

Planning Statement on behalf of
Aliseni Brothers Ltd at
4 Mason Street, Reading, RG1 7PD
Project Ref 9178
Date. July 2025

1.0.0. Introduction

This planning statement accompanies a full planning application for change of use from one dwelling to three flats with part 2 part single storey rear extension and internal alterations to create further amenity space at 4 Mason Street, Reading, RG1 7PD

The building is currently in use as three self-contained flats and has been for in excess of ten years. We can provide proof of these years but due to our client purchasing the property July 2022, we can only provide four robust years for the basement flat and ground floor flat, which are currently subject to a separate lawful use application.

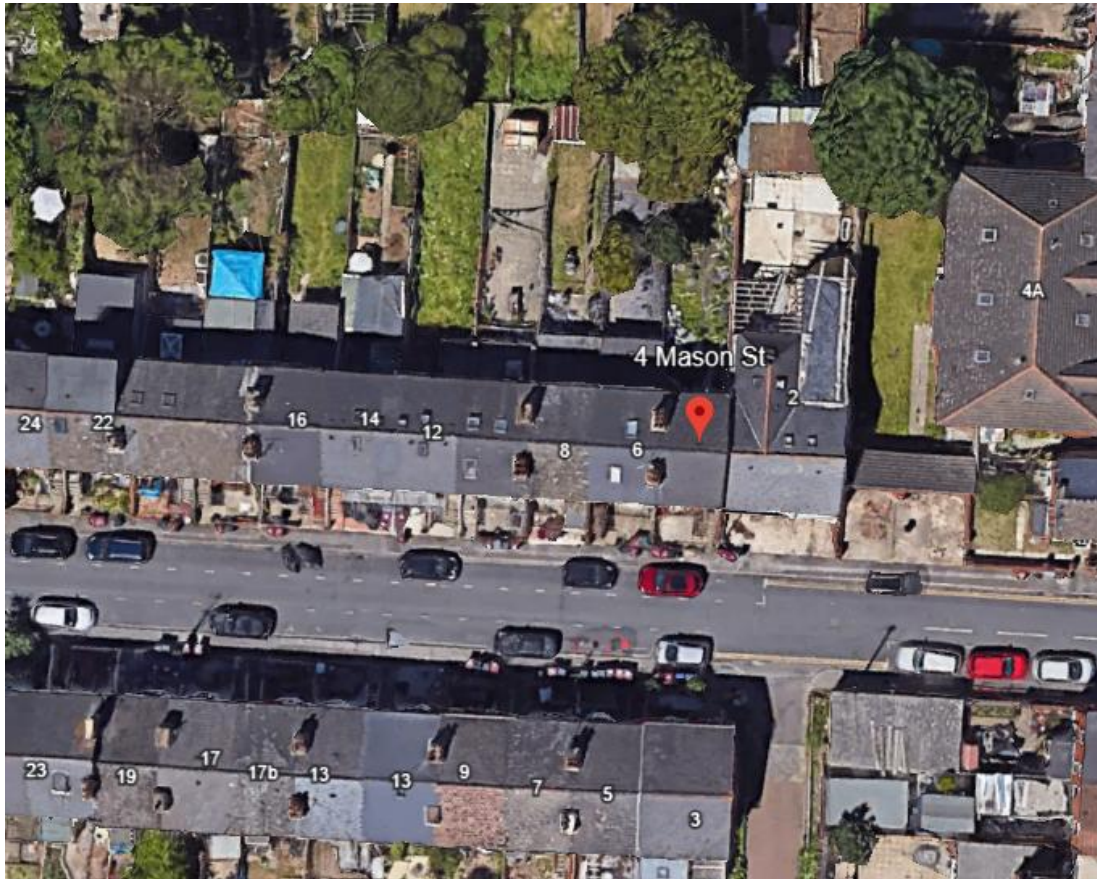
A member of Reading Borough Council attended the property in September 2021 and confirmed the property exists as three separate contained flats. This letter is included within this submission.

1.1.0. The site & its surroundings

4 Mason Street is a mid-terrace property located within an established residential area to the west of Reading town centre. The building spans three storeys, including a lower ground (basement) level, and retains a private rear garden.

The immediate context comprises similar terraced buildings, many of which have been extended at the rear over time. The site lies within walking distance of public transport, local shops, and community facilities.

It is close to local amenities, bus routes and schools.



Google Maps of the site and neighbouring properties

The application site, 4 Mason Street, is situated between two residential properties – No.2 and No.6 Mason Street.

Notably, No.2 Mason Street was recently granted planning permission (Ref:PL/23/0988) for a similar scheme involving the conversion of the property into three self-contained flats, alongside associated alterations. This approval is directly relevant to the current proposal at No.4, demonstrating a precedent for enhanced residential use and modifications to the internal layout.



Streetscene of 4 Mason Street and neighbouring properties

1.2.0. The Proposal

The application proposes a change of use from one dwelling to three self-contained flats, comprising a 2-bedroom family unit at basement level, a 1-bedroom flat at ground floor level, and a 1-bedroom flat at first floor level. The basement and ground floor flats already exist and are the subject of a separate lawful use application.

The proposal includes a part two-part single-storey rear extension at basement and ground floor levels to improve internal space and access to the rear garden. Minor internal alterations are also proposed to improve layout and amenity across all three flats.

The proposal retains private garden space to the rear and improves access and usability for residents of the basement which is a family unit.

1.3.0. The Design

The design has been carefully considered to respect the character and appearance of the host building and its neighbours, and the extensions are modest in depth and height, remaining visually subordinate to the original structure.

A stepped profile is adopted to limit bulk and avoid overbearing impacts on neighbouring properties.

Materials and finishes are proposed to match or complement the existing building.

Rear elevations are fitted with glazing to enhance natural daylight without introducing harmful overlooking.

These extensions are typical of the surrounding area and consistent with similar residential improvements.

1.4.0. The Amount

The proposed development involves a modest increase in built form through the construction of a part two-part single-storey rear extension at basement and ground floor levels. The extension increases the existing footprint from **35.5m² to 68.2m²**, adding **33.8m²** of ground coverage. The total **Gross Internal Area (GIA)** increases from **84.3m² to 137.6m²** across all floors.

- **Basement flat (Flat 1):** 61.2m²
- **Ground floor flat (Flat 2):** 37.5m²
- **First floor flat (Flat 3):** 26.5m²
- **Loft (non-habitable):** 12.4m²

This complies with National Standards.

1.5.0. The Layout

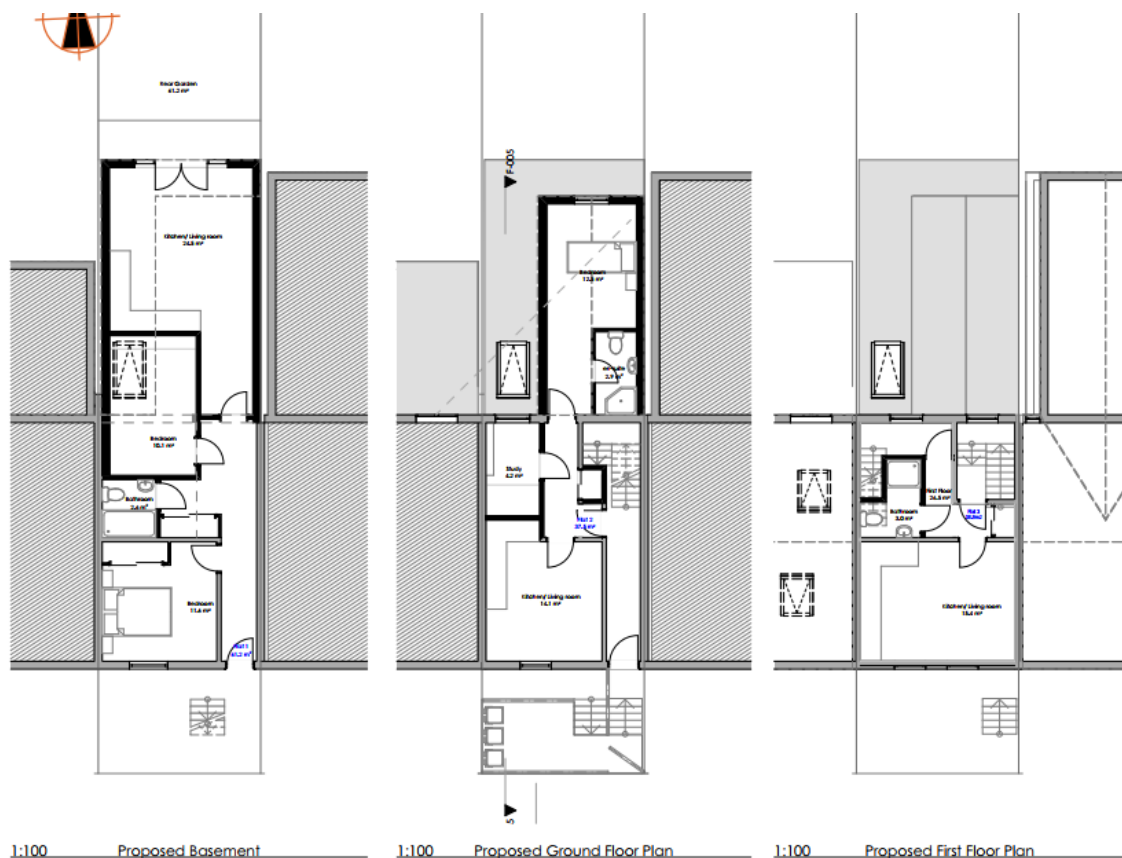
The proposed development maintains the existing layout of three self-contained residential flats across the basement, ground, and first floors. The internal arrangement is enhanced through modest rear extensions and reconfiguration of internal spaces, with the aim of improving circulation, daylight access, and amenity provision for the occupiers.

Basement Level (Flat 1): Extended to the rear by 29.7m², creating a larger open-plan kitchen/living space with improved access to the rear garden. The layout is reconfigured to improve usability and natural light, while maintaining existing bedrooms and bathroom facilities.

Ground Floor (Flat 2): Extended by 15.5m² at the rear, accommodating a reconfigured bathroom and utility area. The living space is enlarged and repositioned to enhance internal flow and natural light, with continued access to shared garden space.

First Floor (Flat 3): No changes to the external envelope. Internal layout retained, with slight improvements to access and amenity provision resulting from improvements to the lower units.

The Proposed GIA is 137.6m²



Proposed Layout

1.6.0. The Scale

The scale is in proportion to its surroundings. The existing footprint of the building is 35.5m², and the proposal introduces an additional 33.8m², bringing the total footprint to 68.2m². The part two-part single-storey form (with a stepped profile between the basement and ground floor) ensures the extension remains visually subservient to the original dwelling.

Landscaping

It is proposed that development retains and enhances the existing rear garden, which provides the basement family flat an external amenity space. While no major hard or soft landscaping works are proposed as part of this application, the improved access from the basement and ground floor flats will encourage better use of the rear garden by occupiers.

Bin storage will continue to be accommodated within the boundary as shown.

1.8.0. Appearance

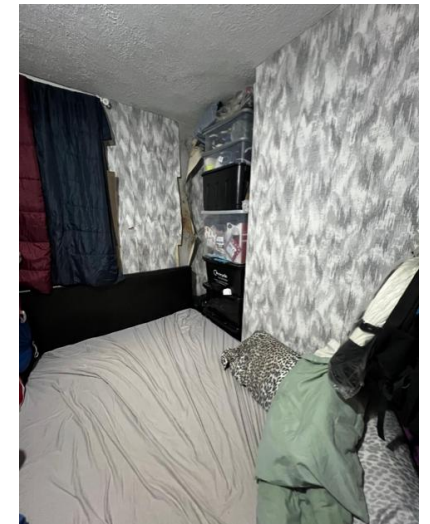
The existing property is in disrepair and the proposed works are necessary to ensure it delivers safe, functional, and high-quality accommodation.



Current condition of Flat A (Basement)



Current condition of Flat B (First Floor)



The proposed extensions are designed to be visually sympathetic to the existing building and consistent with the character of the surrounding Victorian terrace. The overall appearance of the property remains in keeping with the surrounding streetscape, with all alterations confined to the rear and not visible from Mason Street.

The rear extensions will be constructed using materials that match or complement the existing property, including brickwork to blend with the original elevations and simple, unobtrusive finishes to ensure the additions remain visually subordinate.

New rear doors and windows will be of a contemporary but restrained style, using high-quality glazing to maximise natural light into the reconfigured flats while avoiding harm to neighbouring privacy or visual amenity.

No changes are proposed to the front elevation, which will remain as existing and retain the established architectural rhythm of the terrace.



Proposed Elevations

1.10.0 Access

Access to the building is convenient & safe for all the intended occupants incorporating level access into the proposed dwelling.

1.11.0. Flooding

The site is within flood zone 1 and is not close to flood zones 2 or 3.

1.12.0. Transport/ Parking Policy

There is no existing off-street parking provision at the property. The proposal does not seek to introduce any.

It is in a highly sustainable area.

1.13.0 Bin & cycle storage

Waste bins are stored along the front of the property.

There is no room on the frontage for cycle storage, apart from the basement. The other flats will require fold up cycles.

1.14.0. Policy

Residential Conversions SPD (March 2023):

The proposal has been prepared in accordance with Reading Borough Council's Residential Conversions SPD (March 2023), which sets out standards for space, layout, amenity, and design quality in flat conversions.

The development provides:

- A high standard of internal layout and natural light;
- **A 2-bedroom family unit at basement level with direct garden access, as encouraged by the SPD; - Provision of Family Accommodation:**

"At least one unit of accommodation created should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms."
(Checklist Point 25, Section 3.3)

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- **Retention of adequate outdoor amenity space; Checklist Point 24 (Section 3.5):**
"Where a proposal incorporates a family-sized unit, that unit should have direct access to a useable area of private, rather than communal, garden space."
- **A scale and design that respects the character of the terrace and surrounding context; -**

The property's total GIA of 137.6 m² exceeds the 120 m² threshold, thereby triggering the SPD's requirement for a family-sized unit (Checklist Point 6).

We believe that scheme meets the SPD's key requirements and delivers high-quality accommodation without overdevelopment.

1.15.0. Affordable Housing

The proposal supports the aims of **Policy H1 (Provision of Housing)** by contributing to the borough's housing supply through the conversion of an existing dwelling into three self-contained flats. It provides a mix of unit sizes, including a 2-bedroom family unit, and makes efficient use of previously developed land in a sustainable urban location, consistent with the policy's objectives.

1.16.0. CIL

CIL forms included.

Conclusion

The current state of the building is extremely poor, both in terms of its layout and condition. The lawful Use application for the basement flat is robust, as Gemma Beazley has produced many of these successful applications.

Even with the approval, the property requires significant improvement.

We believe that our application will greatly improve the property and provide a family unit on the semi basement level with its own private garden.