

OFFICER REPORT FOR DECISION UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

APPLICATION NO: P0847.25

WARD: Squirrels Heath **Date Received:** 24th June 2025

ADDRESS: 216 - 218 Main Road
Romford

PROPOSAL: Retention of front and side seating decking and smoking area with mobile light canopy.

DRAWING NO(S): 052.25/01
052.25/02
052.25/03
052.25/04
052.25/05
Ordnance survey map

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that **planning permission be REFUSED** for the reason(s) given at the end of the report

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site comprises of No. 216-218 Main Road, Romford, which are units located within a parade of shops. The site comprises of Meteor Meze & Grill restaurant. The site is located in the Gidea Park Conservation Area and the Main Road, Gidea Park Local Centre.

No. 220 Main Road is occupied by MasterCool air conditioning on the ground floor with residential accommodation above (220B Main Road). No. 214 Main Road is occupied by Addspace London Ltd (Property Extensions). Gidea Lodge, 220A Main Road, is a retirement housing complex located to the rear and south east of the site.

THE PROPOSAL

The application seeks consent for the retention of front and side seating, decking and smoking area with a mobile light canopy.

There is an enforcement case, reference ENF/31/21 at No. 216-218 Main Road, Romford, for a rear flue, possibly installation of decking to front for external seating area with planters and retractable covering and painting of extraction flue and alleged unauthorised change of use to restaurant, which is under investigation.

During the course of the application, it was noted that the Ordnance Survey map was incorrect, as it

didn't include the front external seating area. Following negotiations with the agent, a revised Ordnance Survey map was received on 8th January 2026. It was not deemed necessary to re-consult neighbouring properties, as the application is retrospective and no representations have been received.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

P1334.24	Change of Use of ground floor from retail shop Use Class E(a) to Restaurant and Take Away Use Class E(b), installation of extraction flue systems, internal, and external alterations. Opening hours Monday-Saturday 9am-11pm and Sunday and Bank Holidays 10am-10pm, external seating area and boundary fence. P1145.23 Conditions(s) NO.4 , NO.5 and NO.8 Withdrawn - Invalid 14-11-2024
P1335.24	Installation of decking to front for external seating area with planters and retractable covering and painting of extraction flue. Withdrawn - Invalid 14-11-2024
P1145.23	Change of Use of ground floor from retail shop Use Class E(a) to Restaurant and Take Away Use Class E(b), installation of extraction flue systems, internal, and external alterations. Opening hours Monday-Saturday 9am-11pm and Sunday and Bank Holidays 10am-10pm, external seating area and boundary fence Apprv with cons 16-02-2024
P2138.07	Change of use from Class A2 to Class A3 and A5 restaurant with takeaway facility - includin extraction flue Refuse 21-12-2007

REPRESENTATION SUMMARY

The application was advertised by way of a site notice, in the local press and 40 neighbouring owner/occupants were notified of the proposal. No letters of representation were received.

Heritage Officer - Objects to this application, as the installation of a permanent structure represents a significant encroachment onto the public realm. In particular, the inclusion of structural elements such as vertical posts and a canopy introduces visual clutter that constitutes shopfront spillage onto the pavement. This utilitarian intervention detracts from the pedestrian experience and comprises views of adjacent historic buildings. Detailed comments are contained elsewhere in this report.

Public Protection Department - No air quality or contaminated land concerns. Noise wise, the Public Protection require that the hours of use for the areas are tied into the same hours of opening for the restaurant itself under P1145.23.

PLANNING POLICIES

Policies 7 (Residential design and amenity), 13 (Town centre development), 14 (Eating and drinking), 19 (Business growth), 26 (Urban Design), 28 (Heritage assets) and 34 (Managing pollution) of the Havering Local Plan.

Policy D4 (Delivering good design), D8 (Public realm), D14 (Noise), E9 (Retail, markets and hot food takeaways), HC1 (Heritage conservation and growth) and SD6 (Town centres and high streets) of the London Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework is relevant.

The Heritage Supplementary Planning Document.

Gidea Park Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan July 2025

MAYORAL CIL IMPLICATIONS

OFFICER APPRAISAL

The Case Officer carried out a site visit. Site photos were provided by the applicant/agent in support of the application. In determining this planning application, photos, Google Street ViewTM, aerial view images and submitted drawings were used to assess the site constraints.

The main issues in this case are the impact on the streetscene, neighbouring amenity and any highway and parking issues.

DESIGN/IMPACT ON STREET/GARDEN SCENE

It is common within town centres and parades to have seating to the front of restaurants and coffee shops, as they seek to improve the vitality of the area and also aim to increase footfall. It is considered that an outdoor seating area in the traditional cafe/restaurant sense would usually be set at a low level, and as such would not be unduly prominent or obtrusive within the street scene. It would also have an element of semi-permanence whereby the tables and chairs used would not be fixed and could be easily removed overnight or when not in use. In general, external seating areas tend to integrate satisfactorily within district and local centres and would not detract from the character and appearance of the wider locality or adversely affect the street scene.

This application seeks consent the retention of front and side seating, decking and smoking area with a mobile light canopy. The side seating was approved under planning application P1145.23.

The Council's Heritage Officer was consulted and provided the following comments. The application site is within the Gidea Park Conservation Area and forms part of the Main Road Corridor identified by the Character Appraisal as Character Area 4. It is within the immediate setting of the Grade II listed The Ship Public House (List Entry Number: 1079902) and the Coffee Pot (List Entry Number: 1358534). The adjacent property to the west at 202-210 Main Road is locally listed.

The application site currently makes a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Main Road corridor, which serves as the principal east-west thoroughfare through the Conservation Area. Although the building line along this stretch of Main Road is not uniform, groups of buildings form coherent frontages, some positioned directly adjacent to the pavement, while others are set back with paved forecourts used for parking. The set back building line to the west of 210 Main Road, including the application site, allows views of the historic buildings when approached from east. This view has been identified as a key view by the character appraisal.

The current proposal seeks retrospective consent for the retention of a raised decking area with seating and a smoking area, including a canopy, situated to the front and side of Nos. 216-218 Main Road. While temporary seating arrangements on the pavement outside local eateries are a common feature, the installation of a permanent structure represents a significant encroachment onto the public realm. In particular, the inclusion of structural elements such as vertical posts and a canopy introduces visual clutter that constitutes shopfront spillage onto the pavement. This utilitarian intervention detracts from the pedestrian experience and compromises views of adjacent historic buildings.

Although the use of the space for outdoor dining - akin to the arrangement at the Harvester (No. 91 Main Road) opposite - is acceptable in principle, the proposed design and choice of materials are considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regard to the NPPF, the development is assessed to result in a low level of 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of designated heritage assets, and Paragraphs 213 and 215 of the NPPF are relevant.

The Council's Heritage Officer has informally advised that should the proposal be amended to omit the vertical posts/structural elements and canopy, it is considered that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the relevant listed buildings would not be adversely affected, although the acceptability of this would need to be assessed separately and without prejudice to any future submission.

It is considered that the retention of front seating, decking and smoking area with a mobile light canopy, by reason of the cumulative impact of its depth, bulk, mass, design and materials, forms a visually prominent feature in the street-scene and in particular, the inclusion of structural elements such as vertical posts and a canopy, contributes to street clutter in an area that is otherwise devoid of arrangements of such scale. The effect of the development has an invasive and harmful impact on the open nature of the parade. Outdoor seating areas where consent has been sought are relatively modest in scale. It is considered that the extensive enclosure dominates the public realm, lacks subservience to the host premises and sets an undesirable precedent.

It is considered that the installation of a permanent structure represents a significant encroachment onto the wide and open feel of the streetscene, compromises views of adjacent historic buildings and is harmful to the character and appearance of the building, wider parade and consequently the streetscene and the Gidea Park Conservation Area, contrary to Policies 26 and 28 of the Havering Local Plan, Policy HC1 of the London Plan, as well as the NPPF.

IMPACT ON AMENITY

The application property lies within a row of commercial premises which forms part of the Main Road, Gidea Park Local Centre. It is reasonable to assume, given the location of the application site that the ambient noise levels would remain reasonably high in the evenings and on Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays.

The side seating was approved under planning application P1145.23. It is considered that the external seating areas do not create significant levels of noise and disturbance from the site which results in material harm to the residential amenities of surrounding sites. The Council's Public Protection Department was consulted and has no objection to this application on noise grounds, providing that the hours of use for the areas are tied into the same hours of opening for the restaurant itself under P1145.23.

Condition 3 of planning application P1145.23 states that: "The premises shall not be used for the purposes hereby permitted other than between the hours of 9:00 and 23:00 on Mondays to Saturday and 10:00 and 22:00 on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control in the interests of amenity". This condition can be imposed if minded to grant planning permission to protect neighbouring amenity.

A condition can be placed to ensure that no amplified music or speech shall be played or reproduced in the outside pavement seating areas to protect neighbouring amenity if minded to grant planning permission.

HIGHWAY/PARKING

It is considered that the front external seating area does not unacceptably impact upon pedestrian movement in Main Road.

OTHER ISSUES

Equality and Diversity

The Equality Act 2010 (as amended) imposes important duties on public authorities in the exercise of their functions and specifically introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty. Under this duty, public organisations are required to have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and must advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In considering this application and preparing this report officers have had careful regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended). They have concluded that the decision recommended will not conflict with the Council's duties under this important legislation.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the retention of front seating, decking and smoking area with a mobile light

canopy, by reason of the cumulative impact of its depth, bulk, mass, design and materials, forms a visually prominent feature in the street-scene and in particular, the inclusion of structural elements such as vertical posts and a canopy, contributes to street clutter in an area that is otherwise devoid of arrangements of such scale. The effect of the development has an invasive and harmful impact on the open nature of the parade.

It is considered that the installation of a permanent structure represents a significant encroachment onto the wide and open feel of the streetscene, compromises views of adjacent historic buildings and is harmful to the character and appearance of the building, wider parade and consequently the streetscene and the Gidea Park Conservation Area, contrary to Policies 26 and 28 of the Havering Local Plan, Policy HC1 of the London Plan, as well as the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that **planning permission be REFUSED** for the following reason(s)

1 Refusal non standard

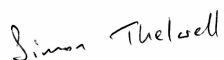
The development, by reason of the cumulative impact of its depth, bulk, mass, design and materials, forms a visually prominent feature in the street-scene and in particular, the inclusion of structural elements such as vertical posts and a canopy, contributes to street clutter. The installation of a permanent structure represents a significant encroachment onto the wide and open feel of the streetscene, compromises views of adjacent historic buildings and is materially harmful to the character and appearance of the building, wider parade, the streetscene and the Gidea Park Conservation Area, contrary to Policies 26 and 28 of the Havering Local Plan, Policy HC1 of the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

INFORMATIVES

1 Refusal - No negotiation

Statement Required by Article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015: Consideration was given to seeking amendments, but given conflict with adopted planning policy, notification of intended refusal and the reason(s) for it was given to ANVA via email on 9th January 2026.

Authorising Officer:



Simon Thelwell

9th January 2026