

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church

App Ref: PL/25/0069 Householder planning permission

Address: 285 BASINGSTOKE ROAD, READING, RG2 0JA

Proposal: Partly retrospective hip to gable loft conversion with rear dormer, single storey rear extension, and outbuilding.

Applicant: Mr Mo Hoque

Received date: 14/01/2025

Target Decision date: 11/03/2025

Case Officer: James Schofield

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site is a semi-detached dwelling on Basingstoke Road, a busy arterial road. The site previously had a two-storey flat roof rear extension.

Site visit date: 28/02/2025

Site visit photos:



(See Site Photos on file for full set)

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for; retrospective roof alterations including a rear dormer, skylights, and a roof type conversion from to gable-end over the two-storey rear projection; a proposed single-storey rear extension at a depth of 4 metres; and an outbuilding at the end of the garden. Plans considered;

Dwg No 2065-L001 Rev P01 Existing Location Plans

Dwg No 2065-P001 Rev P01 Existing Floor Plans

Dwg No 2065-E001 Rev P01 Existing Front and Rear Elevations

Dwg No 2065-E002 Rev P01 Existing Side 1 Elevation

Dwg No 2065-E003 Rev P01 Existing Side 2 Elevation

~~Dwg No 2065-L101 Rev P01 Proposed Location Plans (Superseded)~~

~~Dwg No 2065-P101 Rev P01 Proposed Floor Plans (Superseded)~~

~~Dwg No 2065-E101 Rev P01 Proposed Front and Rear Elevations (Superseded)~~

~~Dwg No 2065-E102 Rev P01 Proposed Side 1 Elevation (Superseded)~~

~~Dwg No 2065-E103 Rev P01 Proposed Side 2 Elevation (Superseded)~~

~~Dwg No 2065-S101 Rev P01 Proposed Section AA (Superseded)~~

~~Dwg No 2065-AD101 Rev P01 Proposed Outbuilding Layouts (Superseded)~~

As received on the 14th of January 2025

~~Dwg No 2065-P101 Rev P01 Proposed Floor Plans (Superseded)~~

~~Dwg No 2065-E101 Rev P01 Proposed Front and Rear Elevations (Superseded)~~

~~Dwg No 2065-E102 Rev P01 Proposed Side 1 Elevation (Superseded)~~
~~Dwg No 2065-E103 Rev P01 Proposed Side 2 Elevation (Superseded)~~
~~Dwg No 2065-S101 Rev P01 Proposed Section AA (Superseded)~~
~~Dwg No 2065-AD101 Rev P01 Proposed Outbuilding Layouts (Superseded)~~
As received on the 4th of March 2025

~~Dwg No 2065-P101 Rev P01 Proposed Floor Plans (Superseded)~~
~~Dwg No 2065-E101 Rev P01 Proposed Front and Rear Elevations (Superseded)~~
~~Dwg No 2065-E102 Rev P01 Proposed Side 1 Elevation (Superseded)~~
~~Dwg No 2065-E103 Rev P01 Proposed Side 2 Elevation (Superseded)~~
~~Dwg No 2065-S101 Rev P01 Proposed Section AA (Superseded)~~
~~Dwg No 2065-AD101 Rev P01 Proposed Outbuilding Layouts (Superseded)~~
Bat Survey
As received on the 5th of March 2025

Dwg No 2065-L101 Rev P01 Proposed Location Plans
Dwg No 2065-P101 Rev P01 Proposed Ground Floor Plan
Dwg No 2065-P102 Rev P01 Proposed First, Loft and Roof Plans
Dwg No 2065-E101 Rev P01 Proposed Front and Rear Elevations
Dwg No 2065-E102 Rev P01 Proposed Side 1 Elevation
Dwg No 2065-E103 Rev P01 Proposed Side 2 Elevation
Dwg No 2065-S101 Rev P01 Proposed Section AA
Dwg No 2065-AD101 Rev P01 Proposed Outbuilding Layouts
As received on the 7th of March 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- PL/24/1236 Removal of existing lean to and replace with single storey extension in same footprint. Construction of new rear dormer and loft conversion. Alter existing hip roof to gable. Build outbuilding within rear of the garden for office space/family room including bathroom. Withdrawn
- PL/25/0136 Single storey rear extension with a max depth of 7m and height of 2.86m
Refused

4. CONSULTATIONS

The site notice was posted on the 24th of January 2025, and the consultation period ran through the 14th of February 2025.

One objection was received from the neighbour living in the attached dwelling. Their concerns primarily related to:

- Whether the outbuilding labelled 'gym' would be and remain in use for domestic purposes only.
 - Officer response: the overall size, height, and use of the outbuilding was a concern, and the Officer sought plans and conditions to ensure that the outbuilding had a more limited scale and would remain in use as incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling.
- Concern about the depth of a 6-meter rear extension.
 - Officer response: This application was proposing a 4-metre rear extension. There was a second PD application for a 7-metre rear extension which was refused. I presume this is what the objector was referring to. Regardless, the Officer has worked with the agent to try and ensure that their outlook is retained, and that the extension would not be overbearing.
- Concern about a change of use of the dwelling away from a family dwelling.
 - Officer response: The council, in general, is also concerned about the loss of single-family dwellings and has various policies to try and manage the impact of the national legislation which is enabling this through conversions. However, in this instance, this application is not

for a change of use of the site away from a single-family dwelling. It is noted that the plans with labelled rooms do not necessarily suggest the site would not be a family home.

Ecology

The Ecology Officer indicated that while the bat survey was done properly, it was not done at the right stage of development. Two surveys should have been conducted prior to works starting, and there is the concern that suitable bat habitat may have been destroyed. The Ecology Officer recommended two ecology related prior to occupation conditions, relating to wildlife enhancements and wildlife friendly landscaping, which have been agreed with the agent and should be included in any decision to grant permission. Further details can be found in the assessment below.

5. 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

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021

6. APPRAISAL

The Planning Officer was assigned to the previous application PL/24/1236 CLP which was withdrawn in late 2024 as the proposal was not permitted development. It is noted that when the Officer went to site for that application in October, it had been subject to fly tipping and what appeared like prolonged neglect. In the course of *this* application, it became clear that works, in particular the roof works, had already started which makes these components partly retrospective.

Character and Appearance

Policy H9 states that alterations to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of location, materials and design and respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

The siting of the single-storey rear extension to the rear, its limited depth, height, and scale all combine to ensure it has a limited non-materially negative impact on the character of the dwelling. It is noted that until recently, there was an informal lean-to structure in the same area which was poorly maintained and that its removal was positive for the overall appearance of the site.

The hip-to-gable roof extension would unbalance the pair of semis. However, it would be of similar appearance to the neighbouring 287 Basingstoke Road and not out of keeping. It is likely this element of the proposal would be permitted development. The conversion of the flat roof to a gable-ended roof is largely welcome, however, the pitch is very steep resulting in a slightly disjointed and out of place appearance. It is noted these changes have already been built and that any harm, insofar as it exists, is not sufficient to warrant recommending refusal in their own right. The impact is reduced to some degree by virtue of its siting at the back of the dwelling.

The scale and appearance of the proposed outbuilding was initially too tall and too large. However, it was noted that with a change to the height of the eaves of the flat roof it would be permitted development. Further to discussion with the planning officer, the final proposal under consideration has a lower eaves height and its overall depth was reduced. Ultimately, its height and siting at the end of the garden reduces its impact to an acceptable degree. Ideally, the landscaping plan will site the replacement trees in such a way as to reduce the visual presence of the outbuilding in time.

The cumulative impact of the rear extensions (both the historic two-storey and that under consideration here) combine with the roof alterations and the proposed outbuilding to result in a scale whereby further increases, without careful consideration, are considered quite likely to result in significant harm to the residential character of the host dwelling and by extension the wider streetscene. As such, a condition removing permitted development rights as they relate to outbuildings are prudent.

The outbuilding, if it were to be let or otherwise used separately from the main dwelling, would harm the single-family character of the dwelling. As such, a condition should be included requiring the outbuilding be kept as ancillary to the enjoyment of the main dwelling, is also considered prudent.

The level of parking provision is not proposed to change, however, if the number of parking spaces were to be increased without due consideration, it would result in harm to the single-family character of the dwelling and the potential impact on traffic safety on an important arterial road should be considered properly. As such, it is considered prudent to include a condition which requires the parking plan, the level of parking provision, and its location, should not be changed without first seeking planning permission to do so.

Further to the above analysis, the proposal satisfies the character considerations of local policies H9 and CC7 provided the discussed conditions are included in any recommendation for approval.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not harm the privacy amenity of neighbouring sites. Policy CC8 states alterations to a house will be acceptable where they will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

Due to amended plans sought by the officer, the rear extension would not extend beyond a 60-degree line drawn from the mid-point of a window drawn from the closest neighbour's habitable room. Please note, the block plan shows the roof overhanging which makes the rear wall appear to extend further than shown on the floor plans. The depth shown on the floor plans is correct for the footprint of the building. The height of the rear extension would be 2.86 metres while its overall depth would be close to 4 metres along the boundary. The rear extension accords with the Design Guide SPD and would not have a materially negative impact on the residential amenity of neighbours or the dwelling itself. If the flat roof of this extension were to be used as a balcony or similar, it would be significantly harmful to neighbouring amenity. As their most valuable outdoor amenity space would be significantly overlooked and they would lose privacy, as it would be possible to view directly into bedroom windows. As such, a condition should be included precluding this conversion without due consideration by removing the relevant permitted development right.

The roof alterations include new outlook which will increase overlooking to some degree for neighbouring sites. However, this is not to a degree which is unusual for this type of site, or in a way that the SPD discourages. Furthermore, no change to privacy would result.

The overall scale and height of the outbuilding will impact the end of the gardens for neighbouring sites. This part of gardens is not the most prioritised space within the adopted policy or policy guidance; however, it is noted that overly large and out of scale outbuildings are to be resisted. And that this outbuilding is up to if not slightly beyond what would ordinarily be considered in scale for this dwelling. The outbuilding, if it were to be let or otherwise used separately from the main dwelling, it would pose a potential risk to the residential amenity of adjoining neighbours. As such, a condition should be included requiring the outbuilding be kept as ancillary to the enjoyment of the main dwelling, is also considered prudent.

The cumulative impact of the rear extensions (both the historic two-storey and that considered here) combine with the roof alterations and the proposed outbuilding to result in a scale whereby further increases, without careful consideration, are considered quite likely to result in unacceptable harm to residential amenity of both neighbouring dwellings and the host site. As such, a condition removing permitted development rights as they relate to extensions, roof alterations, and outbuildings are prudent.

Further to this analysis, the proposal is considered to meet the aims of local policies H9, H10, and CC8.

Biodiversity and Sustainability

Part 'b' of Policy EN12 indicates that all development sites should not result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. These aims are supported by Policy H9 which states that extensions and alterations will only be acceptable where it does not result in the loss of biodiversity within gardens. *'Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System'* states that the presence or otherwise of protected species, including bats, must be established before planning permission is granted, and otherwise all relevant material considerations must be addressed first.

The bat survey was submitted and fully reviewed by the planning officer and the Council's Ecology officer.

The Ecology Officer indicated that while the bat survey was done properly, it was not done prior to starting works on the roof. Two surveys should have been conducted prior to works starting, and there is the concern that suitable bat habitat may have been destroyed. The Ecology Officer recommended two ecology related prior to occupation conditions, relating to wildlife enhancements and wildlife friendly landscaping, which have been agreed with the agent and should be included in any decision to grant permission.

The site previously had a number of large well-established trees lining the boundaries to the side and rear of the site. These offered significant visual amenity and improved biodiversity and wildlife opportunities. Sometime between October 2024 and February 2025 these trees were felled and removed.

The proposal is to have already resulted in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. Through conditions requiring the various biodiversity enhancements recommended by the ecology officer and a landscape plan requiring at least four native trees (like sycamore, yew, or rowan), it is considered this harm could be ameliorated somewhat. As such the proposal is considered not to accord with the biodiversity and sustainability considerations of Policies H9 and EN12 of the local plan, but that on balance, should the proposal gain permission than the opportunity to address this reduction can be realized.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.



8. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

1. TL1 Standard time limit
2. M1 Materials to match
3. AP1 Approved plans
4. Habitat Enhancement Scheme
5. Landscaping Plan
6. Ancillary Domestic Use
7. Flat roof condition
8. PD Rights limited