



# PLANNING BY DESIGN

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

---

## Design and Access Statement:

232 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 8EX

Canopy installed in car park attached to retail unit (retrospective application)

On Behalf of Nish Rajmohan

Drafted by **Planning By Design**

## **Application**

Planning By Design (The agent) has been instructed to act on behalf of Nish Rajmohan (the applicant) to submit a planning application to Reading Borough Council (the Local Planning Authority) for a canopy installed in the car park attached to a retail unit (retrospective application) at: 232 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 8EX (the site).

In support of this application, the following Design and Access Statement has been constructed to demonstrate the suitability of this site for this proposal and evaluate its accordance with national and local planning policy along with supplementary design guidance.

## **Site Location**

The application site is located south west of Reading Town Centre, on the western side of Shinfield Road, within Shinfield Road District Centre.

The area around the site is mixed-use, with residential dwellings and several schools nearby, including Whiteknights and Ridgeway Primary Schools. There are several public and other services located around the site including retail and convenience shops, pubs and restaurants. Public transport is accessible, with bus routes connecting this area to Reading town centre and other parts of the town.

The application site comprises an old public house converted to a retail shop, now trading as "Honey & Ghee", selling fresh fruit & veg, halal butchers and fresh fish. In addition, the shop is an Indian, African, East Asian and East European grocery specialist.

The existing property is a two-storey building featuring a traditional design with some modern adaptations, as well as a white-painted exterior and pitched roof.

Parking is located at the side, in a car park accessed via a vehicular entrance. There are bollards installed along the pavement edge to prevent vehicles from parking too close to the storefront. The building's current use as a commercial establishment reflects the mixed-use nature of this stretch along the A327 road.

## **The Proposal**

The proposed development is for the installation of an external canopy to protect the produce displayed outside the side of the Honey & Ghee main shop elevation at the Ground Floor of the above address.

The proposed canopy is in green. The opening hours are written on side of the canopy. The size of the canopy is 12.2m long by 4.2m wide. Its height is 2.6m.

## **Planning History**

140749, Replace existing sign with new in existing totem sign pole, approved on 15/07/2014

130354, New ATM, approved on 29/04/2013

130355, 2 fascia signs, 1 projecting sign, 3 freestanding signs, ATM surround signage, blue badge pole mounted signs, wall mounted information signs, and window vinyl, approved on 29/04/2013

120319, Single storey front extension with ramp and modifications to windows, approved on 08/06/2012

121790, Construction of plant enclosure and installation of external condensers, approved on 04/09/2012

990273, The forming of a new entrance and steps together with alterations to existing ramps, approved on 28/02/2001

011118, Erection of sign and lighting, approved on 31/07/2001

## **Planning Policy**

The following planning policy and guidance documents are recognised as material considerations for the assessment of this application

- National Planning Policy Framework 2023;
- National Planning Practice Guidance;
- Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

The following section will evaluate the proposals in accordance with the relevant policies and supplementary design guidance of the Council to demonstrate why the proposal should be considered as acceptable in principle and in strict accordance with the Councils development criteria.

### **National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)**

The new National Planning Policy Framework was revised in 2023 and the following paragraphs are considered to be relevant.

Paragraph 38 confirms that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed developments in a positive and creative way. They should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 47 confirms that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the Development Plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. This paragraph also states that decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales, unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

Paragraph 55 advises that Local Planning Authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions.

Paragraph 56 advises that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided.

### **Strong and competitive economy**

Paragraph 85 states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

### **Town Centres**

Paragraph 90 states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning decisions should f) recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.

### **Healthy and safe communities**

Paragraph 96 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and beautiful buildings which: a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.

### **High quality places**

Paragraph 135 states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Development should:

- a) Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) Be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) Optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- f) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

### **Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)**

Policy RL1: Network And Hierarchy Of Centres states that the vitality and viability of these centres should be maintained and enhanced. The policy states that the following improvements will be acceptable in all centres:

- Accessibility and transport improvements;
- Broadening range of facilities;
- Residential use of upper floors; and
- Environmental enhancements.

Policy RL3: Vitality And Viability Of Smaller Centres states that within district, major local and local centres, development will be permitted provided that:

- There would be no more than 2 consecutive A5 takeaways, and no more than 30% of the length of the Key Frontage would be in takeaway use; and
- There would be no net loss of 'centre uses' for 'non-centre uses' at the ground floor (apart from entrances to upper floors) except in exceptional circumstances. On upper floors, other uses including residential ('living over the shops') will be acceptable.

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design And Construction states that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

Policy CC7: Design And The Public Realm states that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they:

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;
- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;
- Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.

## **Assessment**

### **Development Principle**

The proposed development involves the retrospective installation of a canopy in the car park of a retail unit, "Honey & Ghee," which is located within the Shinfield Road District Centre. The principle of development for the canopy is supported by the mixed-use nature of the area and District Centre designation. This location is suitable for a commercial extension as it enhances the retail function without impacting the surrounding residential character.

The installation of the canopy serves a clear functional purpose in protecting the produce displayed outside the store, contributing to the operational efficiency of the business. This aligns with Paragraph 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, which emphasises the need to support the growth of local businesses and improve economic conditions. By protecting the outdoor display of goods, the canopy contributes to the business's ability to provide fresh products to the local community, which would boost foot traffic and economic activity in the area.

By supporting a local business that specialises in a wide variety of cultural foods, the development also caters to the needs of the diverse local community, improving access to fresh and culturally relevant products. This is in line with Paragraph 85 of the NPPF, which emphasises the importance of supporting local businesses to boost economic growth and productivity. Furthermore, the development complements Policy RL1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, as it helps to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Shinfield Road District Centre, fostering a thriving local economy.

This proposal is consistent with Policy RL1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, which supports improvements in district centres, including those related to accessibility and enhancing the

range of retail services. The canopy, although modest in size, facilitates the retail offering at the site and is in keeping with the character of the area.

### **Design and Character**

The canopy's design is a simple yet effective addition that complements the existing character of the retail unit and the surrounding mixed-use area. Finished in green, the canopy is visually consistent with the commercial nature of the building while adding a contemporary touch to the existing structure without overwhelming it. The green colour is neutral and unobtrusive, blending with the shopfront and maintaining consistency with the local street scene.

The size and scale of the canopy, measuring 12.2m by 4.2m with a height of 2.6m, are proportionate to the building and its surroundings. It remains within the established boundaries of the site and does not encroach on public areas or neighbouring properties.

Its lightweight structure ensures that it does not dominate the building or the streetscape, maintaining the overall character of the area. The design respects the legibility of the existing architectural elements of the building, ensuring that it remains in keeping with the local built environment. This is consistent with Paragraph 135 of the NPPF, which calls for developments to be visually attractive, well-designed, and sympathetic to the surrounding character.

Additionally, the proposal aligns with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, which requires new developments to respond positively to their local context and reinforce local character and distinctiveness. The canopy thus enhances the retail unit's functionality while preserving the overall character and visual quality of the area.

### **Residential Amenity**

In terms of residential amenity, the canopy does not pose any adverse effects on nearby residential properties. It is positioned on the side of the retail unit, facing away from any residential dwellings, which ensures there is no impact on privacy, overshadowing, or noise. The nearest residential properties are sufficiently distanced from the installation, and the canopy does not extend beyond the confines of the commercial premises, mitigating any potential visual intrusion.

The proposal adheres to Policy DM01 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, which protects the amenity of existing residents. The scale and positioning of the canopy ensure that there is no negative impact on the quality of life for residents in the vicinity.

Furthermore, the installation of the canopy at 232 Shinfield Road will not lead to a more intensive use of the site. The canopy serves primarily as a protective cover to enable outdoor display of goods, maintaining the current operations of the retail unit rather than expanding them. It does not increase the retail floor area or facilitate additional activities that would generate more footfall or traffic beyond what is already anticipated for a retail unit in a district centre. The purpose of the canopy is functional, offering shelter for perishable items and facilitating loading onto customers vehicles, rather than enabling any significant operational growth. Therefore, the development is in line with Paragraph 55 of the NPPF, ensuring that no conditions or limitations have been breached, and it is consistent with Policy CC7 of the

Reading Borough Local Plan, which focuses on maintaining safe and suitable use of sites without overburdening local infrastructure or amenities.

### **Impact on Parking and Highway Safety**

The installation of the canopy does not encroach on the parking area, and the car park remains fully operational with adequate space for customer parking. Access to the car park is unchanged, and the development has no impact on visibility or safety for vehicles entering or exiting the site.

This aspect of the proposal complies with Paragraph 115 of the NPPF, which stipulates that developments should not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety. The Reading Borough Council's Policy CC7 also supports this, ensuring that developments create safe environments without negatively impacting the public realm or accessibility.

### **Conclusion**

For the above reasons, we see no reason for the Council to withhold our request for planning permission and kindly request that the council make a reasonable decision on this submission in line with the developmental objectives and timescales of the National Planning Policy Framework. Should the Planning Authority have any further questions in relation to this proposal or feel that certain conditions would be necessary to accommodate this proposal, Planning By Design would welcome conversation on any of these matters.