

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0504 Householder planning permission

Address: 104 Pitcroft Avenue, Reading, RG6 1NN

Proposal: Part single-storey, part two-storey side and rear extensions and dropped kerb to serve existing parking area

Applicant: Mr S Randhawa

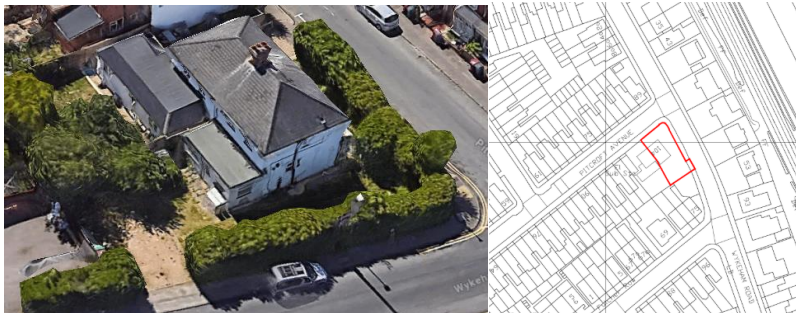
Received date: 31/03/2025

Target Decision date: 29/07/2025 (EXT)

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a semi-detached dwelling with an existing single-storey rear extension and a large garden to the side and rear. It is located at the corner of Pitcroft Avenue and Wykeham Road, East Reading. The surrounding area is residential, comprising Victorian terraced rows to the west of the site and bungalows to the east along Wykeham Road. The A3290 and a railway line are located less than 100m from the site. The proposal site is within an Article 4 Area, which restricts the change of use from C3 use class (dwellinghouse) to C4 use class (small HMO), where planning permission is required.



Figs 1 & 2: Image taken from Google Earth, dated 28/07/25; Location Plan submitted

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks planning permission for part single-storey and part two-storey side and rear extensions. A dropped kerb is also included in the proposal.

The proposed side extensions would project ca 3.5m from the eastern wall and align with the existing front and rear building lines. The first-floor extension would be set back from the front elevation of the host dwelling, and the proposed roof ridge would be set lower than the main roof. The eaves and overall height of the ground floor element at the front would measure approximately 2.6m and 3.4m, respectively. The eaves height of the two-storey element would match the existing, while the overall height would be approximately 7m. New windows and doors would match the existing fenestration. According to the application form, all proposed materials would match those of the existing dwelling.

The proposal also includes the installation of two Manthorpe built-in Swift Nesting Boxes beneath the eaves. Additionally, a 4.8m-wide dropped kerb is proposed to serve the existing parking space in the rear garden.

Plans considered:

- Drawing No. 21482_001 Existing Floor Plans & Elevations, received 31 March 2025.
- Drawing No. 21482_002/C Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations, received 15 July 2025.

- Drawing No. 21482_003/A Site/Location Plans, received 15 July 2025.



Fig 3: Existing Plans & Proposed Plans

Relevant Planning Histories:

PL/22/1074 - Pre-Application advice for proposed extension to existing dwelling to provide new 2-bed dwelling. Advice given on 07/09/2022.

3. CONSULTATIONS

Ecology consultation, Reading Borough Council: A previous withdrawn proposal (reference PL/24/0383) was reviewed by the Ecology team. Their comments still apply to the current application (ref: PL/25/0504), as the originally submitted proposed plans dated 31 March 2025 did not address the existing ecological concerns.

The comments are as follows:

The site is not located in habitat where bat roosts have previously been found in the borough, moreover there is limited suitable habitat for use by foraging or commuting bats in the surrounding area. As such, it is considered unlikely that the works would adversely affect bats or other protected species and there would be no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

However, in accordance with paragraph 186 of the NPPF, which states that “*opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity*” a condition should be set to ensure that enhancements for wildlife are provided within the new development. In this case it would be appropriate for the applicant to install swift bricks as the area hosts a population of swifts which nest under the eaves of the houses. Swift numbers have been declining in recent years in part due to the loss of and lack of nesting sites and are a bird of conservation concern due in part to a lack of nesting sites which are usually in buildings.

The Planning Officer consulted the Ecology team regarding the latest proposal, and a response was received on 8 July 2025 as follows:

The proposal would need to mark the plan up with the specification of the swift boxes – these should be integrated into the walls as attached ones often fall off and do not provide long term roosting habitats for birds.

Planning Officer’s note: Drawing No. 21482_002/C Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations, received on 15 July 2025, illustrates two Manthorpe built-in Swift Nesting Boxes beneath the eaves.

Transport Consultation, Reading Borough Council: Response received 8 July 2025.

A new vehicle crossing is proposed visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m would be required, I am happy that this can be achieved, however, plans must show the extent and location of the crossing. As previously advised, a licence will be required to install a vehicle crossing which will need to be illustrated on plans. Transport would not support a formal break in the residential/shared parking bays fronting the development site unless protection markers were in place which will need to be illustrated on plans. It is not permitted for vehicles to overhang the public highway as this can constitute an obstruction of the public highway under the Highways Act 1980.

In principle, there are no Transport objections to this application.

Planning Officer's note: Drawing No. 21482_003/A, Site/Location Plans, received on 15 July 2025, illustrates the proposed width of the vehicle crossing, which the Transport team has confirmed is acceptable.

Site Notice:

A site notice was displayed on 24th April 2025 in front of the application site. The 21-day consultation period ended on 15th May 2025. No letter of representation has been received.



Fig 4: Site notice photo, taken 25/04/2025

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)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy)
TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

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.

The proposal is considered subservient to the host dwelling due to its first-floor setback, lowered ridgeline design, and modest projection of approximately 3.5m. Additionally, all proposed windows to the front and rear would match the existing fenestration, reflecting the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. Overall, the proposal is considered to complement the existing building. A condition is recommended to ensure that its use remains ancillary to the residential function of the host dwelling, thereby safeguarding the character and integrity of the main property.

With regard to the impact on the public realm, the proposal is not considered to detract from the character or appearance of the local environment, due to its modest scale, complementary design, and alignment with the established building line along Wykeham Road. While the development would be acceptable in its own right, the presence of an existing green hedge along the front and side boundaries provides an additional benefit by screening much of the proposed extension and further softening its visual impact.



Fig 4: Image taken from Google Street View, taken 28/07/2025

Therefore, the proposal is considered to respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would not detract from the local environment, comply with Policies H9 and CC7 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 in terms of privacy, loss of light or overbearing impacts to neighbouring properties, as the new development is located close to the street and there are no adjacent properties. The extension would not directly overlook No. 75's garden. Upon completion, the rear garden would retain sufficient space to provide private outdoor amenity for the occupants. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies H9, H10, and CC8.

Transport

Policies TR1 and TR3 require development proposals to ensure safe and accessible transport connections, particularly for walking, cycling, and public transport, and to assess the impact of new or altered access points on safety, congestion, and the environment.

The application site does not currently benefit from a vehicular crossover serving the parking area identified on the submitted plan. Therefore, a licence would be required to install a new crossover to provide access to the existing parking spaces. The latest revised proposed site plan illustrates a vehicle crossing of approximately 4.8m in width. The Transport Team has confirmed that they have no objection to the updated proposal. Conditions would be recommended to secure the installation of the vehicle crossing and to ensure it does not obstruct public transport. Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of transport and highway safety.

Ecology

EN12 states that on all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Following discussions with the agent, the proposal now includes the provision of two Manthorpe built-in Swift Nesting Boxes beneath the eaves, as illustrated on Drawing No. 21482_002/C – Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations, received on 15 July 2025. This enhancement is considered to contribute positively to biodiversity in and around the development. As such, no objections have been raised by the Ecology

Team, and the proposal is considered to comply with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

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)

Ancillary use

Vehicular Access (As Specified)