

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church Ward

App Ref: PL/24/1612 Full planning permission

Address: Honey & Ghee, 232 Shinfield Road, Reading, RG2 8EX

Proposal: Erection of canopy in car park area (retrospective).

Applicant: Nish Rajmohan

Received date: 03/12/2024

Target Decision date: 03/02/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a large Victorian building set over 2 floors, located along the Shinfield Road near the junction with Elm Road. The property is made up of a number of buildings - the layout and main structure has largely remained the same over the years. The property retains the original front façade with ornate ridge/brickwork detail, which faces the public highway, largely unchanged apart from the window and door locations and window styles.

The property served as a Public House for many years, known as the “The Merry Maidens” and then rebranded as “Maidens”. The pub closed its doors and reopened as a “Sainsbury’s Local” 2014.

The building is located in a prominent location fronting the Shinfield Road. The building is constructed with brickwork in white render with pitched and tiled roofs. Original Victorian features remain including the ornate chimney stacks and intricate details on top of the front façade.

This part of Shinfield Road is largely retail and commercial, with residential properties located to the rear of the host property.

The property is not listed, not locally listed nor located within a conservation area.

Site visit date: 12th December 2024



Front elevation – looking from Shinfield Road



Standing in carpark looking northerly towards canopy.



Standing on public footway looking westerly towards side view of canopy.



Standing on public footway looking north-westerly towards window signage, wall fixed adverts and totem pole.



Looking north-westerly towards the fruit and vegetables on display behind one of the roller shutters and the other roller shutter giving access into the supermarket.

It should be noted that at the time of my visit, I observed an inner room (see image below) segregated by doors, within the canopy structure itself. This application makes no reference to an additional room within the canopy structure (no floor plans have been submitted) and no additional historical planning permission(s) have been located relating to this internal room.



Looking westerly – display racking and separate internal chilled room with double doors can be seen.

It should be noted that at the time of my visit I observed an air conditioning unit located adjacent to and attached to the store (see image below). No planning permission(s) have been located relating to this air conditioning unit.



It should be noted that new signage (images above and below) was observed at the time of my visit. The application makes no reference to Advertising Consent and no historical planning permission(s) have been located relating to the signage attached to the property front and side elevations, totem pole and window signage.

Photographs of the application address through the years:

As a Public House in 2009



Looking north-westerly towards front elevation

As a Sainsbury's Local in 2016



Looking north-westerly towards front elevation

As Honey & Ghee in 2024



Looking north-westerly towards front elevation

As The Merry Maidens, dated 1935 (John Hancock).



Looking towards front elevation.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application consists of retrospective planning permission for the erection of a metal canopy in the carpark area of Honey & Ghee, a supermarket located at 232 Shinfield Road, Reading.

The canopy, which has been constructed in part of the carpark, is positioned along the most southern elevation and measures an overall depth of 4.2m, by 12.2m long and 2.6m in height. The applicant states that the canopy is to protect the produce displayed outside the main shop. The canopy structure is fully enclosed and includes 3 sets of roller shutters to its front elevation, 2 sets of roller shutters are positioned in front of shelving units used to display fruit and vegetables, whilst the other roller shutter provides the main access into the canopy area and on into the main supermarket.

The canopy also includes an additional strip of metal to act as a porch covering, which runs along the entire length of the canopy structure and extends an additional 1m forwards of the canopy structure but is included within the 4.2m width.

Plans considered:

Drawing no: 01-Site Location Plan-V1, dated Sept 24



Drawing no: 02-Pre-Existing Block Plan-V1, dated Sept 24

Drawing no: 03-Existing Block Plan-V1, dated Sept 24

Drawing no: 04-Pre-Existing Plans-V1, dated Sept 24

Drawing no: 05-Existing Plan-V1, dated Sept 24

Drawing no: 07-Existing Elevations-V1, dated Sept 24

Design & Access Statement (Planning by Design) on behalf of Nish Rajmohan

Covering Letter (Planning by Design) on behalf of Nish Rajmohan

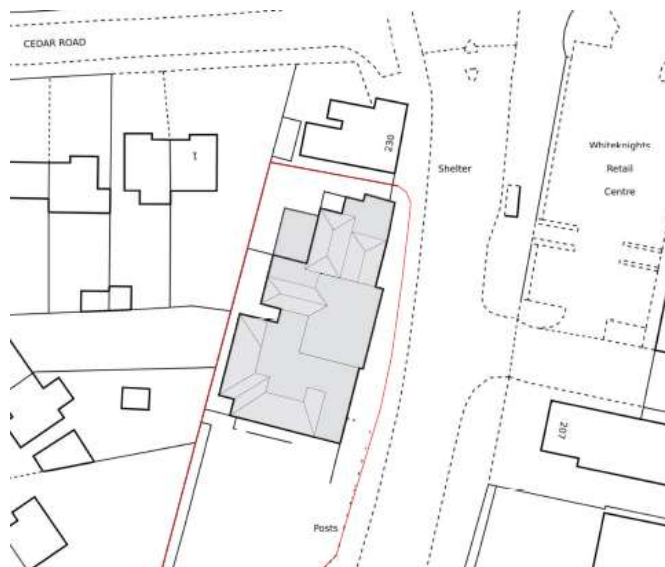
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 3rd December 2024



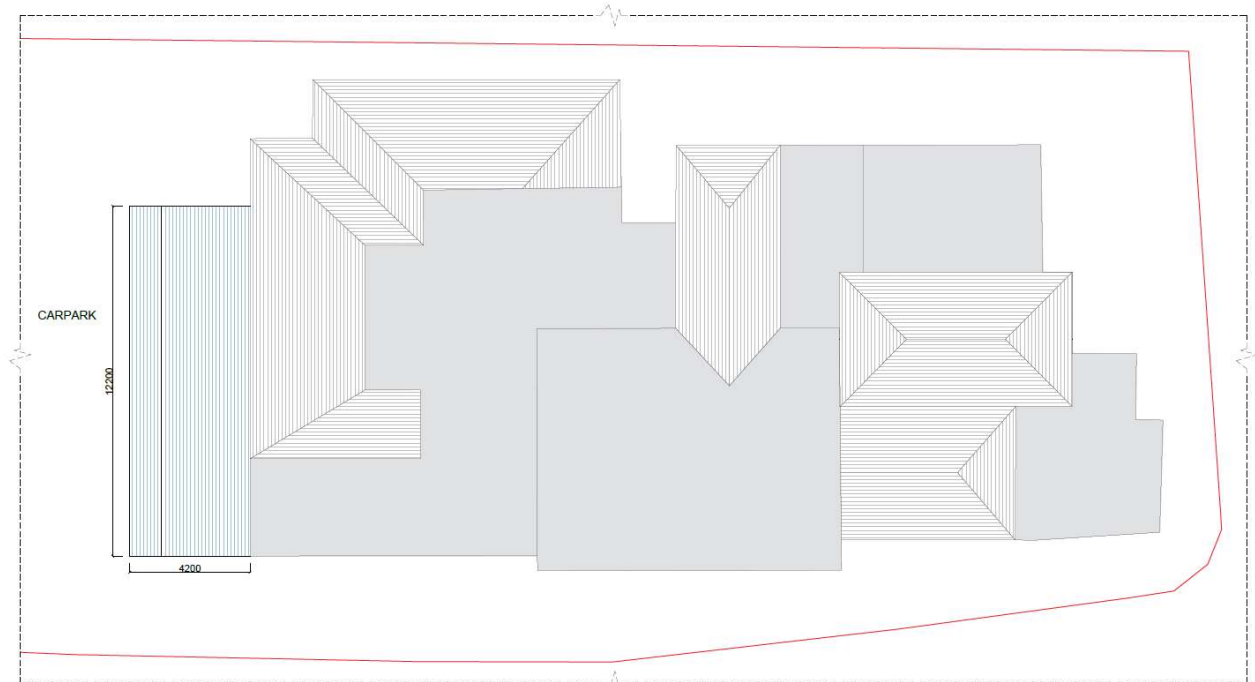
Site Location Plan



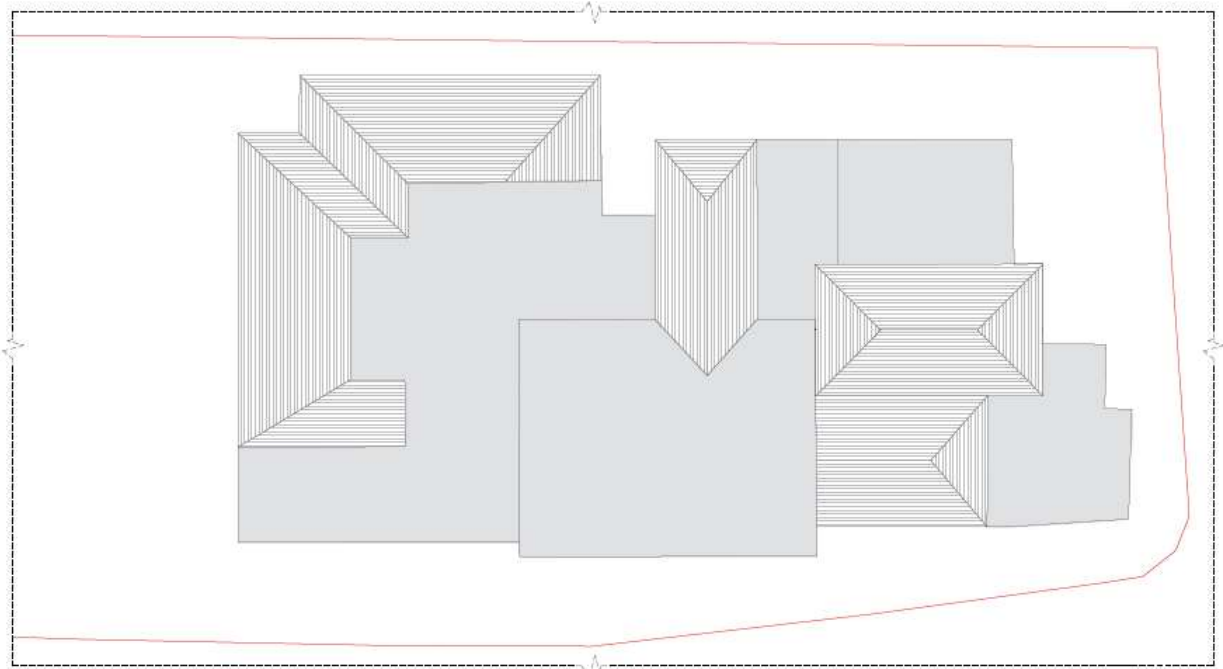
Existing Block Plan



Pre-Existing Block Plan



Existing Roof Plan



Pre-Existing Roof Plan



Existing Elevations

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None of relevance.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal:

The Environmental Protection officer was consulted due to the storage of food within the canopy structure.

External:

A planning site notice was attached to a lamp column adjacent to the main entrance of the property on 17th December 2024 and left in-situ for a minimum of 3 weeks for the public consultation.

No letters of representation have been received.

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the

development.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm
Policy CC8 – Residential Amenity & Visual Amenity
Policy EN16 – Pollution & Water Resources
Policy EN17 – Noise & Noise Generating Equipment

7. APPRAISAL

Character & Appearance

Policy CC7 sets out relevant considerations for design. All development must enhance the character and appearance of Reading in which is located. In particular the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, height, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line.

The canopy structure consists of an unsympathetic form, and incongruent appearance, the canopy structure fails to respect the host property in terms of character and appearance, materials and design. Its inappropriate siting obscures the original roof form to the rear. The metal canopy is unsympathetic form and materials, incongruent appearance, harmful to the fabric of the original Victorian building. The structure fails to match the materials of the host property in this case brick, block and render.

In terms of design, the metal canopy structure fails to respect the character and appearance of the host building. The canopy structure fits the purpose of displaying fruit and vegetable but adds nothing to the character of the host building and is considered detrimental to the original building, adjacent properties and the wider streetscene.

For the reasons outlined above, the application is not supported in planning terms and is contrary to policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (updated 2024).

Safeguarding Amenity

Policy CC8 states development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties in terms of: Privacy, Visual Dominance and overbearing effects of development, Noise and disturbance, Artificial, lighting and Odour.

The canopy is large and visually dominating compared to the host property and its surroundings.

The proposal would facilitate customers mingling inside and outside of the metal canopy structure, whilst browsing and purchasing fruit and vegetables. This canopy structure is positioned close to neighbouring residential properties located in Poplar Gardens.

At the time of my site visit I observed light and power within the canopy structure. LED lighting was observed. This lighting is considered harmful to residential amenity.

Officers consider the canopy structure is harmful to visual amenity, an unnecessary proliferation of clutter.

For the reasons outlined above, the application is not supported in planning terms. The canopy is contrary to policies CC8 and EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 198 of the National Planning Policy Framework (updated 2024).

Environmental Protection Matters

The EHO has concerns about the storage of food outside, in the canopy, as it is not pest proof, in which case, it is likely to encourage rat activity feeding on fruit and vegetables which is a food safety issue, a food waste issue and an amenity issue for the neighbourhood. There is a significant problem with rats in Reading, and all premises need to ensure that they are not providing rats with a food source.

The canopy structure is considered harmful to residential amenity in terms of storage of food outside within the canopy, the food source is likely to increase food waste thus increase risk of vermin, which in turn will be harmful to neighbours including the nearby residential properties.

For the reasons outlined above, the application is not supported in planning terms. The canopy is contrary to policies CC8 & EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

8. CONCLUSION

The canopy has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be unacceptable due to its unsympathetic form, and incongruent appearance, harmful to the character of the host property and wider streetscene. It is also harmful to the amenity of the area in terms of noise, light and vermin.

9. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

1. The development by reason of its unsympathetic form and materials, incongruent appearance, and inappropriate siting, fails to respect the character and appearance of the host building, with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the area. The development is therefore contrary to policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
2. The development is harmful in terms of increased noise, increased artificial light, and increased risk of vermin, harmful to the amenity of adjacent residents and the area in general. The development is therefore contrary to policies CC8, EN16 & EN17 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.