity for natural ventilation. Although these windows face north, these flats are set on a corner, therefore other outlooks would be available to the occupants. Accordingly, I find that these flats would afford the future occupants an acceptable standard of living conditions.
23. Flats 2 and 3 have small outdoor amenity areas and both these areas are below the standards outlined in Table 5.3 of the HLPDMP. The remaining flats within the building have no direct access to any outdoor amenity space. However, the proposal does provide a 176 square metre rooftop outdoor area although this falls below the expected standard of 215 square metres. This outdoor area would be fairly exposed, even with the glazed screens which are proposed as part of the scheme. It would also not be landscaped in a conventional manner, owing to its rooftop location.
24. Whilst I recognise that the private and communal areas are all below the Council's normal standards, I must also consider the location of the site. Indeed, for a town centre location, the provision of this amount of external, communal amenity space seems to me to be both unusual and welcome. I accept that it is not in an optimal arrangement however this is a constraint of the site. Accordingly, in spite of the non-compliance with adopted standards, I find that, in this context, this opportunity is one to be promoted and, assuming it was delivered with care, would present a substantial and noteworthy benefit to the future occupants.
25. The screens to flats 2 and 3 would impinge upon the outlook for the residents of these units. However, this provides these residents with a degree of privacy from the communal amenity area and the main entrance into the building. Therefore,

balancing this with the provision of the communal amenity space, I find this would deliver an acceptable level of living conditions for the future occupants despite a slightly curtailed outlook from the mentioned flats.

26. The proposal has clearly given thought to the delivery of communal outdoor amenity space and responded to the constraints of the site. As such, the proposal therefore complies with policies DMHB11 and DMHB18 of the HLPDMP as it provides good quality and useable private outdoor amenity space, given the context of the site.

Refuse and recycling

27. A refuse and recycling store is indicated on the submitted plans, and this would be in close proximity to the ground floor entrance to the proposed flats. Due to this positioning and a lack of reasonable alternative locations, this would invariably result in an excessive bin drag distance for the future occupants.
28. However, the appellant has nominated a solution where serviced refuse collections would be undertaken. This would mean that the future occupants would only need to deposit waste and recycling near to the main entrance to the building. As this is a town centre location, such arrangements are no doubt already in place for businesses along the High Street and upper floor residential uses. It represents a practical, and probably the only, viable solution in this scenario.
29. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the refuse and recycling arrangements would be sufficient and that these could be secured through the appropriate use of planning conditions on any permission granted. As such, the proposal could comply with policy DMHB11 of the HLPDMP.

Fire safety

30. A fire safety statement has been provided. This indicates fire safety measures for the construction and operation of the building, route for attendance of fire appliance(s), evacuation plan and assembly location. These details could be secured though the imposition of a conditions were permission to be granted and could therefore comply with policies D5 and D12 of the LP.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

31. The proposal would not preserve or enhance the RVCA and would result in less than substantial harm to due to its increase in height in an unsatisfactory manner. It would fail to make contributions towards mitigating effects on air quality. Whilst I recognise the benefits of the proposal and have afforded weight to the benefits of the scheme, this would not reconcile or outweigh the harm to the RVCA. The Council claims a five year housing land supply and this is not disputed by the appellant. Therefore, the provisions of 11 d) of the Framework are not engaged which, in any case, would not apply here due to footnote 7.
32. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

N Bowden

INSPECTOR