

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0681 Householder planning permission

Address: 163 UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7JR

Proposal: Front single storey porch extension; New flat top pitched roof to existing attached garage & breakfast area; First floor side extension within the existing ground floor footprint; Single storey rear extension; Alterations to the ground floor fenestration.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Dixon

Received date: 08/05/2025

Target Decision date: 31/07/2025 (EXT)

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a detached two-storey dwelling with an existing single-storey side extension that projects approximately 2.3m beyond the rear building line of the host property. The site benefits from an existing garage, on-site parking spaces, and a modest front garden. It is located to the west of Upper Woodcote Road, which is characterised by large detached properties of varying styles. The rear boundary fence of the proposal site also forms the boundary line of Reading Borough and lies adjacent to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



Fig 1 & 2: View from the front of the property (06/06/25); Extract of the location plan submitted

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a single-storey front porch, a first-floor side extension, and a single-storey rear extension. The scheme also includes associated fenestration and internal alterations. According to the application form, all proposed materials—including bricks, windows, doors, and roof tiles—would match those of the existing dwelling.

Front porch:

The existing open-sided front porch would be demolished to facilitate the construction of a new enclosed front porch, measuring ca 1.4m in depth and 2.7m in width. The proposed porch would project around 0.5m beyond the existing front building line. It would feature a hipped roof with an eaves height of ca 2.5m and an overall height of around 3.5m. A single entrance door would provide access to the main dwelling.

First-floor side extension:

The proposed first-floor side extension would be constructed above the existing garage. It would be set back from the principal elevation and set down from the main ridge line of the host dwelling, incorporating a gable roof design. The extension would measure ca 2.5m in width and 6m in depth, maintaining a separation from the shared boundary with No. 165. A front-facing window of similar design to the existing would be installed, while the rear-facing window would be smaller in scale. The roof of the existing garage below would be redesigned to a hipped roof to integrate with the new development.

Single-storey rear extension:

The proposed single-storey rear extension would span the full width of the rear elevation, projecting ca 3.7m in width and 1.5m in depth. It would adjoin the existing single-storey side extension, with the entire roof redesigned as a crown roof incorporating two roof lanterns on the flat sections. The eaves and overall heights would be ca 2.7m and 3.4m, respectively. The rear elevation would include the installation of two full height glazed doors.

Alterations regarding internal layout and fenestration:

The internal ground floor layout would be reconfigured following the proposed extensions, resulting in enlarged living spaces, particularly the kitchen and dining areas. The development would also introduce a new snug room and a storage area. At first-floor level, an additional bedroom with an en-suite bathroom would be created. Associated fenestration changes are proposed to accommodate the revised internal layout.

The existing high-level, elongated windows on the south elevation, currently serving the living room, would be removed and infilled with matching brickwork. In their place, the proposal includes the installation of a standard-sized window, a smaller secondary window, and a door to provide access. Additionally, the existing ground floor front window serving the study room would be enlarged to serve the relocated living room.

Plans/documents considered:

- Location Plan
- Drawing No. 251003.01-A1 – Proposed and Existing Plans and Elevations
- Drawing No. 251003.02-A1 – Proposed Plans
- Drawing No. 251003.03-A1 – Block Plan
Received 08/05/2025.
- Preliminary bat roost assessment, ref: CE4861, prepared by Chase ecological consultancy, dated 5th June 2025, received 20th June 2025.
- Emergence Survey Report – Bats, ref: CE4861-01, prepared by Chase ecological consultancy, dated 7th July 2025, received 15th July 2025.

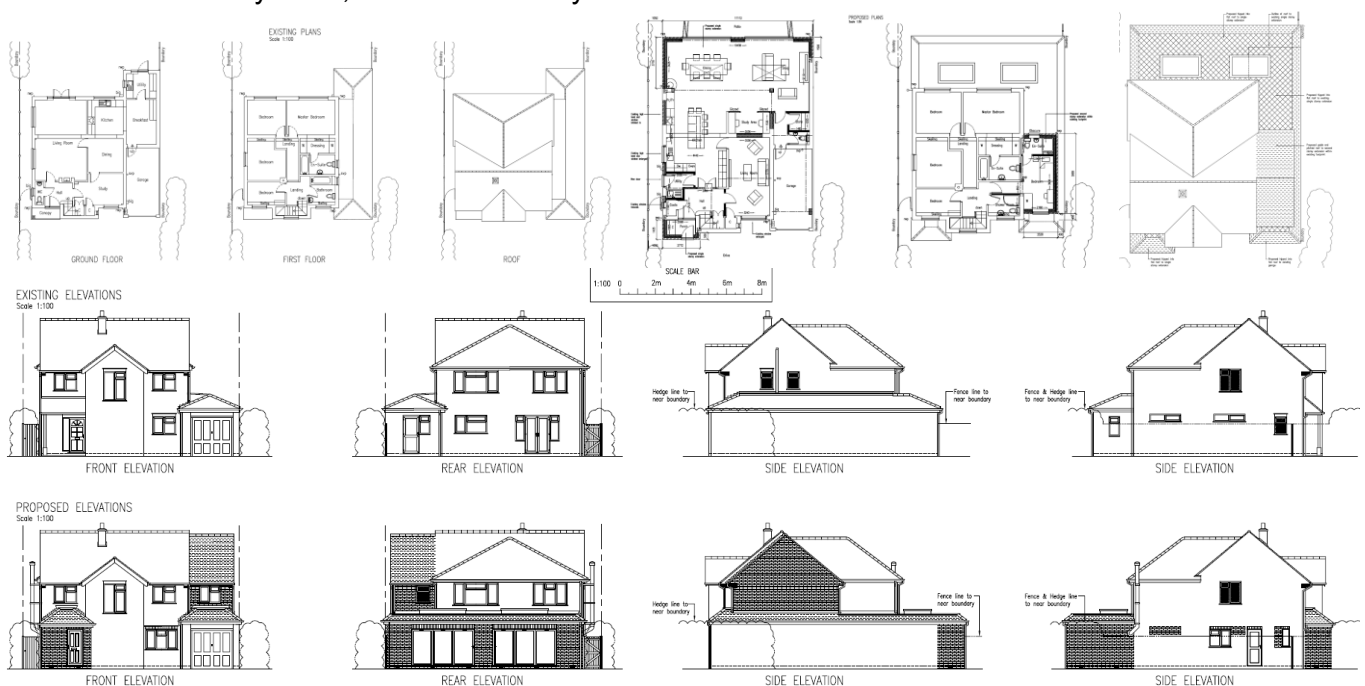


Fig 3: Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations submitted

Planning history:

PL/05/0499 - Erection of a first-floor rear extension, a single storey rear extension and formation of garage and utility room from existing garage. Approved 26/07/2005.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- Transport Development Control, Reading Borough Council – No objection, response received on 14th May 2025.

There are no Transport objections to this application. The garage is being retained and there is additional parking on site. No changes are proposed to the existing vehicle crossing.

- Ecology, Reading Borough Council – No objection, original response received on 15th May 2025 as follows:

The house may host roosting bats and to confirm whether this is the case, and if so, how bats will be affected by the proposals, a bat survey will need to be carried out. The survey will need to be carried out prior to determination of the application, or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been provided to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats (which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process).

Planning Officer's note: Following discussions with the agent, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (Ref: CE4861), dated 5th June 2025, was submitted on 20th June 2025. The follow-up comments from the Council's Ecology Officer are as follows:

The submitted bat survey report (Chase Ecological Consultancy, June 2025, ref: CE4861) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and concludes that because there are small gaps under tiles and under the chimney, further survey should be undertaken to confirm whether the building hosts a bat roost.

The results should be provided prior to the determination of the application, or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided for the council to determine the likely impact of the proposals upon bats, which are a protected species and material consideration in the planning process.

Planning Officer's note: A follow-up Bat Emergence Survey Report (Ref: CE4861-01), prepared by Chase Ecological Consultancy and dated 7th July 2025, was received on 15th July 2025. The subsequent comments from the Council's Ecology Officer are as follows:

The bat survey report (Chase Ecology, 7 July 2025 ref: CE4861-01) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal.

There are therefore no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

Site Notice:

A site notice was displayed on 6th June 2025 in front of the application site. The 21-day consultation period ended on 27th June 2025. No letter of representation has been received.



Fig 4: Site notice photo (06/06/25)

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.

4. 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

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
EN13 (Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A submission draft of the Local Plan was submitted on 9th May 2025.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It

is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

5. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design and respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design. Policy EN13 states that development which affects the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that demonstrates that there is no detrimental impact on the Chilterns AONB in terms of scale, design, layout or location.

Front porch

The proposed front porch is considered acceptable in design terms, given its modest scale and the use of materials that would match those of the existing dwelling. The property is set back from the highway by a substantial front driveway and garden, which helps to minimise its visual impact. As such, the proposed porch is considered to respect the character of the host dwelling and would not detract from the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

First-floor side extension

The proposed first-floor side extension is considered subservient to the host dwelling, as it would be set back from the principal elevation and set down from the existing ridge line. It would also maintain a separation from the shared boundary with No. 165, preserving the visual gap between properties. The proposed gable roof form would complement the original roof in terms of design and pitch. The front-facing window would be of a similar size and design to the existing fenestration, and all external materials—including bricks and roof tiles—would match the existing dwelling. The extension is, therefore, considered proportionate to the original building and in keeping with the character of neighbouring properties. The front element of the existing garage roof beneath the extension would be replaced with a hipped roof, which is considered acceptable due to its modest scale and its symmetrical relationship with the proposed porch roof.

Single-storey rear extension

The proposed single-storey rear extension would project from the full width of the rear elevation, integrating with the existing single-storey side extension. This results in varying proposed depths of ca 3.75m and 1.5m, respectively. The proposed depth is within the guidance set out in the Design Guide to House Extensions (2021). While the combined footprint of the rear and side extensions would wrap around the host dwelling and is relatively large in scale, the proposal remains single storey in height and the site is considered capable of accommodating development of this size. As such, the rear extension is considered acceptable in terms of scale, design, and impact on the character of the host property.

Cumulative impact of the front porch, rear and side extensions

It is acknowledged that, when considered cumulatively, the front porch, rear, and side extensions represent a significant increase in the overall bulk and massing of the property, resulting in a noticeable change to its character and appearance within the streetscene. However, as outlined above, each element is considered acceptable in its own right in terms of design, scale, and materiality. When assessed together,

the cumulative impact is still considered to respond appropriately to the local context and character. The site also lies adjacent to the Chilterns AONB; however, the proposal is not considered to result in harm to its special qualities or landscape character, and is therefore regarded as acceptable in this context. The overall level of development is regarded as the upper limit of what can be accommodated on the site without causing harm and is therefore considered to comply with Policies CC7, H9 and EN13 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 states that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space. Policy CC8 states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

There are no identified risks regarding loss of light or overbearing impact to neighbouring properties, due to the detached nature of the host dwelling and the appropriate separation distances maintained by the proposed development. The most potentially sensitive element—the first-floor side extension—would be set away from the shared boundary with No. 165 Upper Woodcote Road, maintaining a separation of approximately 3.7m from the neighbouring dwelling. The proposed rear extension would be single-storey in height, with a depth of approximately 3.7m, and would integrate with the existing single-storey side extension. No adverse impacts have been identified in this regard.

Although the proposal involves the removal of high-level windows on the south elevation and the introduction of two standard windows and a door, these openings would be at ground floor level and face directly toward the shared boundary with No. 161. Therefore, it is not considered that the development would result in any significant loss of privacy. To safeguard neighbouring amenity, a condition is recommended to restrict the insertion of any additional openings on the proposed north elevation and the existing south elevation of the host dwelling.

It is noted that the proposal includes a crown roof that incorporate large flat bit on the proposed single-storey rear extension combined with existing single-storey side extension, which could potentially be used as a roof terrace with minimal further alterations. Given the proposed extension is set close to the boundary with the neighbour, it is considered necessary to include a precautionary condition which prevents the flat roof of the proposed extension being used as a terrace, without specific permission being granted by the local planning authority. This condition will secure the amenity of the neighbouring occupier at this point.

The site benefits from a spacious rear garden. As such, adequate private amenity space would be retained following the proposed development, ensuring sufficient room for outdoor seating, children's play, and other family activities.

Transport

Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

The proposed development would retain the existing garage, on-site parking spaces, and vehicle access arrangements. As such, there would be no loss of parking provision or changes to vehicular access. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of transport and parking, and compliant with Policy TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Ecology

As per the comments from GS Ecology, following the submission of a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment received on 20th June 2025 and an Emergence Survey Report received on 15th July 2025, no issues have been raised in this regard.

6. CONCLUSION

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

7. RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

Recommended Conditions:

Approved Plans

Time Limit

Materials (To Match)

Use of Roof Restricted

No New Openings