

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Battle Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0476 Householder planning permission

Address: 158 BELMONT ROAD, READING, RG30 2UX

Proposal: Loft conversion with rear dormer, along with two front roof lights. Change of use from C3 to C4 3-bedroom HMO. (amended)

Applicant: Mr Etmond Palamani

Received date: 26/03/2025

Target Decision date: 31/10/2025 (EXT)

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey mid-terrace property located on the west side of Belmont Road. Battle Primary Academy, Granbury College, and two churches are situated to the west of the site. The property is currently in C3 use. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, characterised by small, elongated terraced properties. It is not a listed building nor within a Conservation Area. There is no Article 4 Direction in place at this address, and no permitted development rights have been removed.

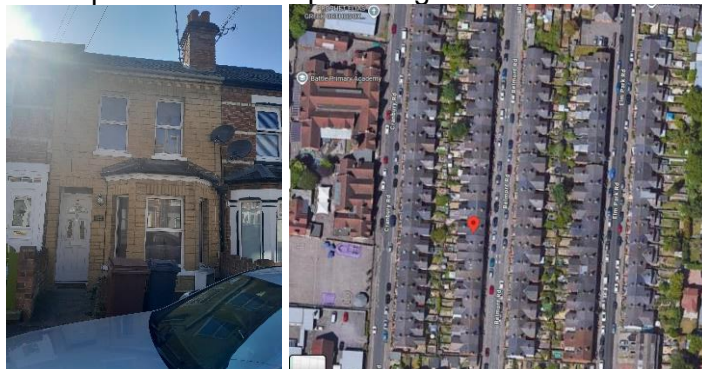


Fig 1 & 2: View from the front of 158 Belmont Road, taken 24/04/2025; image from Google aerial, captured 23/10/2025.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks permission for a loft conversion with a rear dormer and two front roof lights, as well as a change of use from C3 to a C4 3-bedroom small HMO for 5 persons.

The proposed rear dormer would measure approximately 2.27m in height and 3.86m in depth. It would be set within the roof slope and include one rear-facing window. The proposal also includes two roof lights on the front sloped roof.

According to the application form, the proposed bricks, roof tiles, and windows are intended to match the existing dwelling.

Plans/information under consideration:

- Drawing No. EE01 - Existing elevations, dated 27/01/2025, received 26/03/2025.
- Drawing No. EFP 01 - Existing floor plans dated 27/02/2025.
- Location plan, dated and received 26/03/2025.
- Drawing No. PE01 - Proposed section plan (east elevation), dated and received 30/06/2025.
- Drawing No. PFP01 - Proposed floor plans, dated 29/09/2025, received 30/09/2025.
- Bin and bike storage plan, dated 29/09/2025, received 30/09/2025.

- Drawing No. PE01 – Proposed elevations, dated and received 30/09/2025.
- Proposed Block Plan received 28/10/2025.



Fig 3: Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Planning histories:

None.

3. CONSULTATIONS

3.1 RBC Ecology Consultations – No objection, received 01/04/2025.

The application site comprises a mid-terrace property in a residential area of West Reading, where it is proposed to convert the loft, add dormer windows and add a single-storey extension.

The house is located in a built-up residential area of Reading, and although the works will affect the roof, it is considered unlikely that bats will be adversely affected by the proposals. As such, and because it is expected that there would be no impact on protected species, there are no ecological objections to the application.

3.2 RBC Transport – No objection, but further information is required, received 23/07/2025.

This application is for a change of use from a 3-bedroom dwelling to a 6-bedroom HMO with a loft conversion and single-storey rear extension.

Belmont Road is located in Zone 2 of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. Typically, this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone.

The Council's residential parking permit scheme also operates in the area. The applicant should be advised that future residents of the HMO residential bedrooms would not be entitled to parking permits for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under pressure. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area. The appropriate conditions and informative will be applied if the application is successful.

Bin storage should comply with Reading Borough Council's Waste Management Guidelines for property developers. The bin storage area is to be located at the front of the site in the small front garden area. However, it is recommended that the Council's Waste department be consulted to ensure that the existing bin storage is suitable for the number of residents proposed, given that the area is small.

In accordance with the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision of 0.5 cycle storage spaces per HMO room should be provided within a communal lockable store equipped with "Sheffield" style stands. It is indicated that cycle storage will be located at the front of the site, but I am concerned that the area is too small to accommodate cycle and bin storage. Therefore, full details of the layout and specification should be submitted.

There are no transport objections; however, I would recommend that the additional information be requested in respect of the cycle storage, given that space is limited.

Suggested conditions

- C2 CONSTRUCTION METHOD STATEMENT (TO BE SUBMITTED)
- HM4 HMO CYCLE STORAGE (TO BE SUBMITTED)
- HM5 HMO PARKING PERMITS (NOTIFICATION TO LPA)
- HM6 HMO PARKING PERMITS (NOTIFICATION TO OCCUPANTS)

Planning Officer's note: Following discussions with the agent, the proposal has been amended to remove the proposed single-storey rear extension and reduce the number of bedrooms, with the property now intended to be used as a 3-bedroom HMO for 5 persons. A bin and bike storage plan has been submitted, indicating that both would be located at the rear of the property. The Transport team has confirmed that they are happy to accept the bin and bike storage at the rear, as there is now direct access from the front of the site through to the back. Residents will be required to transport waste to the kerbside on collection days, as they currently do. Subject to a cycle parking condition, they are happy to remove the Construction Method Statement (CMS) condition.

3.3 RBC Waste – No comments received.

3.4 HMO team – comments received 04/08/2025.

Our records show that the Private Sector Housing have between 2010 - 2017 inspected and carried out informal action at the property. During this period, the property was in single occupation.

The above property, once converted, would be an HMO. This will then require a mandatory licence. Therefore, the property would need to meet all health and safety standards in accordance with the Housing Act 2004 and any licensing conditions.

Further information can be found on the Reading Borough Council website (link below):

[Houses in multiple occupation – management pack - Reading Borough Council](#)

The above link includes fire safety, amenity standards, space standards etc.. There will be no confirmation that the property is adequate until work is completed, a full inspection has been carried out, and relevant certification has been submitted to the Private Sector Housing team.

The owner is to ensure they contact Building Control concerning all structural alterations and drainage design.

3.5 RBC Environmental Health – concerns raised 22/07/2025.

I have concerns regarding noise from the communal area impacting any adjoining property, as the noise from the residents using the communal area is likely to be greater than a typical family home. Further information is required regarding the construction proposals and layout. If the communal area adjoins a neighbouring property, then further information on the sound insulation performance of the separating wall will be required prior to planning permission being granted. The sound insulation performance should be demonstrated to be equal to or better than the current building regulations standards for a party wall.

Site Notice:

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



Fig 4: Site Notice photo

3.6 Discussion with agent:

The proposal originally applied for a loft conversion with front and rear dormers, as well as a single-storey rear extension. Additionally, though the description of the application had not mentioned the potential use of the property upon the completion of the proposal, the initial proposed floor plans (ref: PFP01, see fig 5) received on 26th March 2025 appear to indicate that the proposal is for a C4 6-bedroom HMO use.

The officer provided comments to the agent regarding the proposed developments and change of use, dated 13th May 2025 and 16th July 2025, respectively, summarised as follows:

- Proposed rear extension: The proposed rear extension would potentially block light to 160 Belmont Road, and not comply with Policy CC8 of Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
- Proposed rear dormer: The proposed rear dormer is suggested to lower the proposed roof below the existing ridgeline of the main property, to make it more in proportion to the main roof, to comply with Policies CC7 and H9 of Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

- Proposed front dormer: Belmont Road has a strong and consistent roof pattern that the proposed front dormer would disrupt; therefore, it is not acceptable, as it is not considered to be in keeping with the character of the streetscene.
- The proposed change of use from a C3 dwelling house to a C4 6-bedroom HMO would not comply with Policy H8 of Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, due to insufficient room space for bedroom 5, insufficient total gross internal floor area, insufficient communal room. Further information such as the potential number of occupants for each room, clarification or evidence to demonstrate no increased noise and disturbance, were requested.

Ground Floor Plan First Floor Plan Loft Floor Plan Roof Plan

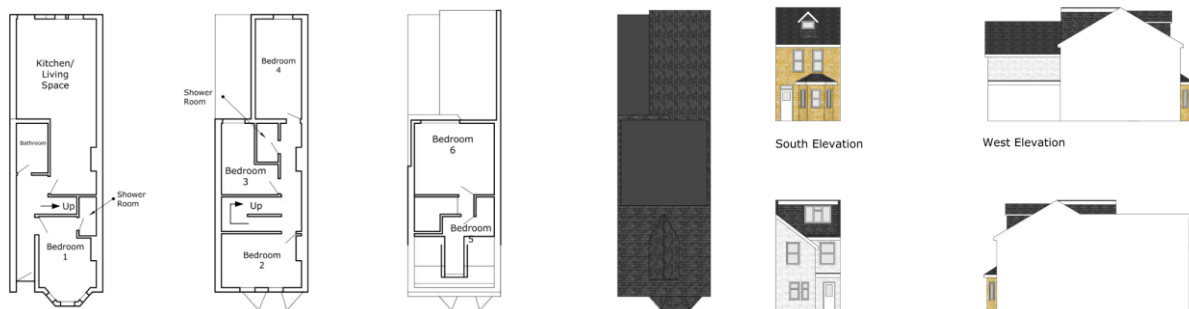


Fig 5: Original drawing no. PE01 - proposed floor plans and elevations, received 26/03/2025

The agent has also been advised of the comments regarding noise concerns and bike storage arrangement from the Environmental Protection team and Transport team shortly. Subsequently, revisions from the agent have been received, and the final proposal under consideration removes the proposed single-storey rear extension and the proposed front dormer, instead of two rooflights. Additionally, the internal layout of the proposal has been reorganised to a 3-bedroom HMO for 5 persons.

Please refer to the appraisal session for further assessment.

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 (NPPF) 2024
National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage)
CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
H8 (Residential Conversions)
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
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011
Residential Conversions SPD 2023

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

Impacts on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area

Policies H8 and H9 state 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 also respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole, including any important existing building line.

Policy CC7 sets out additional relevant considerations for design. Furthermore, Policy H8 requires that the proposal not harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single-family housing.

The proposal involves a loft conversion and a change of use from C3 to C4. It is considered acceptable in terms of scale and design. The proposed rear dormer would be proportionate to the main property and positioned at the rear, making it less visible from the street. All proposed bricks, windows, and roof tiles would match the existing materials. Although two rooflights are proposed on the front roof slope, they would be small in scale and integrated into the existing roof. Therefore, the proposal is considered to respect the character and appearance of both the property and the street scene.

There are 82 properties within a 50m radius of the application site, of which 7 are currently in use as flats or HMOs—approximately 8.5%. As such, single-family housing remains the predominant use in the area.

The application site is not subject to an Article 4 direction that restricts changes of use from Class C3 to Class C4. Therefore, there is no requirement to identify the proportion of properties in the area that can be used as HMOs. Although such an assessment is not necessary in this case, it nonetheless provides

evidence that the proposed change of use would cause minimal harm to the existing mixed and sustainable community.

Consequently, the proposed development is considered to comply with Policies CC7, H8, and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Impacts on the amenity of proposed and existing residents of nearby properties

Policies CC8 and H8 state that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it does not cause a significant detrimental impact on the living environment of existing or new residential properties. This includes considerations such as the intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, provision and location of adequate on-site car parking, and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing. Additionally, there should be no unacceptable adverse impacts on residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance, particularly in relation to the number and layout of units proposed and their proximity to other properties.

Policy TR5 also sets out requirements regarding parking provision. Policy H10 states that dwellings should be provided with functional private or communal open space. Furthermore, Policies CC5 and H8 require that bin and cycle storage be of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed, and that they be located at the ground floor level with easy access.

Internally

The proposed bedrooms—1, 2, and 3—are approximately 7m², 12m², and 16m² respectively, and all comply with the standard floor-to-ceiling height requirements. The proposal also includes separate kitchen and living spaces. As confirmed by the agent, the proposed small HMO use is intended for 5 persons. Therefore, the development would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for future occupants.

Regarding the stacking and location of rooms, given that this is a mid-terrace property, layout options are limited. Currently, only Bedroom 3—the new dormer room—would be located above the bathroom. This arrangement is not considered sufficient grounds for refusal.

As the proposed development is for a 3-bedroom HMO accommodating 5 persons, any adverse impacts from noise and disturbance are expected to be limited.

Externally

There are no identified risks in terms of blocking sunlight or daylight to neighbouring properties, given that the proposal is for a loft conversion with a rear dormer. No side windows are proposed; therefore, there are no concerns regarding privacy or overlooking. The proposal does not alter the footprint of the property, and the private outdoor space would remain unchanged. The change of use is for a 3-bedroom HMO accommodating 5 persons; as such, the existing external amenity space is considered sufficient upon completion of the development.

With regard to on-site parking, the Council's residential parking permit scheme operates in the area. Future residents of the HMO would not be entitled to parking permits for the surrounding residential streets, where parking is already under pressure. Conditions would be applied to protect the existing parking arrangements from potential increased demand. The proposed bike storage measures 1.9m², which complies with the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD. It is to be located in the rear garden, with direct access from the front of the site through to the rear. Therefore, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of cycle parking, and a condition would be included to secure the installation of the bike storage.

Regarding bin storage, it is proposed to be located in the rear garden, which is easily accessible for all occupants and allows for straightforward transport to the kerbside on collection days. As the Waste

Services team has not provided comments within the consultation period, the applicant is advised to contact the team at least six weeks prior to occupation to ensure that bins can be purchased, delivered, and collection arrangements scheduled with the crews.

As a result, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of residential amenities.

Other matters

As recommended by Ecology consultee, the proposal is unlikely to impact protected species, comply with Policy EN12 of Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Furthermore, the permitted development right for a change of use from Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to Class C4 (small HMO) has not been removed from this property. Under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class L(b) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, such a change of use is allowed without planning permission, provided the site is not subject to an Article 4 Direction. As no such direction applies here, this constitutes a fallback position that is a significant material consideration in the assessment of the application.

Overall, the proposal is considered to comply with relevant policies and is acceptable on this basis.

6. 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.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

Recommended Conditions:

Time limit

Approved plans

Materials (To match)

Cycle parking (As Specified)

HMO parking permits (Notification to LPA)

HMO parking permits (Notification to Occupants)