

R A M M U R T I D E S I G N L T D

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**Design & Planning Statement
to accompany Planning Application submission**

Proposed construction of aluminium and glass canopy to existing restaurant

**at No 21 Wokingham Road, Reading
RG6 1LE**

For Idealmark Limited

26 August 2024

Site Context and Heritage

The planning application seeks approval to provide an external glass and aluminium canopy to include the surrounding area that wraps around the front of the building that will enhance the frontage and create much needed floor area, and an element an open and welcoming feature which can add some enhancement to what is seen as a semi drab façade.

The property is a long established restaurant which was in use for many years as “ Colleys Supper rooms”, but which closed in May 2013 after having been in operation for over 25 years.

The applicant has been looking to let out the premises and has struggled to retain a successful occupancy with a few changes in short spaces of time.

The property lies on the corner of the A329 Wokingham Road and St Bartholomew’s Road, in the East of Reading which is a short walk from the retail centre further East along Wokingham Road heading towards Earley and Wokingham.

Palmer Park is set opposite and to the east, with established residences adjacent and to the north, to the rear at the west and across the road to the south.

The restaurant is on the ground floor towards the main entrance, with ancillary kitchens and storage set towards the centre and the rear of the building. There are apartments at first floor.

The principle of use has been established over many years and it is just the need to secure a viable operation that will attract customers and bring vibrancy to the building.



Aerial view



View from Wokingham Road



view from St Bartholomew's Road

The existing building takes the opportunity to wrap around the corner allowing frontages to both streets and has feature ornate brick arches at both ground and first floor levels. Recent timber posts and Perspex roof coverings have been added with tables set on the frontage to encourage a café and alfresco arrangement.

The intention is to create modern look to the building where the inspiration to introduce a glass and metal framed canopy has come from the recent similar addition to the well known “Café York” located not far from the application site on Erleigh Road which has been a successful addition to that thriving business, which also took the opportunity to include the frontage area as part of the restaurant which has created an attractive feature to street scene.

The applicants are looking to create a similar arrangement by carefully taking the space to the street boundary and opening window apertures to gain access to the semi external area.

The character of the external façade would be unchanged other than the introduction of the glass and aluminium canopy “conservatory” frontage

Planning History & Policy

There are only two records that can be seen on the council's planning applications portal as follows:

Planning reference	description		
900703	Erection of a single storey extension for dining area and toilets for disabled	Application refused	07/08/1990
970047	Demolition of storage building, single storey extension and ancillary alterations	Application permitted	10/07/1998

As the applications are more than 10 years old, it has not been possible to check the full details of these applications at the time of writing.

In terms of policy, this building is not located in an area of other commercial uses as it is a single unit a little remote from the nearest "Major" Local centre heading further east out of Reading or the shops in the "District Centre" at Cemetery Junction area heading west towards the town centre.

There are sporadic commercial uses, an example being the Estate Agents officed on the corner of Bulmersh Road (now a heating and plumbing store)

Relevant policies are those contained in the Reading Borough Council Local Plan adopted November 2019:

CC1, Presumption in favour of development

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

The building and the use as a restaurant is long established, and hence scale and density of development is not necessarily in question with the modest change to the buildings frontage.

The premises are located in an accessible location all within walking and cycling distances, and with a very frequent bus service with a stop just a minutes walk near the entrance to Palmer Park.

CR7: Primary frontages in central reading

This policy is very relevant as it states that “New developments (or alterations to existing uses) that front onto any of the designated primary frontages will provide an active building frontage with a display window or glazed frontage at ground floor level, in order to contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre, and provide visual interest”.

Albeit the location is not town centre, it is certainly relevant here.

EM1: Provision of Employment Development

The applicant is actively seeking opportunities to retain the use as far as possible and his feedback from likely tenants is that the building needs some form of attraction and a vibrant feel.

EM3: Loss of Employment Land & EM4: Maintaining a Variety of Premises

Similarly, the lack of interest in the building being retained as an active and relevant use would be lost and an alternative non commercial use explored potentially.

RL6: Protection of leisure facilities and public houses

Although the premises is an E(b) restaurant, the importance for the retention of this building as an active viable facility is no different to keeping the boroughs pubs and hence this policy should apply here.

Proposals

As described above the intention is to add a glass and metal frame lightweight canopy structure. CGI images below show the envisaged design:



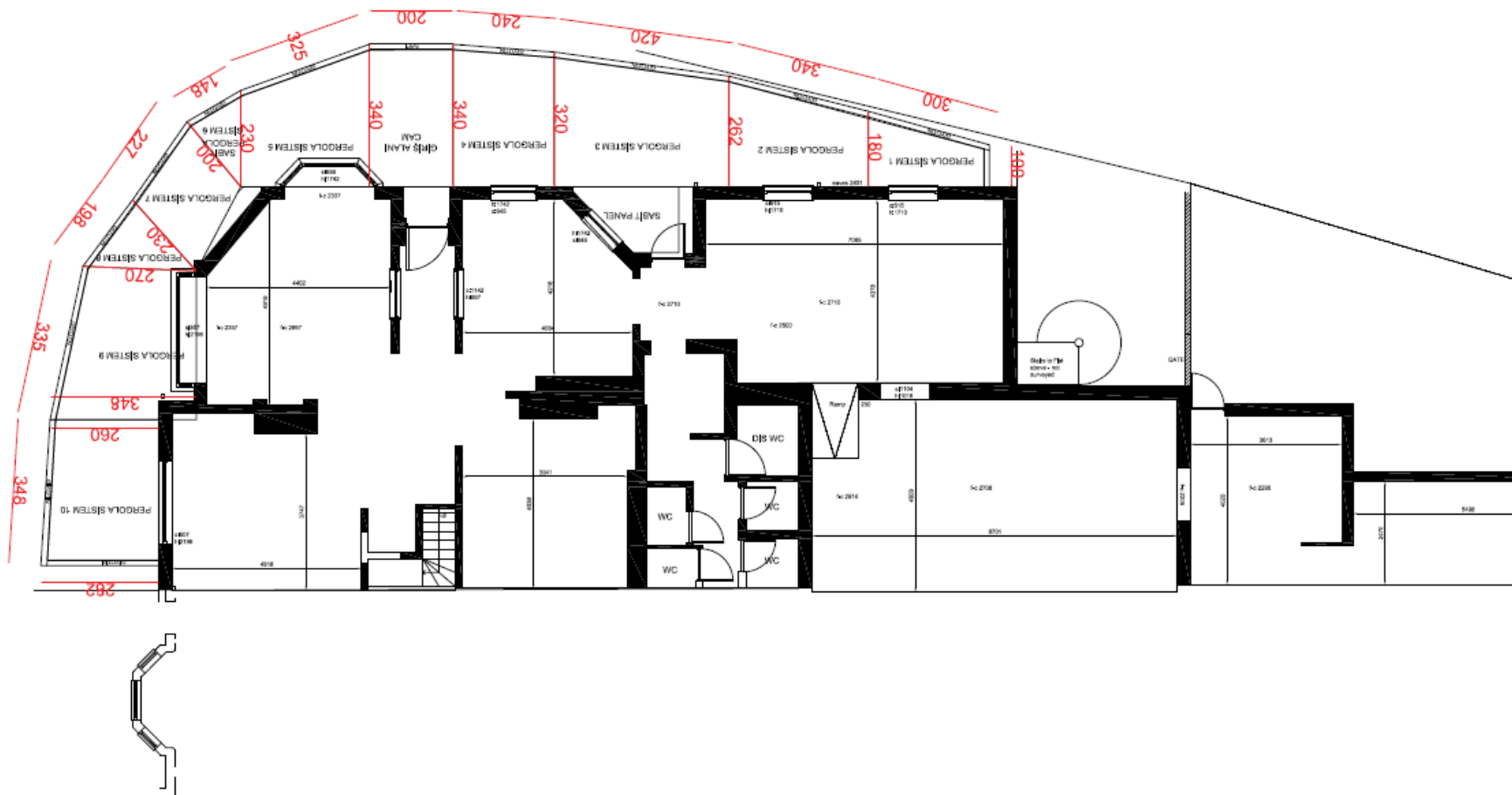
External views





Internal views





Proposed floor plan with the glazed canopy added



As an example, the “before” and “after” to show the improvement to Café York located in Erleigh Road Reading with the addition of the canopy

Flood risk

The property lies in flood zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding, and no special measures are required.

Conclusion

The current status of the ground floor restaurant is that it is vacant with one potential client willing to take over the operation albeit with the addition of the glazed canopy enclosure being able to be added.

The use of the building is well established and there is not expected to be any detrimental impact other than the business becoming active once again, and the applicant is hopeful that the proposed addition will be supported by officers for a positive determination.