

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Southcote Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1305 Householder planning permission

Address: 70 BRUNEL ROAD, READING, RG30 3JL

Proposal: Part two storey part single storey side and rear extensions and internal alterations.

Applicant: Mr H Smith

Received date: 15/09/2025

Target Decision date: 11/11/2025

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a semi-detached property with a hipped roof, located on the north side of Brunel Road, near the cul-de-sac. The property benefits from a notable separation from No. 72, provided by two side access paths. This section of Brunel Road, close to the cul-de-sac, is predominantly characterised by modest semi-detached dwellings with appropriate spacing between them. While some properties feature narrower gaps, these typically include existing two-storey rear and side extensions that are set significantly back from the frontage, thereby maintaining visual separation at first floor level.

The site contains an existing rear conservatory and an outbuilding in the rear garden. There is no planning history for the outbuilding and it has not been confirmed whether it would fall within permitted development limits.



Figures 1 & 2: View from the front of 70 Brunel Road and its existing outbuilding, taken 17/10/25

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development comprises a two-storey side and rear extension, a single-storey rear extension and associated internal alterations.

The proposed ground floor extension would align with the front building line of the host dwelling, extending along the shared boundary and wrapping around the property. It would measure approximately 11m in depth and 7m in width. The proposed upper floor extension would be set back from the principal elevation by approximately 0.45m, with a depth of around 9.5m. While it also wraps around the host dwelling, the upper floor element would cover about half the width of the rear elevation of the main house.

The proposal includes one roller shutter door at the front of the ground floor, serving a storage/services room, and one window at the front of the upper floor. A side-facing window is proposed at the ground floor level, facing No. 72 Brunel Road; this would be obscure-glazed and fixed shut. The rear elevation would feature one bi-fold door at the ground floor level and two new rear-facing windows on the first floor level.

In terms of roofing, the single-storey side element fronting the street would have a mono-pitched roof, with an eaves height of approximately 2.5m and a total height of 3m. The main roof would be hipped, with an eaves height of around 5m and a total height of 6.4m. The rear ground floor roof would be a combination of flat and mono-pitched elements, measuring approximately 3m at eaves and 3.8m at its highest point, and would include a roof lantern on the flat section. Three steps would be installed at the rear to provide access to the internal space.

All proposed windows, walls and roofs would be of matching materials as the existing.

Plans/information submitted:

- Drawing No. 15225-01 – Existing ground floor plan
- Drawing No. 15225-02 – Existing first floor plan and roof plan
- Drawing No. 15225-03 – Existing elevations
- Drawing No. 15225-04 – Proposed ground floor plan
- Drawing No. 15225-05 – Proposed first floor plan and roof plan
- Drawing No. 15225-06 – Proposed elevations
- Drawing No. 15225-07 – Location and block plan

Received 15th September 2025.

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at 70 Brunel Road, ref: SPH/NP/PEA-25/16.09, prepared by Urban Tree experts, dated 02/10/25, received 3rd October 2025.



Fig 2: Existing Plans

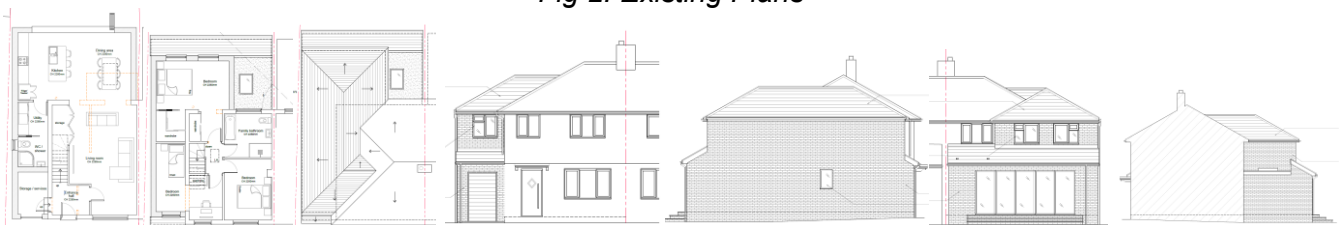


Fig 3: Proposed plans

Planning history:

None.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- RBC Natural Environment – no objection, received 13/10/2025.

I can confirm I have no objections to the above application. The trees in the adjacent properties will not be impacted as they are of an appropriate distance from the proposal.

- RBC Ecology – no objections, comments received 20/10/2025.

There are no objections to the application. The bat survey (Urban Tree experts, 2/10/2025) concludes that the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect protected species. Therefore, there would be no ecological objections to the proposals.

- RBC Transport – revised plan is required, comments received 20/10/2025.

The side extension will result in the loss of access to the detached single garage located at the rear of the site. In accordance with the Council's current Parking Standards and Design SPD a 3-bedroom property in this zone would require 2 off street parking spaces. No plan has been submitted illustrating a revised parking layout. Revised plans illustrating 2 on site parking spaces is required and illustration of the vehicle access.

Should the existing vehicle crossing need to be extended to facilitate a new parking layout a license from the Highway team will be required to undertake all works on the public highway, this includes and changes to the grass verge and location of the tree located in the grass verge outside the property should also be identified on plans.

- Site notice

A site notice was displayed on 17th October 2025 in front of the application site. The 21-day consultation period ended on 6th November 2025.



Fig 4: Site notice photo

One objection was received from No. 72 Brunel Road as below:

The objection we would like to raise is regarding the proposed toilet window in the ground floor extension on the boundary line of the property although we understand the proposed window will not be a functioning window we do have concerns that in the future if we decide to build an extension on our own property being no 72 Brunel Southcote Reading RG30 3JL and the owners of no 70 Brunel road were to object to our proposed extension it will not be allowed because of this non-functioning window in the ground floor toilet extension on the boundary line.

We have spoken to the owner regarding this issue, to which she has accepted that this will be an issue, we would therefore like this to be recorded as a formal objection.

May we please also enquire as to the ground floor one storey building that the owners of no 70 Brunel Road have already built at the bottom of their garden? Is this taken into consideration by the planning department for the proposed extension for the size and amount of permanent buildings being built on their property, being no. 70 Brunel Road Southcote Reading RG30 3JL.

Discussion with the agent:

The officer discussed the proposal with the agent and informed them of the recommendation for refusal on 3rd November 2025, asking whether they would prefer to withdraw the application or proceed to a decision. The agent confirmed that they would like to proceed to a decision on 5th November 2025.

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 2014 onwards

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)

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.

Although the proposed extension would be significantly set down from the existing ridgeline, the side element is only set back from the principal elevation by approximately 0.5m. With a depth of around 11m and a wrap-around rear component, the overall scale and massing of the extension fail to appear subservient or complementary to the original dwelling. As such, the proposal is not considered to comply with Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, which require extensions to respect the character of the host dwelling and the surrounding street scene in terms of scale, location, and design.

This also conflicts with guidance in the Design Guide to House Extensions 2021, which states that “consideration needs to be given to the size of the existing dwelling and what is considered subservient to the existing dwelling.”

Furthermore, the Design Guide highlights that in streets with closely spaced semi-detached buildings, the gaps between properties are integral to the character of the area. The loss of such gaps through two-storey side extensions can result in a terracing effect and the erosion of views between buildings, intensifying the built form in already high-density areas.

The proposed extension would be built along the boundary with No. 72 Brunel Road, eliminating the existing gap. Consideration must also be given to the potential for a future two-storey side extension at the neighbouring property, which could result in a terraced impact that is highly likely to harm the street scene and local character.

The inclusion of a roller shutter door on the ground floor side elevation—serving a storage/service room—raises concerns regarding potential non-residential use. While no clarification has been provided, the presence of such a feature is considered inappropriate in this residential context. It is not associated with garage use and is positioned along the frontage of the main dwelling, which conflicts with the established fenestration pattern and domestic character of the street. In addition, the roof design of the single-storey rear extension is considered unsympathetic to the host dwelling and does not complement its architectural style. Together, these elements further contribute to the proposal’s overall incompatibility with the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Overall, the proposal is not considered to respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding street scene, and is therefore unacceptable in planning terms.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 seeks to ensure that the amenity of gardens and other outdoor areas are not compromised. 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.

In terms of visual amenity, the proposed two storey element of the proposal—comprising minimal setback and extensive coverage of the side elevation and approximately three-quarters of the rear elevation—would appear visually dominant. As such, it is not considered to comply with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, which seeks to protect the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

The proposed two-storey side extension would be built along the shared boundary with No. 72 Brunel Road and is considered overbearing to this neighbouring property. In contrast, the element adjacent to No. 68 Brunel Road is single-storey and is not considered to result in an overbearing impact.

There are no identified concerns regarding loss of light, as the proposed development would align with the rear building line of both No. 72 and No. 68. Although a ground floor side window is proposed facing No. 72, it is not considered to raise privacy concerns, as it would be obscure-glazed, fixed shut, and face directly onto the boundary fence. If the proposal had been approved, a condition would have been required to secure this specification. Similarly, a condition would have been necessary to restrict the use of the flat roof of the single-storey rear extension to roof use only, in order to safeguard the privacy of No. 68. However, as the proposal is to be refused, these conditions are noted for completeness.

In response to concerns raised by the residents of No. 72, this application is recommended for refusal, the neighbour's concern regarding the proposed ground floor side window at the application site would not be an issue. With regard to the existing outbuilding, it is not part of the proposal, and the applicant is advised to confirm its lawfulness through a CLE.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area and would appear overbearing to the neighbouring property at No. 72. Owing to its scale, height, and proximity to the boundary, the extension would fail to integrate sympathetically with neighbouring dwellings and would detract from the established pattern of development along Brunel Road. The proposal is therefore considered harmful to the visual amenity of the area and the adjoining occupiers, contrary to Policies CC8 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Transport

Policy TR5 requires that the 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 proposal would require the provision of two on-site parking spaces and clear details of vehicle access arrangements. If the existing vehicle crossover is to be extended, a licence from the Council's Highways Team would be required. Furthermore, any alterations to the grass verge or the tree located within it would need to be clearly identified on the submitted plans.

As no such details have been provided and the proposal fails to demonstrate that it can accommodate the necessary parking and access arrangements without adversely affecting the public highway or existing landscaping, the development is considered contrary to Policy TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. Given that the proposal is not acceptable in its current form, this forms one of the reasons for refusal.

Other matters

With regard to trees and ecology, as noted in the consultation responses, no objections have been raised.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the scale, massing, and design of the proposed two-storey side and rear extension, along with the single-storey rear extension, fail to appear subservient or complementary to the host dwelling. The minimal setback from the principal elevation, combined with the extensive depth and wrap-around two storey element, results in a visually dominant addition that disrupts the character of the street scene. The proposal would also result in the loss of the visual gap between No. 70 and No. 72 Brunel Road, contributing to a potential terracing effect and intensifying the built form in this high-density area. The inclusion of a roller shutter door, unrelated to garage use and aligned with the main building line, further detracts from the residential character. Additionally, the roof design of the single-storey rear extension is

unsympathetic to the architectural style of the host property. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Additionally, the proposed development, particularly the two-storey side extension built along the boundary with No. 72, would appear overbearing and visually dominant to the neighbouring occupiers. While no significant harm is identified in terms of loss of light or privacy—due to the alignment of rear building lines and the use of obscure-glazed, fixed-shut windows—the overall scale and siting of the development would result in an unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of neighbouring residents. The proposal, therefore, fails to comply with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

The proposal fails to provide sufficient detail regarding on-site parking provision and vehicle access arrangements. In particular, it does not demonstrate how two on-site parking spaces would be accommodated or whether alterations to the existing vehicle crossover or grass verge (including the presence of a tree) would be required. In the absence of this information, the proposal is considered to have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and amenity, contrary to Policy TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

For these reasons, the application is recommended for refusal.

7. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE Planning Permission for the following reasons:

1. The scale, massing, and design of the proposed two-storey side and rear extension, along with the single-storey rear extension, fail to appear subservient or complementary to the host dwelling. The minimal setback from the principal elevation, combined with the extensive depth and wrap-around two storey extension, results in a visually dominant addition that disrupts the character of the street scene. The proposal would also result in the loss of the visual gap between No. 70 and No. 72 Brunel Road, contributing to a potential terracing effect and intensifying the built form in this high-density area. The inclusion of a roller shutter door, unrelated to garage use and aligned with the main building line, further detracts from the residential character. Additionally, the roof design of the single-storey rear extension is unsympathetic to the architectural style of the host property. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
2. The proposed development, particularly the two-storey side extension built along the boundary with No. 72, would appear overbearing and visually dominant to the neighbouring occupiers. The overall scale and siting of the development would result in an unacceptable impact on the visual amenity of neighbouring residents. The proposal, therefore, fails to comply with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
3. The proposal fails to provide sufficient detail regarding on-site parking provision and vehicle access arrangements. In particular, it does not demonstrate how two on-site parking spaces would be accommodated or whether alterations to the existing vehicle crossover or grass verge (including the presence of a tree) would be required. In the absence of this information, the proposal is considered to have an unacceptable impact on highway safety and amenity, contrary to Policy TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.