

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove

App Ref: PL/24/1639 Full planning permission

Address: 70 WHITLEY STREET, READING, RG2 0EQ

Proposal: Erection of canopy system-pergola with shutters - Part retrospective.

Applicant: Mr ALI YILMAZ

Received date: 09/12/2024

Target Decision date: 28/07/2025

Extension of Time agreed with agent until 11/08/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

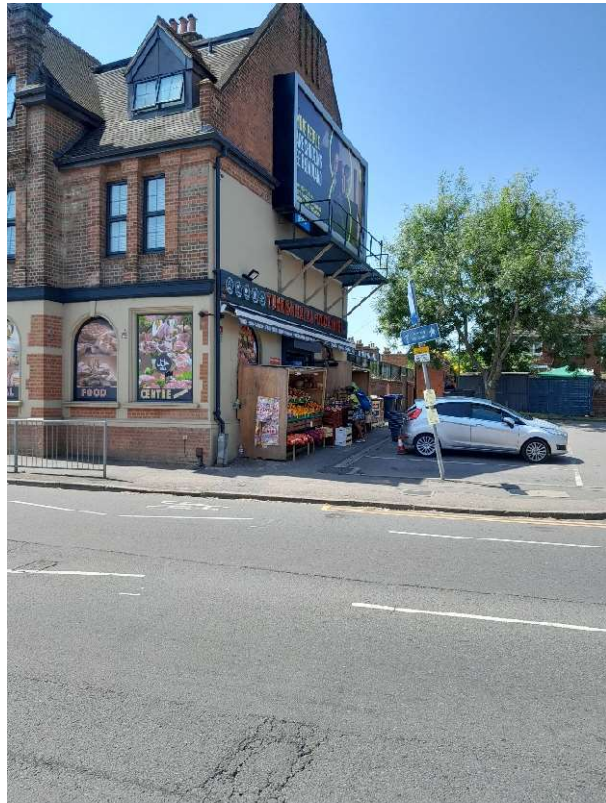
1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is an attractive late Victorian building formerly known as the Wellington Arms public house, designed by a local architect, within the extended part of Christchurch Conservation Area. The application relates to the ground floor section of the former Public House located to the west of Whitley Street, south of Reading town centre. The ground floor is currently occupied by a grocery store trading as "Turkish Halal Food Centre" which is class E, whilst the floors above are residential apartments class C3.

The area directly adjacent to the application site is wholly residential, whilst the wider area mostly on the opposite side of Whitley Street is made up of a mix of commercial and residential properties.

Whilst the building is not listed, the building is a non-designated heritage asset and a Building of Townscape Merit, retaining many original features to this day.

Site visit date: 19th July 2025



Looking towards the front (east) and side (north) elevations with unauthorised window adverts, display stands, signage, awning and floodlights.



Looking towards the (northerly) elevation, showing unauthorised timber display units and proliferation of clutter on footpath.



Looking towards side (northerly) elevation with unauthorised timber grocery display units, awning, floodlights and signage and clutter on pavement.

It should be noted that at the time of my site visit I noticed a number of additions to 70 Whitley Street, which have been implemented without correct permissions, the following items are considered unauthorised development, and should be removed.

- **Roller shutter over the main entrance door.**
- **Awning below the signboard.**
- **2no. floodlights, one fixed to the wall and one fixed to a timber grocery display unit.**
- **Illuminated signboard.**
- **Transfers to windows on front (easterly elevation) and side (northerly elevation).**

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal consists of the erection of a canopy system-pergola with shutters. The Design and Access Statement states the pergola will be constructed from aluminium composite material, will be bolted to the ground and the building. The pergola will have automatic shutters which will close at the end of trading hours.

The proposed development will measure 3.2m in height, 0.9m deep and approximately 9m long and extend largely across the entire side (northerly) elevation. It should be noted that officers advised the application should be amended to 'part retrospective' due to the presence of 2 unauthorised timber grocery display units in place.

Plans and documents considered:

Design and Access Statement

Ref: PP-13615925c1- Location Plan, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley01-Existing Floor Plan, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley02-Proposed Floor Plan, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley03-Existing Front Elevation, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley04-Proposed Day Time Front Elevation, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley05-Proposed Night Time Front Elevation, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley06-Existing Side Elevation 1, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley07-Proposed Side Elevation 1, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley08-Existing Side Elevation 2, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley09-Proposed Side Elevation 2, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley10-Existing Site Plan, dated Dec 24

Drawing no: ku-whitley11-Proposed Site Plan, dated Dec 24

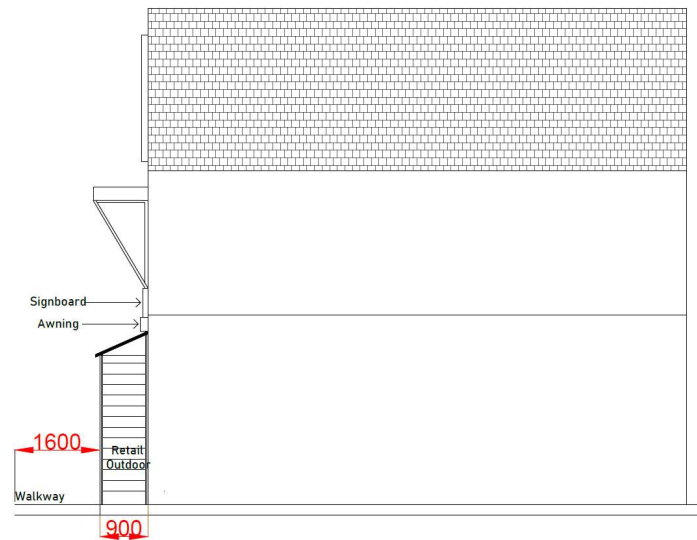
Drawing no: ku-whitley12-Site Plan (Block Plan), dated Dec 24

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 9th December 2024



Proposed northerly elevation.

Proposed easterly elevation.



Proposed westerly elevation.



Proposed site layout (blue line denotes proposed pergola).

The following points are mentioned in the DAS;

- *The pergola design aligns with the architectural style of the surrounding area, ensuring it integrates harmoniously with neighbouring buildings.*
- *Its modern appearance enhances the shopfront's visual appeal.*
- *The structure will not obstruct visibility or create hazards for pedestrians.*
- *Creates a modern and clean shopfront appearance, improving the streetscape.*

The DAS concludes:

- *The design respects the surrounding architectural context, maintains sufficient access, and enhances the overall functionality of the premises. They believe the development will contribute positively to the local area by improving aesthetics and operations of this community-focused business while adhering to relevant planning guidelines.*

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/24/1639 - Part retrospective application to install a aluminium composite material pergola system to shop front – undecided – due August 2025

PL/25/0863 - Non-material amendment to condition 6 of application 181351, to allow evening opening until 22:00 across the week – Refused July 2025

PL/24/0167 - Non-material amendment to condition 6 of application 181351 (Change of use for ground floor commercial unit from use class A4 to A1) – Adjust hours of opening to 6am-11pm Monday to Sunday – Withdrawn March 2024 (Greggs)

PL/18/1351 - Change of use for ground floor commercial unit from use class A4 to A1 – Granted September 2018

PL/18/1874 – Install two air conditioning condenser units at ground floor level. Cut a new WC extract grill and install new extract flue on the rear pitched roof – Granted December 2018

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal Consultees

RBC Environmental Protection Officer

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 increased risk of vermin, which in turn will be harmful to neighbours including the nearby residential properties.

Concerns are raised about the floodlighting resulting in loss of amenity to nearby residents. Insufficient information has been provided in order to assess whether the flood lighting forms part of the application, however the lighting is likely to adversely impact nearby residents, specifically those in Spring Terrace.

The applicants have failed to demonstrate that light levels from the two floodlights will not exceed the relevant guidance lux levels and that, the floodlights will not distract or hinder motorists and road users travelling along Whitley Street.

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

RBC Conservation Officer

Relevant policies and legislation

From the point of view of the historic environment, the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay **special attention** to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

National Planning Policy and Guidance

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. **Chapter 16** of the NPPF (2024) 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

Paragraph 207 states, *"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. " And Paragraph 208 says, "Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."*

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF requires that *'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation....'* And **paragraph 213** says, *'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification'.*

Paragraph 215 requires that *'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal...'*

National Planning Practice Guidance on Historic Environment provides context to the NPPF.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Policy EN1 'Protection and enhancement of the historic environment' of the Reading Borough Local Plan sets out the Council's aspirations for the historic environment. The policy requires that all proposals to protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and *their settings*, historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. It echoes the NPPF by stating, *"Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits"*.

Applications which affect *Listed Buildings* are expected not to have an adverse impact on the elements that contribute to their special architectural or historic interest, including their settings.

Policy EN3 'Enhancement of conservation areas' of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires that development proposals within Conservation Areas contribute positively to local character and distinctiveness. This policy further states *"Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas."*

Policy EN6 'New development in a historic context' also requires *"New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:*

- a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);*

b. Sensitivity to historic context;

c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);

d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.”

Christchurch Conservation Area Appraisal (November 2024) is also a material consideration in determining applications for development.

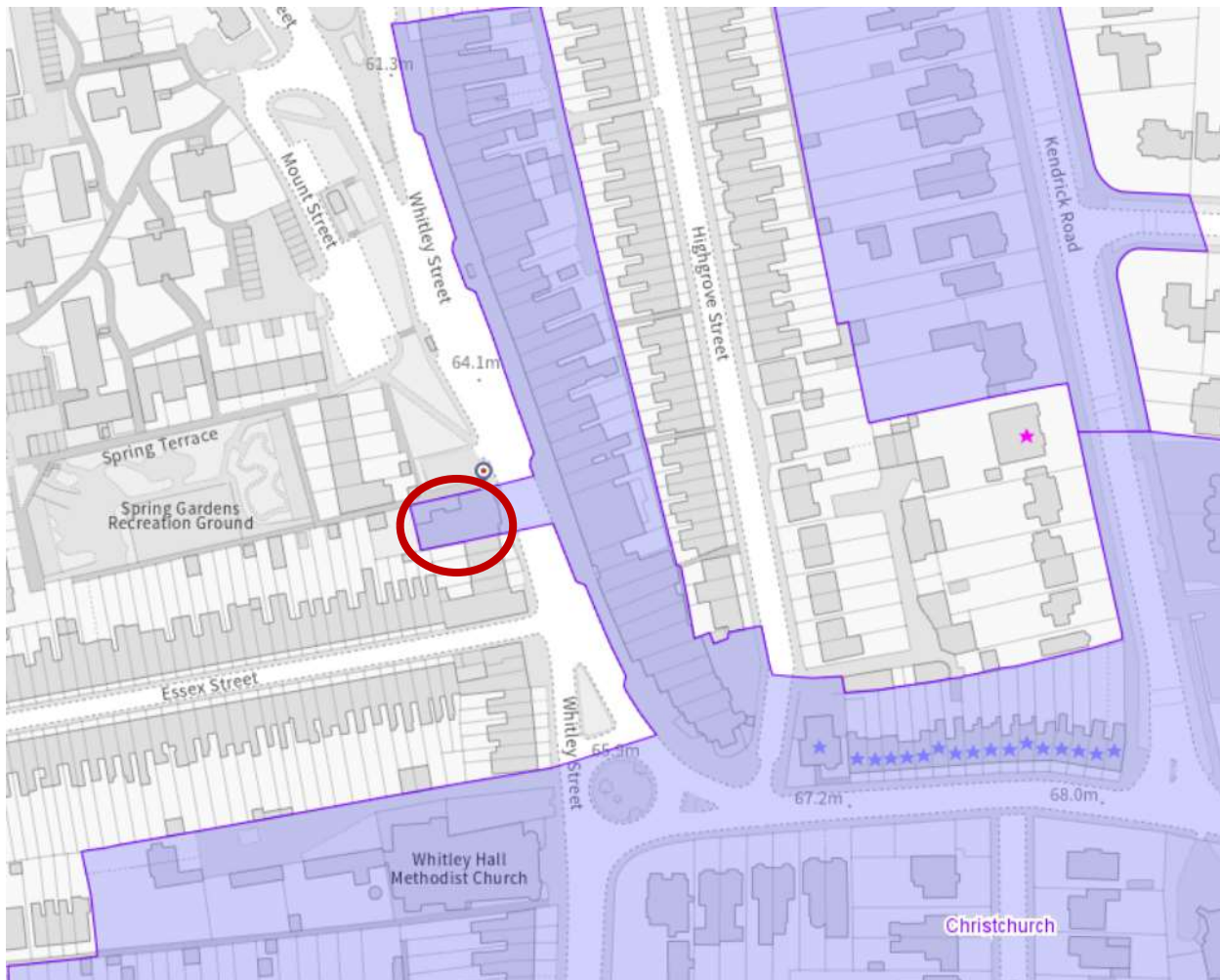
Other

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent.

English Heritage’s “Conservation Principles” provides policy and guidance for the “sustainable management of the historic environment”.

Relevant heritage assets and Significance

The application relates to an attractive late Victorian public house, Wellington Arms, designed by a local architect, located to the west of Whitley Street within the extended part of Christchurch Conservation Area, as illustrated below.



The application site (circled in red) within the Christchurch Conservation Area (light purple)

The subject building is described as a building of townscape merit by the conservation area appraisal. Emphasising the local importance of the building appraisal states:

“The retail unit at 70 Whitley Street with apartments above is a fine example of a sympathetic conversion of a former public house, The Wellington Arms. The Victorian design was by local architect William Ravenscroft for brewers H & G Simonds.”

“The former Wellington Arms at 70 Whitley Street was built in 1897 to designs by local architect William Ravenscroft. The Victorian building was a replacement for an older public house on the site and can be linked with the contemporary development of the west side of the street.”

The building is in a prominent position, and due to its height and scale, it marks the entrance to the conservation site when approaching from the north. Architecturally, it represents a classic Victorian era pub with red and dark brickwork with decorative patterns, a dominant gable on the principal façade, stone window surrounds and sills with alternating rounded and flat tops on the ground floor, an important, inviting feature.

The site is also within views into and within the conservation area.



Existing façade of the BTM facing Whitley Street

Among the **Negative features, issues, and opportunities for enhancement defined by the appraisal**, the subject building is known for its **advertising and shop signage problems**, while it is said, “The pub closed in the 2010s and was sympathetically converted to apartments with a retail unit below.” In 2024 (when the appraisal is completed and adopted), before the existing shop. The photo of the side elevation where this application relates to the building in 2024 is given below (from the appraisal).



Impact of proposal upon heritage asset(s)

The proposal seeks permission for the erection of an awning and installation of shutters to be placed below the existing signage on the first-floor level and the one for the existing shop (matter of another application) occupying the full width of this elevation, blocking the architectural features and readability of the ground floor façade of the building.

The purpose of the proposed shutters appears to be to create an enclosure for the existing display shelves, which are not suitable for the BTM or any historic building. The proposal would not respect the historic and architectural characteristics of the building, would not be of appropriate scale and materials in a conservation area, poorly relating to the significance of the area as seen in the photo below.

Existing view of the side elevation

During my site visit, I also noted that the existing use resulted in unsuitable advertising on all windows. In addition, the use of a walkway should not be acceptable, and the dimensions on the proposed block plan do not appear correct.

Overall, the proposed awning and shutters, because of their location, scale, design, and materials, would result in a discordant and detracting feature, disrupting the architectural and historic significance of the BTM, harming the view from the public realm, and the character and appearance of the Christchurch Conservation Area. Therefore, the proposal does not comply with Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The harm to the heritage assets would be at the highest level. As there is no public benefit from the proposed development, and the benefit is only for the applicant, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

Therefore, the proposal does not comply with Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The harm to the heritage assets would be at the highest level. As there is no public benefit

from the proposed development, and the benefit is only for the applicant, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

External Consultees

A planning notice was attached to the nearby streetlamp column on 10th July 2025. The planning notice was photographed in-situ and saved to the planning portal and left in place for a minimum of 21 days for the statutory public consultation period.

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

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)
EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)
EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context)
EN16 (Pollution & Water Resources)

A footpath is located adjacent to the application site as shown on the plan below highlighted with red dots.



Officers contacted colleagues across the council, checked Land Registry and checked highways, but this did not clarify matters.

As the footpath is not included within the ownership of 70 Whitley Street, the applicant needed to do Certificate D in the ownership section of the application form. This involved publishing a Notice in the newspaper under Article 13 of the Town and Country Planning, procedure. The purpose of the article is to allow landowners to come forwards and claim the area of land, in this instance, the Local Planning Authority has not received any letters of representation in relation to the said land. The newspaper Notice is dated Thursday 3rd April 2025.

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 proposed canopy system-pergola with shutters consists of an unsympathetic form, and incongruent appearance, the structure will fail to respect the host property in terms of character and appearance, materials and design. It's inappropriate siting obscures the side elevation, windows entrance door openings. The proposed canopy system with shutters will be constructed in unsympathetic form and materials, incongruent appearance, cutting across architectural features and z harmful to the appearance and fabric of the original Victorian building. The structure fails to match the materials of the host property.

In terms of design, the proposal 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).

Note

A similar application for a single storey front extension to shops at 82-84 Whitley Street and 92 Oxford Road were refused in April 2022 and March 2025, under the same local planning policy and harmful to policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Safeguarding Amenity & the Public Realm

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 system-pergola with shutters will be visually dominating by virtue of its location to the main entrance of the property.

The proposal would facilitate customers mingling outside of the structure, whilst browsing and purchasing fruit and vegetables. This proposed structure is positioned very close to neighbouring residential properties located in Spring Terrace, Essex Street, and the residential units above the application site.

At the time of my site visit, I observed items blocking the shared footpath, shopping baskets, packaging and other clutter observed blocking up the footway which provides access to Spring Terrace, the play equipment and onwards to Waterloo Road.

2no. LED floodlight units was observed. This lighting is considered harmful to residential amenity.

Officers consider the proposed structure is harmful to visual amenity and the public realm and brings 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, as there is no evidence in the supporting documents which state the proposed canopy system-pergola with shutters is 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 proposed canopy system-pergola with shutters 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 increased 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.

Conservation and Historic Environment matters

The proposed canopy system-pergola with shutters, because of their location, scale, design, and materials, would result in a discordant and detracting feature, disrupting the architectural and historic significance of the BTM, harming the view from the public realm, and the character and appearance of the Christchurch Conservation Area.

The proposal does not comply with Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The harm to the heritage assets would be at the highest level. As there is no public benefit from the proposed development, and the benefit is only for the applicant, the proposal fails to meet the requirements of paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

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, wider streetscene and Christchurch Conservation Area. 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. It would result in a discordant and detracting feature, disrupting the architectural and historic significance of the Building of Townscape Merit, harming the view from the street, and would harm the character and appearance of the Christchurch Conservation Area. As such, the development is contrary to policies EN1, EN3, EN6 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, and paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. The development is harmful in terms of increased noise and disturbance, 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.