

**FOLLY FARM
TWO HEDGES ROAD
WOODMANCOTE
NEAR CHELTENHAM
GLOS GL52 9PT**

Planning Department,
Cheltenham Borough Council,
Municipal Offices,
Promenade,
Cheltenham, GL50 9SA

10 February 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re- Planning application ref- 24/01763/FUL for the erection of metal-framed pergola structure to be located at the front of 125 to 133, The Promenade, Cheltenham.

I write to strongly object to this application.

I have read and considered the documents relating to this application. In addition, having lived and worked in Cheltenham for most of my life I know the application site very well.

My comments are outlined below-

- 1. The proposed works which form the application, the location of the application site and the listed status of the buildings forming the applications** – The application is for the erection of a metal-framed pergola structure, located at the front of 125 –133, Promenade, Cheltenham. The site is located within Cheltenham’s Central Conservation Area and the buildings which are the subject of this application are all grade II* listed.
- 2. The visual impact of the proposed metal-framed pergola work structure on the appearance of the front elevations of 125-133 Promenade (i.e. the application buildings)** – The proposed metal-framed structure will obscure a significant portion of the lower sections of all of these listed buildings, including the steps and part of the entrance door to no.131, Promenade, and the projecting ground floor balcony to no. 133, Promenade.
- 3. Cheltenham’s historic town plan in relation to the application site** – Cheltenham is an exceptionally beautiful town, with an important historic architectural legacy of national, indeed international significance. However its important street layout did not evolve in an organic form of winding medieval streets like many towns. Instead the majority of central Cheltenham was planned with exceptional skill and forethought, and within a relatively short period of time in the early

part of the 19th century. This historic town plan incorporates long distance views which terminate with important well designed large buildings, with these views being enclosed at the side by equally well designed medium sized buildings which are in turn framed by long tree lined avenues. The heart of this beautiful planned town is the Promenade and the most important views in the whole town are looking along the Promenade. Whilst the key view to the south along the Promenade terminates at the Queen's Hotel, which is set on slightly higher land. A fundamental element in creating this principal view, are the equally important buildings located along the west side of the Promenade (i.e. 125-133 Promenade).

4. In my opinion the buildings, 125- 133 Promenade are an essential element in creating this key heart of Cheltenham. These buildings together with the Queen's Hotel form the most important group of buildings in the town, in terms of the beautiful townscape and beautiful architecture.

5. The listed status of 125-133 Promenade (i.e. the application buildings) and their appearance –These buildings are all II* listed and are therefore considered to be of very high value in terms of heritage and architectural quality. It should be noted that of all the listed buildings in the UK only 5.8% are grade II* listed, thus confirming the high status of these buildings in the Promenade.

All of these buildings are in the Regency style of architecture. However, whilst individually their appearances do differ between each building, their front elevations are all elegant, superbly proportioned and outstandingly beautiful. The important features of this architectural style are proportion, symmetry, a hierarchy in terms of prominent and recessive features in the elevation and a sophisticated understanding and implementation of vertical and horizontal features (i.e. vertical features such as pilasters, columns and vertical window alignment; and horizontal features such as projecting ground floor balconies, projecting cornices and horizontal window alignment). In addition no. 131, Promenade has an especially attractive front entrance door with flight of steps, and these features combine to give an important hierarchy within the front elevation of that building.

In addition to the physical appearance of the buildings, consideration must be given to their setting. Regency buildings of this size, architectural quality and town location were intended for wealthy residents and a reasonably sized front garden area would have been considered essential both for privacy but also to allow the buildings to be viewed and appreciated within their own private setting.

6. My comments on the impact of the proposals on the appearance of the listed buildings, on the impact of the setting of the buildings and on the impact on the conservation area –

In my opinion these proposals will significantly harm the appearance of these beautiful historic buildings. This harm will be caused by obscuring a significant portion of all of the lower sections these listed buildings, including the steps and part of the entrance door to no.131, Promenade, and the projecting ground floor balcony to no. 133, Promenade; thus harming their historic architectural design and proportions.

In addition, in my opinion the setting of the buildings will also be harmed by the erection of the proposed metal-framed pergola structure. This harm will be caused by the proposed structure creating a loss of the important historic space at the front of these buildings.

Furthermore, in my opinion the proposals will also harm the conservation area, by detracting from the elegant appearance of the application buildings and therefore eroding the architectural beauty of this key centre of Cheltenham and destroying many long distances views which terminate in these buildings.

7. Policy implications and the applicant's justification -

The proposals in this application are clearly contrary to a number of policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan. The applicant has suggested that interpretation of planning rules is subjective. Also because the application proposals are better than the existing tents and in addition there will be an economic implication for the commercial use of the buildings, the application should be approved.

8. I strongly disagree with the applicant's comments. I consider that this key historic site in the centre of Cheltenham and these grade II* listed should not be compromised and harmed by these proposals and I completely reject the applicant's weak arguments for justification for this harm.

Finally, it is 40 years since Prince Charles described the proposed extension to the National Gallery as *quote* - "a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved elegant friend". In my opinion this same description could be applied to these proposals.

Yours faithfully,

