



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
2 MIDCROFT
RUISLIP – HA4 8ES

July 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SUMMARY

This Design and Access Statement has been produced by USL Architects.

The planning application relates to the erection of a three story residential building on 2 Midcroft, Ruislip.

The site is currently occupied by a former petrol filling station, which has most recently been used as a car wash facility. Unfortunately, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the business and it is no longer trading. The site in its present form does not enhance the local street scene or local vernacular. It creates an incongruous structure, which is intrusive to its surroundings.

The proposed scheme comprises of seven flats ranging from one bedroom to three bedrooms and also includes refuse storage, a cycle store, and parking spaces, whilst considering the local area in all aspects.

The purpose of this document is to provide further information relating to the design and accessibility of the proposed scheme.

This statement should be read in conjunction with other material submitted, as well as:

- Planning Application form
- Planning Application drawings (existing, proposed, photo report)
- Planning Statement
- Transport Statement
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

1.2 DESIGN TEAM

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2.0 PART 1 – ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

2.1 SITE LOCATION



The site, as mentioned previously, currently houses a former petrol station, comprising a single sub-rectangular building situated in the northern half of the site, with a covered forecourt and fuelling stations adjacent in the southern half.

It is located in the Ruislip Town Centre, off the High Street and lies within the Archaeological Priority Area (APA) of Ruislip and within Ruislip's Conservation Area.

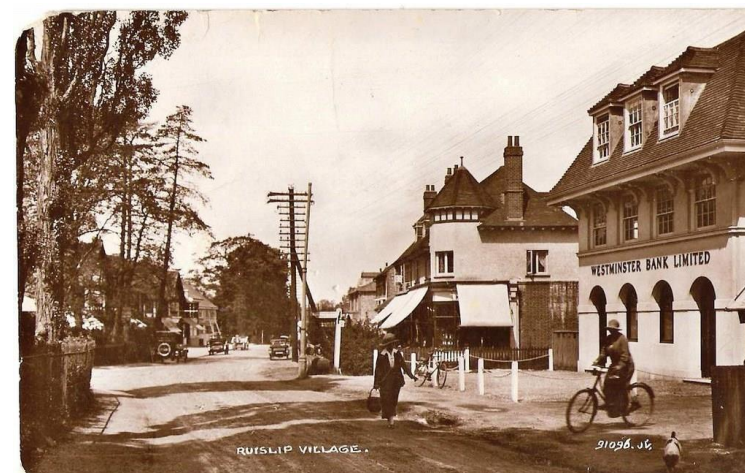
The site fronts onto Midcroft Road, a residential street characterised by semi-detached residential properties. It is positioned immediately to the rear of the No 53-61 High Street, a 1970s three storey building that has commercial/retail units at the ground floor with office space above.

On the south side of Midcroft Road the site faces into the service yard of the locally Listed Building at No 63 High Street which currently accommodates the NatWest Bank.

Midcroft itself runs east from Ruislip High Street towards Manor Way; it is a residential road.

The site it is located within close proximity to Ruislip train station and Ruislip Underground station, which connects the area easily through the Metropolitan and Piccadilly line to central London.

Pictures on the right: Old postcards of Ruislip High Street



3.0 PART 2 – PLANNING HISTORY

Before our latest proposal four planning applications and a pre-application were submitted to Hillingdon Council:

A first application was submitted in November 2014 under **LPA Reference 4918/APP/2014/1274 4918/APP/2014/1274 for the “Demolition of existing petrol station with tanks and erection of a four storey building comprising 14 residential, an office unit at ground floor level plus associated access, underground car parking and cycle storage”.**

The application was recommended for conditional approval by the officers but due to some significant objections from local resident groups to some aspects of the scheme the Committee decided to go against the officer advice and refused permission, for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal, by reason of its siting, size, height, bulk and proximity to neighbouring buildings, would be unduly intrusive and would represent an incongruous form of development, which would be out of character with Ruislip Village Conservation Area and Midcroft Area of Special Local Character. It would not complement the appearance of the street scene and would result in a loss of visual amenity.*
- 2. The proposal fails to demonstrate sufficient manoeuvring and access arrangements for service vehicles and car parking for adjoining commercial premises and would result in conditions prejudicial to highway and pedestrian safety*

Following the refusal in 2016 a new scheme was submitted to the council via a formal Pre-Application Advice.

After consideration of the officer’s comments made at that meeting and his written preliminary assessment of the proposal, a new application was submitted in February 2018. **LPA Reference 4918/APP/2018/738 for the “Demolition of existing petrol station plus removal of tanks and erection of a four-storey building containing 9 residential units.”**

This application due to a series of concerns raised by the officer was withdrawn in June 2018. Resubmitted, following the case officer advice, in December 2018. **LPA Reference 4918/APP/2018/4227 for the “Erection of four storey building with undercroft to create 2 x 1-bed, 3 x 2-bed, and 4 x 3-bed self-contained flats with associated parking, amenity space, refuse and cycle storage”**

In March 2019, the application was refused again, for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposed development by reason of its size, scale, bulk and design represents an overdevelopment of the site that would be detrimental to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the street scene and would fail to either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the surrounding Ruislip Village Conservation Area.*

2. The proposal, fails to demonstrate that that sufficient manoeuvring and access arrangements for service delivery vehicles and car parking would be maintained for adjoining commercial premises which would result in driver confusion and unexpected vehicle movements for other highway users and deliveries and parking taking place from the road. The development is therefore considered to be detrimental to highway and pedestrian safety and prejudicial to the free flow of traffic on the adjoining highway, including access by service delivery vehicles the adjacent buildings at 53 - 61 High Street Ruislip.

3. The proposed development by reason of its layout and design, including a large basement that covers mostly the entire site, fails to demonstrate how it would prevent an increased flood risk.

4. The proposed development by reason of its layout and design fails to provide sufficient outlook and privacy for occupants of existing and the proposed building resulting in a development that is detrimental to the amenity of existing and future occupiers of the site and adjacent buildings.

The most recent application was submitted in March 2021: **LPA Reference: 4918/APP/2021/1103** and was subsequently appealed, leading to a refusal. **Erection of a part 3 storey, part 4 storey building to provide 1 x 1-bed, 3 x 2-bed and 5 x 3-bed self-contained flats with associated parking, amenity space, refuse and cycle storage following demolition of existing petrol filling station/car wash.**

The refusal reasons were as followed :

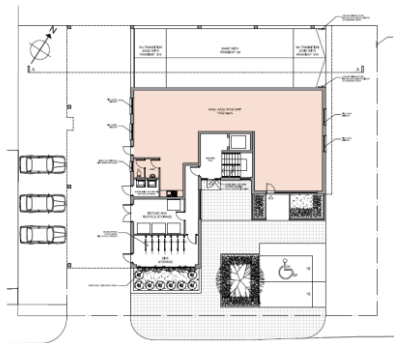
- 1. The proposed development by reason of its size, scale, bulk and design would be an inappropriate development of the site that would be detrimental to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the street scene and would fail to either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the surrounding Ruislip Village Conservation Area and the adjacent Area of Special Local Character. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (November 2012), Policies DMHB 1, DMHB 4, DMHB 5, DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part Two - Development Management Policies (January 2020), Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2019).*
- 2. The proposal, fails to demonstrate that that sufficient manoeuvring and access arrangements for service delivery vehicles and car parking would be maintained for adjoining premises which would result in driver confusion and unexpected vehicle movements for other highway users and deliveries and parking taking place from the road. The development is therefore considered to be detrimental to highway and pedestrian safety and prejudicial to the free flow of traffic on the adjoining highway, including access by service delivery vehicles to the adjacent buildings at 53 - 61 High Street Ruislip, contrary to Policy DMT 1 of the Local Plan: Part 2 Development Management Policies (2020) and Policy T4 of the London Plan (2021).*

3. *The proposed development by reason of its siting, layout and design would result in the provision of a habitable rooms on the ground floor with very limited levels of natural lighting, outlook and privacy that would result in a substandard form of living accommodation and reliance upon artificial means of lighting which would fail to satisfy sustainability and energy efficiency objectives and would be to the detriment of the amenity of future occupiers, contrary to Policies DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) and Policies D6 and SI2 of the London Plan (2021).*

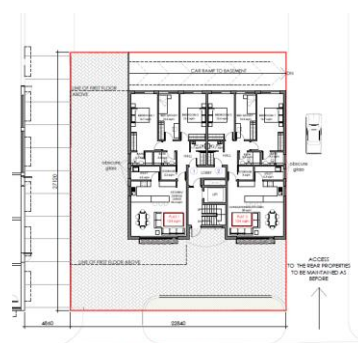
Shown below are the aforementioned previous applications. The design team for the new proposal has taken into account all of the comments and reasons, which caused the refusal of the previous applications.

The new building has been designed taking in consideration the relationship with the adjacent buildings and to respect the character of the area, in order to provide a design for residential accommodation, which would enhance the appearance of the street scene, which currently is impoverish, by the presence of an incongruous structure. This is demonstrated later in the document.

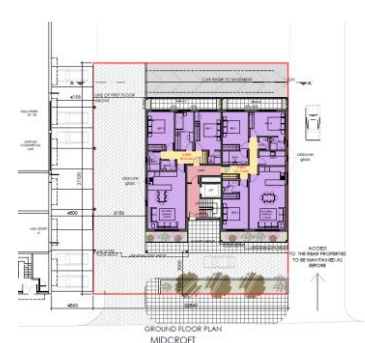
APPLICATIONS COMPARISONS



First Application



Second Application



Third Application



Fourth Application

First Application



Second Application



Third Application



Fourth Application



4.0 PART 3 – OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION – LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON

This section of the statement aims to summarise the analysis undertaken in the design policy documents relative to the new design.

3.1 DESIGN GUIDANCE

- MASSING AND RESIDENTIAL PROPOSED:

The new proposal responds to the Government's target to increase new residential developments by 60%.

The proposed scheme would remove the existing petrol station structures and replace them with a new residential building on three floors, taking into account all of the previous reasons for refusal. This has been achieved through a variation in the massing, to respect the adjacent buildings, reduce perceived bulk and ensure that the building sits comfortably with its neighbors and complements the character of the locality.

As visible in the proposed site plan the proposed building line has been considerably set back from the street. On the eastern side, to be in line with no.4 Midcroft (and all of the other semi-detached residential properties of the street) and on the western side set back from 53 - 61 High Street. This decision has been taken in order to create a ground floor frontage that is more open and interesting. This also produced the of having a combination of hard and soft landscaping between the centered covered pedestrian entrance and the street, providing a more private access from the main road to the building for the future occupants.

The redevelopment of this site is seen as an opportunity to provide a medium scale residential development, which would produce a transition in terms of scale and appearance, from the taller, commercial High Street buildings, to the domestic scale of the houses in Midcroft.

- PRIVACY AND OVERLOOKING:

The main windows within the building would be on the front and rear elevations. The windows set within the east and west elevations would be obscure glazed if required in order to avoid overlooking whilst not affecting the levels of natural light provision within the flats.

- AMENITY:

The development provides generous, direct private garden space from the principal habitable rooms of all of the flats. Upper apartments have private amenity in the form of balconies that exceed the minimum standards, again accessible from principal habitable rooms. Some bedrooms also feature direct private amenity space. The public open space of Church Field Gardens is located very close by and is easily, and safely accessible via a pedestrian route next to the proposed building. It is therefore considered that the amenity open space needs for the flats would, overall, be reasonable and would more than meet expectations for such town centre flats.

- ACCESS STRATEGY:

Whilst maintaining the existing access arrangements for the adjoining properties, the vehicle access to the property is on the western of the site, while the pedestrian access route is provided directly off Midcroft through a landscaped area. Existing car parking spaces at the rear of N. 53 – 61 High Street would be retained and adequate manoeuvring space would be provided to enable continued access to them.

This aspect is detailed further within the Transport Assessment accompanying this application.

3.2 PARKING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The site is located within easy walking distance from the London Underground services and Ruislip Station. Additionally, there are bus services operating along the High Street, with bus stops nearby.

The proposal will provide six on-site car parking spaces (including 1 accessible space) which is in accordance with the Local and Regional policy requirements. Of these spaces, one space shall have active provision and one space shall have passive provision for electric vehicles.

This aspect is detailed further within the Transport Assessment accompanying this application.

3.3 REFUSE AND CYCLE STORAGE

Refuse storage is located at the ground floor on the left of the main entrance of the building. The access for the occupant is via an internal door located in the entrance lobby whilst an external door guarantees safe and secure storage of refuse and easy collection of the bins on the appropriate days. More detailed information can be found within the Transport Assessment accompanying this application. A cycle store is provided at the rear of the ground floor for a total of 20 cycle spaces. This store provides accessible, secure, safe and sheltered cycle parking for the development which exceeds the LBH Local Plan standards.

5.0 PART 4 – DESIGN PROPOSAL

4.1 DESIGN STRATEGY

4.1.1 ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

The design, as mentioned, has changed significantly, from the previous schemes, which were refused planning permission in 2014, 2018 and 2021. The new proposal looks to push the design standards in the locality. Instead of being a pastiche of different styles or a too contemporary a proposal, it takes some cues from traditional architecture but is given a modern treatment in respect of the neighboring Jebson house. Front Windows are vertical revoking the opening characteristic of the buildings on the high street, creating light, airy interiors and elegant exteriors. Further relief in the brickwork is provided by brick banding to emphasize the rhythm of the facades. All accommodation has been designed to exceed the space standards as per The London Housing Design Guide and Lifetimes homes.

The refusal reason for the most recent application referred to the size and massing of the proposal. This has been carefully reconsidered. This comment largely related to the large gable on the front elevation which was deemed to be out of character with the area. For this reason, and following a contextual study, the front elevation has been redesigned to incorporate key features of the local area including two smaller gables which can be seen on most of the residential properties, a hipped roof with differing ridge heights to respond to the neighbouring properties and a sloped roof which is a common feature in Ruislip and Hillingdon. We believe this new proposal responds to the local context coherently.

The context study can be seen on the next page which shows a number of buildings and residential properties in the area which we have drawn inspiration from, both in terms of aesthetics, proportion, and scale. The neighbouring property was also carefully surveyed and measured so that we could replicate the proportions, just on a slightly larger scale.



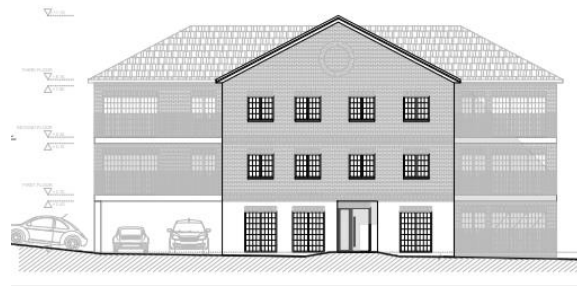
No. 4 Midcroft used for scale and proportion



Map of nearby building and properties near No.2 Midcroft, Ruislip

4.1.2 SCALE

The new proposal and individual flats reflect the demand within the market of Ruislip town centre. The design has been carefully considered to adapt to the character of the area in respect of the scale of the adjoining buildings and in order to provide the best quality space to the future residents of the building.



REFUSED APPLICATION 2021



PROPOSED ELEVATION

4.1.3 LAYOUT

The scheme as mentioned comprises seven flats between three floors.

At the ground floor there will be the refuse store, the cycle store and a 2-bedroom Flat with direct access to a private garden from the principal habitable rooms.

At the first floor there will be a one 2 bedroom/3 Person flat, one 2 bedroom/4 person flat and one 3 bedroom/6 person flat. All the flats will have private amenity in the form of balconies that exceed minimum standards. This layout is also repeated on the second floor. All of the floors will be served by an internal and protected staircase and lift.

In the most recent application, one of the refusal reasons stated: *'The proposed development by reason of its siting, layout and design would result in the provision of a habitable rooms on the ground floor with very limited levels of natural lighting, outlook and privacy...'*

To respond to this, the second flat that was on the ground floor in the previous application has been removed and replaced by one single larger flat with 2 bedrooms/4 person at the front and the living space towards the rear which is now double aspect too. The outdoor amenity space remains and can be accessed via the principal rooms. We are confident that this new proposal responds to the previous comments.

This provision of mixed units is considered more appropriate to the town-centre location in order to respond to the different demands of the area. All flats are designed to a high specification and quality to respect the location while complying to the space standard,

4.1.4 MATERIALS

All new materials to be used will be sympathetic with the style, design, character and appearance of the adjoining buildings and the local context: red brickwork for the walls, grey natural slate for the roof and dark grey for the windows and the balustrades protecting the balconies.

4.1.5 SUSTAINABILITY

Low energy appliances and lighting will be used in order to reduce the demand for energy. Other aspects of water saving measures will also be employed, such as water butts, water saving taps and reduced flush toilets. The development will be designed to meet and/or exceed current building regulation standards.

CONCLUSION

The proposed building has been carefully and sensitively designed to provide a high quality development that responds positively to the local context and scale. The design respects the history and character of the area whilst maintaining good outlook and privacy for occupants of existing neighboring properties.

The building will have a positive impact on street aesthetics and will finally enhance this area of Ruislip, making full and efficient use of the existing land through good residential architecture. The sensitive use of traditional materials and high quality landscaping will greatly improve the site yet remain sympathetic to the nearby properties and will be a positive addition to the street.

USL Architects are positive that this proposed design is an appropriate response to the constraints and opportunities presented by the site and the surrounding area whilst remaining compliant to council requirements, and this proposal deserves the support of the council in planning terms.

6.0 PART 5 –APPENDIX

5.1 SCHEDULE OF ACCOMODATION

2 MIDCROFT, RUISLIP - GIA						
FLAT	TYPE	LEVELS	Number of bed spaces (persons)	Built in Storage - Sqm	SURFACE Sqm	SPACE STANDARD SURFACES Sqm
1	2 BERDOOM	Ground Floor	4	6.9	99.0	70
2	1 BEDROOM	First floor	2	3.9	52.8	50
3	3 BEDROOM	First floor	5	6.8	89.5	86
4	3 BEDROOM	First floor	6	7.1	98.2	95
5	1 BEDROOM	Second floor	2	3.9	52.8	50
6	3 BEDROOM	Second floor	5	6.8	89.5	86
7	3 BEDROOM	Second floor	6	7.1	98.2	95

TOTAL			580	532
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2 MIDCROFT - FLATS TYPE

TYPE	NUMBER
1 BEDROOM	2
2 BEDROOM	1
3 BEDROOM	4

7
