

Planning

Delegated Officer Report

Summary of application details

Application reference:	145639/FO/2026
Application type:	Full planning permission
Proposal:	Erection of canopy on front elevation.
Site address:	Ground Floor 7 Princess Street Manchester M2 4DF
Ward(s):	Deansgate
Date application valid:	22 June 2026
Applicant name:	Mr Arman Vardazaryan
Agent (if any):	Mr James Scott
Case officer:	Sam Elliott
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	29/07/2026

Description of site, building and/or area

The application concerns the Grade II listed 'Nos. 1-7 Princess Street, Nos. 59 and 61, Cross Street', which occupies the end block of Princess Street at the junction with Cross Street.

The significance of the building partly derives from its architectural quality and merit of its frontage. It is designed in the Gothic style circa 1877. The ground floor of the façade has two wide stone elliptical arched windows with moulded heads and decorative stone frieze above with Tudor flowering detail. The 4 upper floors are red brick with sandstone dressings, large gables on each façade and two small gables over the corner all with tourelles and finials linked by open work parapets.

The building occupies a prominent corner within the street scene, with the Princess Street elevation fronting onto Albert Square highly visible from a number of viewpoints in the square.

The property also adjoins the Grade II listed Northern Assurance Building to the east. The significance of the adjacent listed building partly derives from its architectural quality and ornamental detailing, constructed in an eclectic style with French Renaissance accent.

It is similarly seen in context with the Grade II listed Anglia House. Its significance partly derives from its construction in red sandstone ashlar in the Free Baroque Style with ornamental detailing and impressive masonry. The application site is also seen in the setting of the Grade II listed No.1 Albert Square. Its significance derives from its narrow semi-circular front, Portland stone materiality and architectural detailing.

These buildings are a high-quality grouping of Victorian and Edwardian buildings and form the backdrop to Albert Square outside the Grade I listed Manchester Town Hall. Its significance derives from its central role in the governance of Manchester, as well as its scale, sandstone

construction and Gothic detailing. There are moreover a number of statues and fountains of architectural and historical significance which contribute to this setting, including the Grade I listed Albert Memorial.

These listed heritage assets therefore form and positively contribute to the setting of the Albert Square Conservation Area, and are moreover seen within the context of the Town Hall restoration, with regeneration works to Albert Square improving the quality and appearance of the Conservation Area. The significance of the Conservation Area is therefore largely derived from the architectural quality of the buildings around this central square, as well as its civic role.

The unit features clutter which detracts from its appearance and harms its significance including 1no. large projecting sign without advertisement consent, 1no. menu boards, alarm equipment and various cabling.

The adjacent unit within the Grade II listed Northern Assurance Building features 2no canopy awnings.

Description of development

As per the application form submitted with this application, planning permission is sought for the installation of a retractable awning which would be fixed above the two-ground floor elliptical windows. As per correspondence received from the applicant dated 22/06/2026, they wished to only seek planning permission for the canopy. No advertisement consent has been sought for the advertisement shown on the canopy.

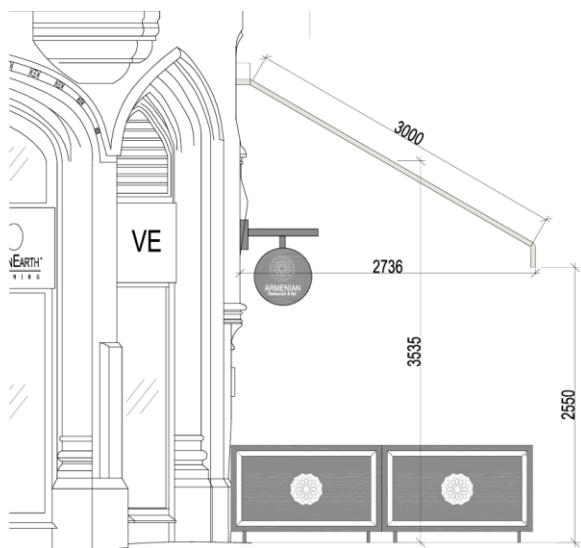




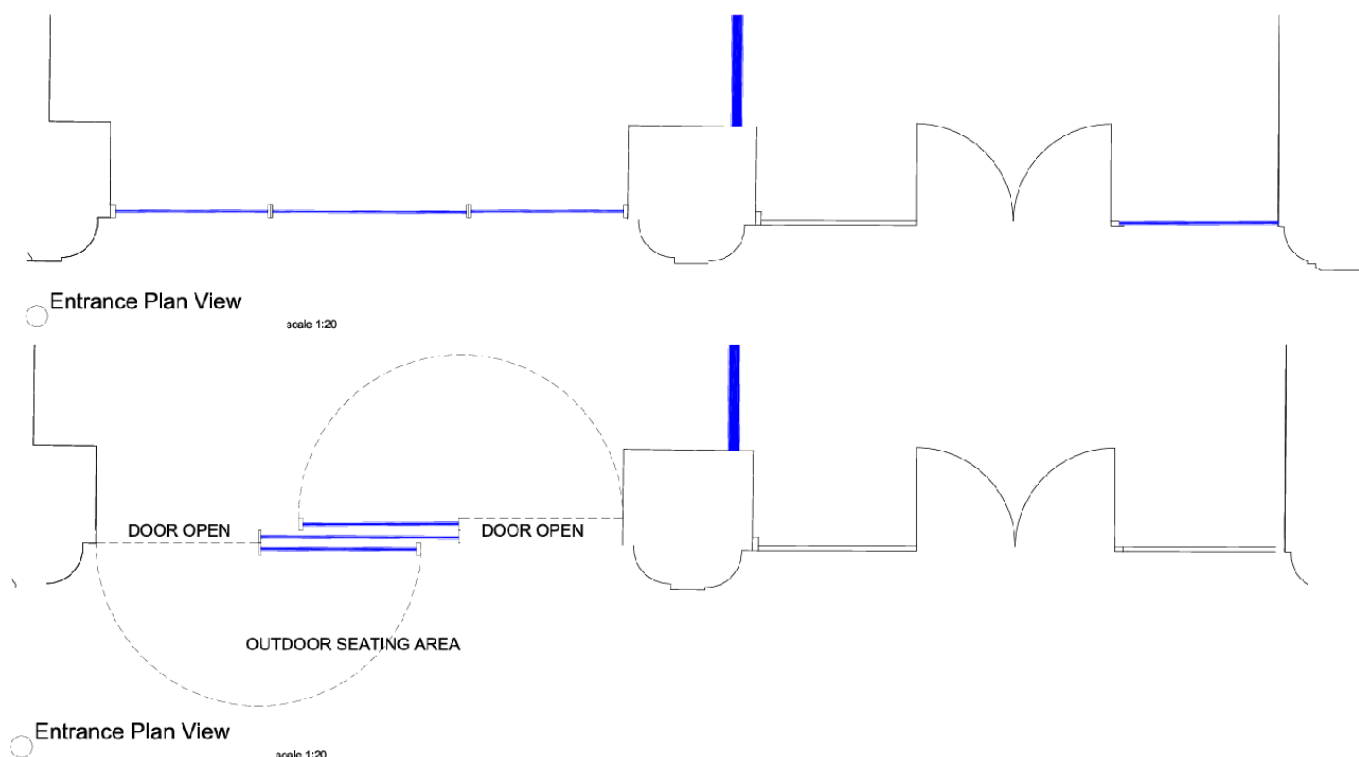
The proposed canopy would project a total of 2736mm from the face of the building, extending for a length of 9307mm across the building façade.

The awning would be of a fabric material in a cream colour, and applicant has proposed that these details are agreed via condition. It is noted that the applicant proposes to utilise existing fixing holes, or within the horizontal and vertical joints of the stonework.

It is noted that while not specified within the application form as comprising part of the development for which consent is sought, the proposed plans show a hanging sign and external barriers to the seating area, both of which do not correlate to those observed on site. The proposed front elevations indicate a different kind of sign with external illumination. No further details have been provided for these elements.



It is also noted that the proposed 'canopy closed' and proposed 'canopy open' drawings do not correlate, with the 'canopy open' drawings indicating there would be further alterations including a second entrance to the outdoor seating area. There also appear to be additional alterations to the main entrance.



This application was considered in conjunction with application 145640/LO/2026: Listed Building Consent for the erection of canopy on front elevation. The application, now refused, considered matters relating to the impact on the listed building.

Relevant planning history

129804/LO/2021: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for external awning, CCTV and various advertisements for the restaurant, together with internal works including opening up existing doorway and various minor alterations associated with fitting out as a restaurant.

- *Approved 18/11/2021*
- *Approved awning at adjacent Northern Assurance Building.*

129811/FO/2021: Fixing of awning and fixing of a cctv camera on the existing facade, and outdoor dining area.

- *Approved 18/11/2021*
- *Approved awning at adjacent Northern Assurance Building.*

134838/AO/2022: Installation of logo printed onto a new external awning and projecting sign and a new laser cut brass restaurant logo applied to a central window.

- *Withdrawn 26/09/2022*

135338/LO/2022: Listed building consent for internal and external alterations comprising fit-out of new restaurant (Use Class E) to ground floor, together with elevational alterations including installation of extraction system and reinstatement of windows to rear elevation together with the creation of an outside seating area, installation of projecting sign and sign to either side of glass.

- *Withdrawn 17/11/2023*

135238/AO/2022: Installation of externally illuminated projection sign and sign to either side of glass

- *Approved 22/12/2022*
- *Approves Armenian sign and Virgin sign,*
- *No subsequent signage applications, these signs now replaced with unauthorised signs.*

Consultation, notification and publicity responses

Consultations

MCC Highways Services:

No objection, subject to further construction management detail:

- Acceptable headroom clearance
- Sufficient set-in from carriageway
- Projection Over license required
- Detail for proposed installation arrangements requested
- Applicant should discuss licensing and event/traffic management with MCC Highways Services teams.

Notifications and publicity

Occupiers of neighbouring buildings were notified via notification letters and the application was advertised via site notice and in the MEN as affecting a listed building and conservation area. No representations were received in response to the application.

Relevant policies

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

Places for Everyone

- JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- JP-S1 – Sustainable Development
- JP-J1 – Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth
- JP-C1 – An Integrated Network
- JP-C5 – Streets for All
- JP-C6 – Walking and Cycling
- JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
- JP-P2 – Heritage

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester

- SP1 – Spatial Principles
- EC1 – Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester
- CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus : City Centre and Fringe
- CC4 – Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure
- CC5 – Transport
- CC7 – Mixed Use Development
- CC9 – Design and Heritage
- T1 – Sustainable Transport
- EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- EN3 – Heritage
- DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

- DC14 – Shop Fronts and Related Signs
- DC18 – Conservation Areas

- DC19 – Listed Buildings
- DC22 – Footpath Protection

NPPF

- Section 6 (Building a Strong Competitive Economy)
- Section 7 (Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres)
- Section 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport)
- Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)
- Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2025)

- The government has published a consultation National Planning Policy Framework which is intended to improve housebuilding rates through a clearer, more predictable and faster policy basis for decision and plan making.

Whilst this is a draft NPPF for consultation it is considered that the development proposals are in accordance with the general thrust of policy contained within it. As set out in the printed report no adverse impacts have been identified through consideration of the application proposals that would outweigh a positive decision in this instance.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990

- Section 66 (General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions)
- Section 72 (General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions)

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide

Assessment

Principle of Development

There are a number of discrepancies with the scheme whereby the full scope of the works is not clear.

The application would however see a retractable awning above the building's distinctive elliptical architraves. This would have a negative visual impact on the appearance of the building, as well as impacting upon the setting of nearby listed buildings. This would moreover impact the backdrop formed by these buildings to the Town Hall, and negatively affect the setting of the Albert Square Conservation Area.

Given the lack of information, the above impacts to listed buildings and the Conservation Area, and that any associated public benefits would not outweigh these harms, the scheme is not supported in principle.

Lack of Information

As outlined above, there are a number of inconsistencies within the plans which may indicate additional elements (including signage and a new entrance) to the scheme which have not explicitly been sought.

It is considered that the applicant has not clearly set out the scope of the scheme, having provided drawings that do not correlate. The applicant has therefore not provided the necessary information to assess the full impact of any physical alterations to form a new entrance, or signage works on the external character of the listed buildings and the setting of the Albert Square Conservation Area.

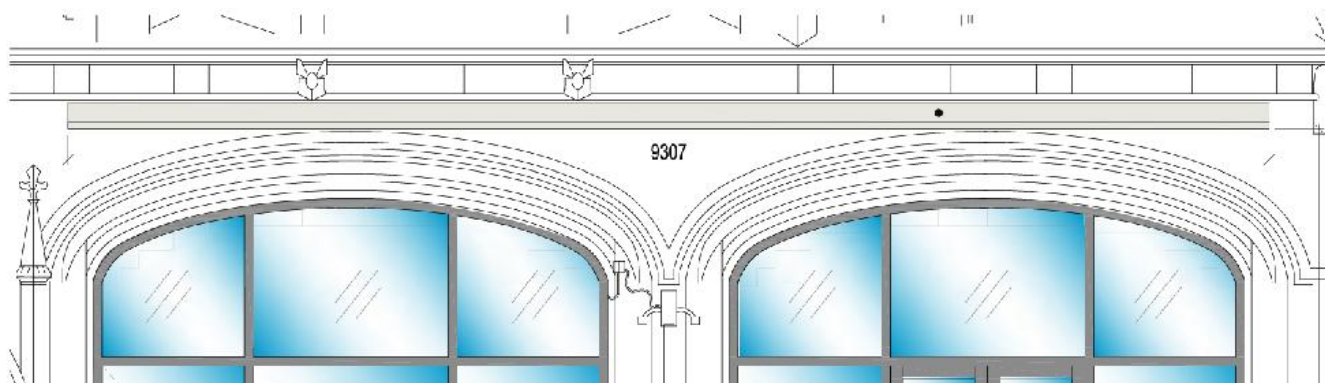
Notwithstanding this, the impacts that can be assumed as they relate to the awning are discussed below.

Impact of the Proposed Awning on the Appearance of the Building

When unfurled, the proposed awning would extend beyond and drape lower than the elliptical architraves. This would obscure the frieze detailing of the building's ground floor for passers-by, and by concealing the decorative stone elliptical arches the form and special architectural features would be obscured at most vantages. The awning would not span the full width of the arches.

Overall, this would result in an imbalance in the overall architectural composition of the listed building at ground floor. The proposed awning would therefore detract from the appearance of the listed building in both close-range and long-range views within the wider townscape.

Even when closed, the proposed awning would occupy the band between the hood moulding and friezes above. This would remove the architectural spacing between these elements, appearing overly crowded. It would moreover appear as a modern functional piece of equipment which directly abuts and detracts from the ornamental string course, seen also in the context of the existing clutter variously applied to the building's elevation. No detail has been provided which would indicate how much projecting bulk is added to the face of the elevation when viewed from the side.



While the applicant's observation that the adjacent Grade II listed Northern Assurance Building features 2no. awnings is acknowledged, the Council considers that the proposed awning would specifically and more significantly detract from the appearance of no.7 Princess Street. The elliptical moulded stone arched windows are especially distinctive and vary from the squared headed windows of the adjacent listed Northern Assurance building. These canopies are also fitted more discretely within a horizontal cornice feature on the facade resulting in less visual harm to the appearance of the listed building. Ultimately, this adjacent building does not share the features which comprise No.7 Princess Street's special architectural interest, and the impact of an awning is not borne out equally in each case.

In addition, the applicant has provided some evidence of historic awnings to the unit's arches, indicating that there would be a lesser impact on the significance of the building due to historic precedent. This evidence includes photographs of fixing holes between the hood moulding of the ground floor arch and string course over. It is not clear if these belong to previous awnings or

projecting signs. Additional evidence includes 2no. postcards. One is from 1918, which either depicts a set of stalls to the front of the building, or awnings attached to the horizontal transom and below the arches. The other is from the mid-twentieth century, which suggests a white infill within the arches and a yellow awning attached to the horizontal transom. Notwithstanding concerns over the accuracy of the evidence, it is not considered that this would justify the proposed siting of an awning above the arches for the reasons outlined above.

Impact on the Setting of Listed Buildings and the Albert Square Conservation Area

The proposed awning would be seen most immediately with the adjacent Grade II listed Northern Assurance Building. While the adjacent building features 2no. awnings and there would be some continuity within the street scene in this respect, the proposed awnings would effectively square off two of the building's curved ground floor windows.

This would detract from and unbalance the appearance of no.7 Princess Street and seen in the context of the adjacent Northern Assurance Building would disrupt the architectural rhythm between the two buildings, diminishing the variety in form appreciated in long- and short-range views.

This would have a further negative visual impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Anglia House and No.1 Albert Square, and moreover harm the backdrop to the Grade I listed Town Hall and the character and appearance of the Albert Square Conservation Area as a whole.

These identified impacts on the listed assets and the Conservation Area are considered to be at a low level of less than substantial harm.

Assessment of Harm

The medium level of less than substantial harm to the special character and significance of Grade II listed No.7 Princess Street has been assessed in application 145640/LO/2026.

With regards to harms to other heritage assets, considerable importance and weight shall be given to the desirability of preserving the setting of the nearby listed buildings; as well as that of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Albert Square Conservation Area.

For the above reasons, it is considered that insufficient information has been provided to allow a full assessment of the harms identified. For this reason alone, the applicant is considered to have failed to demonstrate the impacts of the works to listed buildings within the vicinity and to the Albert Square Conservation Area as a whole.

Where some extent of the impact of these works can be assessed, the proposed awning would detract from the appearance of the application building as seen in the setting of the listed buildings and within the Conservation Area, as well as disrupting the architectural rhythm with the Grade II listed Northern Assurance Building.

It is therefore considered to result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the settings of the Grade II listed Northern Assurance Building, Anglia House, and No.1 Albert Square as such. As these buildings form the backdrop to Albert Square and the Grade I listed Town Hall, there would be additional instances of low levels of less than substantial harm to the Grade I listed asset and the Albert Square Conservation Area as a whole.

In consideration of the proposal's public benefits as per the requirements of Paragraph 215 of the NPPF, it is acknowledged that the applicant claims a number of public benefits within the covering letter submitted with the application.

Amongst other things and in general terms, these include support for the hospitality sector as a means of achieving economic growth as outlined in Sections 6 and 7 of the NPPF; as well as Core Strategy policies SP1, CC4, and CC7. The applicant states the scheme's economic and environmental benefits would help make full and practical use of the existing pavement license and support the long-standing business in its operations.

In consideration of this, it is noted that there is an existing pavement license for use as an external seating area and, as the applicant notes, shading could be achieved by temporary parasols and umbrellas. It should also be noted that this is a long standing and popular business, and no evidence has been provided as why this is a fundamental requirement of the operations of the business.

The Council does not view that a permanent awning to be used infrequently throughout the year within an already established seating area to achieve the same ends as could be achieved by other less harmful means would provide significant material benefit. It is therefore considered that any derived public benefit would be marginal and would not be sufficient to outweigh the harms identified above. It is not considered that the alternative use of temporary umbrellas need be sporadic or be visually untidy as the applicant has claimed, and view that these would constitute a significantly less harmful visual impact to the listed building.

Additionally, the applicant states that there would be positive visual benefits, which would be seen within the wider regeneration context of the Albert Square regeneration, according with Section 16 of the NPPF, the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act, and Policies SP1, CC9, and EN3.

In consideration of this, the Council would reiterate its concerns that the proposal would result in overall harm. As such, it is considered that the wider Albert Square regeneration, which has centred around the restoration of the Grade I listed Town Hall and uplifted the appearance of the Conservation Area, would make more acute the identified negative visual impact to No.7 Princess Street. The Council does not agree with the applicant's position that the harmful intervention to the detriment of No.7 Princess Street, particularly within the context of a heritage-led regeneration, makes for a more attractive frontage or public realm that outweighs any harm caused.

In view of the above, it is viewed that the proposed approach for shading within the external seating area has not been designed to minimise harm to the setting of listed buildings in the vicinity, nor that of the Albert Square Conservation Area, particularly where more appropriate solutions could have been adopted. The less than substantial harm resulting from the works would be at a level where the ancillary public benefits provided by the awning in facilitating the further use of an existing external seating area for of an existing commercial use are not outweighed by the considerable harm they pose.

On this basis, the proposal is considered to fail the statutory test to preserve the setting of the nearby listed buildings as required by Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; as well failing the statutory tests to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Albert Square Conservation Area as required by Section 72(1) of the Act.

It would moreover not be in accordance with Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC14, DC18 and DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework; as well as guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

Impact on the Public Footway

The proposed awning would extend over an existing external seating area and would be set back by more than 450mm from the carriageway.

MCC Highways Services have reviewed the application and are satisfied that the headroom clearance would be acceptable, and the set-in from the carriageway would be acceptable.

The proposal would therefore comply with Places for Everyone Policies JP-C1, JP-C5, JP-C6, JP-C8 and JP-P1; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC5, CC10, T1, DM1; saved UDP policy DC22; as well as Section 9 of the NPPF.

Had the scheme otherwise been considered acceptable, informatives would have been recommended in line with consultee comments. Additional construction management detail would not have been sought due to the scale of the proposal.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Conclusion

In consideration of the above, the proposed works are considered to have an unacceptable adverse effect on the listed asset's architectural and historic character. On this basis, the proposal is considered to fail the statutory test to preserve the setting of the nearby listed buildings as required by Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; as well failing the statutory tests to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Albert Square Conservation Area as required by Section 72(1) of the Act.

It would moreover not be in accordance with Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC14, DC18 and DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework; as well as guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to matters arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. The application has been assessed against policy and the comments received. There would be conflicts with policy which could not be resolved through amendments to the scheme. The application is determined in a timely manner.

Recommendation:

Refuse

Reasons for refusal

Full and consistent details of the scheme have not been provided, and the scheme is insufficient to demonstrate the full impact of the works on the building, street scene, nearby listed buildings or the Albert Square Conservation Area.

The proposed awning would however unacceptably detract from the appearance of No.7 Princess Street and street scene by virtue of obscuring the form and detailing of the elliptical moulded architraves in close-range and long-range views within the wider townscape, as well as occupying and overcrowding the architectural spacing between the architraves and ornamental string course. When unfurled, it would appear as another item of clutter affixed to the building's elevation seen together with signage, security infrastructure and associated cabling.

The awning would therefore unacceptably detract from the appearance of the prominent listed building. This would moreover upset the architectural rhythm between the ground floors of No.7 Princess Street and the Grade II listed Northern Assurance Building, as well as detract from the settings of the Grade II listed Anglia House and No.1 Albert Square in the immediate vicinity. This would moreover negatively impact the backdrop of the Grade I listed Town Hall and the character and appearance of the Albert Square Conservation Area as a whole.

The low level of less than substantial harm to the listed buildings and the Albert Square Conservation Area is at a level where any public benefits do not outweigh this harm.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC14, DC18 and DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework; as well as guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.