

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Battle Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0776 Full planning permission

Address: 288-290 OXFORD ROAD, READING, RG30 1AD

Proposal: Two rear-facing dormers with a rooflight to the front. Change of use from 5-bed small HMO (C4 use) to a 7-bed large HMO (Sui Generis) for up to 7 individuals. Relevant internal alterations. (amended)

Applicant: MR K SEHDEV

Received date: 26/05/2025; Valid date: 02/07/2025

Target Decision date: 14/11/2025 (EXT)

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey mid-terrace property forming part of the key frontage of the Oxford Road West district centre (RL1 and RL3). The ground floor of the building is a retail store, whilst the first floor is for residential use. The property lies on a busy arterial road, within a mixed residential and retail community.

The site is within walking distance of Reading Town Centre. The property is not listed, and it does not fall within a conservation area. The permitted development rights regarding Class MA and Class M of Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the GPDO have been removed from this property by an Article 4 Direction, which restricts the change of use from commercial/business/services use to C3 dwellinghouse.

The property has been granted permission for a single-storey rear extension with a depth of approximately 6m under permission reference PL/25/0667. The existing shopfront is unauthorised; it was altered around July 2025 (see Figures 1 and 2). Therefore, the unauthorised shopfront is not included within the scope of this application (ref: PL/25/0776).



Figures 1 & 2: View from front of 288-290 Oxford Road, taken 06/06/2025; Image of previous shopfront from Google Street View, dated 07/2019;

The agent confirmed via email dated 16th June 2025 that a separate planning application would be submitted for the unauthorised shopfront.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the erection of two small rear-facing dormers with one rooflight to the front, and for the change of use from a 5-bedroom small HMO (C4 use) to a 7-bedroom large HMO (Sui

Generis) for up to 7 persons. The internal layout would be altered to facilitate bin and bike storage, and to accommodate a new staircase providing access to the loft floor.

The two proposed rear dormers, each with a gable roof, would be symmetrically positioned on either side of the rear roof slope. Each dormer would measure approximately 1.6m in width and 1.8m in total height, projecting around 3m from the sloped roof. One rear-facing window would be installed in each dormer. All proposed materials are to match those of the existing property.

Regarding the change of use, the two additional bedrooms—each with an en-suite—would be created within the new dormers. The existing first-floor layout of five bedrooms would be reorganised to accommodate a staircase providing access to the two attic bedrooms. Additionally, the existing ground-floor storeroom would be internally enlarged to accommodate bins and bikes.



Fig 3: Drawing No. 1554-P-011 Rev C – Existing Floor Plans and Elevations

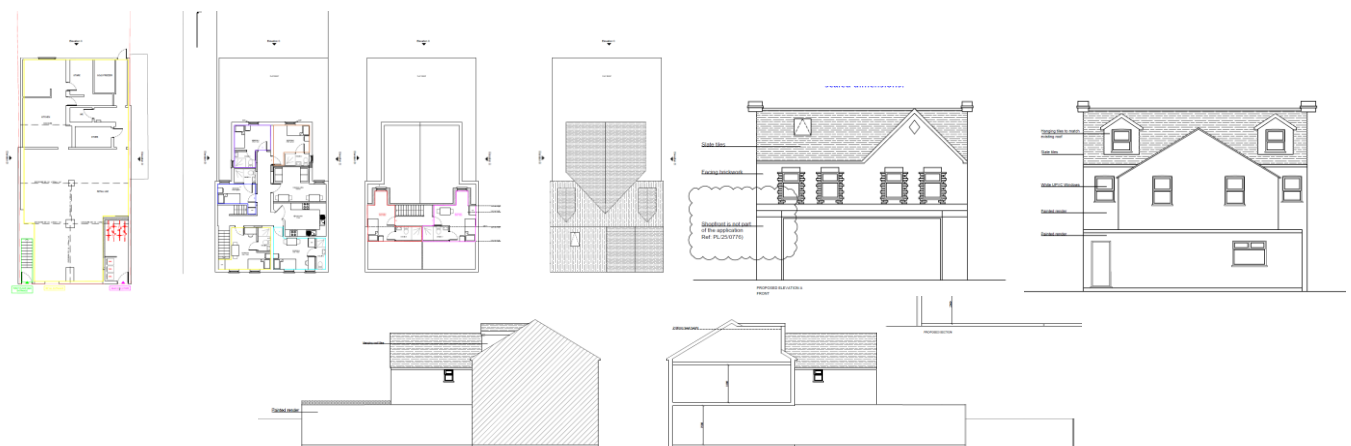


Fig 4: Drawing No. 1554-P-012 Rev C – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Plans considered:

- Drawing No. 1554-P-011 Rev C Existing Floor Plans and Elevations, received 16/10/2025.
- Drawing No. 1554-P-012 Rev C Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, received 16/10/2025.
- Drawing No. 1554-P-010 Site and Location Plan, received 05/11/2025.

3. Relevant Planning History:

- PL/05/1134 (288 - 290 Oxford Road) - New shop front and subdivision of the existing first-floor flat into 2x two-bedroom units. Permitted subject to Legal Agreement on 06/03/2006.
- PL/24/0729 (288a Oxford Road) - Change of use of existing 2X2 bed, first floor flats into a 5 bedroom, 5 person C4 HMO. Granted 11/09/2025.
- PL/25/0667 (288 - 290 Oxford Road) - Single-storey rear extension. Granted 27/06/2025.



Fig 5: Approved proposed floor plans and elevations under PL/25/0667

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 RBC Transport Development Control – received 11/08/2025.

Oxford Road is a classified road and is a main transport corridor; it is also part of the Red Route which means there is no parking along its length and in the vicinity of the site.

The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically, these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities. The site is within close proximity to Reading West Station and has access to multiple buses travelling in and out of the town centre.

This application proposes to increase the existing 5-bedroom HMO to a 7-bedroom HMO. There is no on-site parking associated with this site, and there are extensive parking restrictions preventing unauthorised on-street parking. The Council's residential parking permit scheme operates in the area. Under the Borough's current parking standards, this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area. There should be an assumption that any future occupants of the proposed HMO will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits which would be covered by condition and an informative applied. 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.

In accordance with the Council's current Parking Standards and Design SPD the 7-bedroom HMO would require cycle storage provided at a ratio of 0.5 spaces per lettable room, this equates to a total provision of 4 cycle storage spaces, i.e 2 Sheffield type stands (rounded up from 3.5). Plans do not illustrate a lockable storage area. This will need to be identified on the plans. It should be noted that cycle storage should not be housed with the bin storage area, and there should be some form of separation.

Bin storage should comply with the Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings and should be located no further than 10m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. Plans illustrate the location of the bin storage area within an enclosed storage area; however no detail of how this will be presented for collection has been provided. Clarification is required. Refuse storage should be separate from the residential refuse storage area; this has not been illustrated on the plans.

It is recommended that the Council's Waste Management team be contacted to ensure the correct capacity of bins is provided for the proposed size of the HMO.

Please ask the applicant to address the comments above and submit revised plans.

Planning Officer's note: Transport team has reviewed the submitted revised plans from the agent, and confirmed the proposal is considered acceptable regarding cycle and bin storage, subject to conditions.

4.2 RBC HMO team Consultations – received 18/08/2025.

No objection to the property being an HMO. Advise that the applicant and owners should be informed of the following:

- The proposed plans do not show any fire safety precautions for the 3-storey property (including commercial ground floor). The applicant/owner needs to ensure that the HMO has adequate means of escape and fire safety precautions in line with a 3-storey property as per the LACORS Housing – Fire Safety guidance (Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing) [guidance-on-fire-safety-provisions-for-certain-types-of-existing-housing.pdf](#). There should be an hour fire separation between the commercial and residential premises. Where this is not achieved, there must be a minimum half-hour fire resistance separating the commercial and residential premises, along with a linked panelled fire alarm system with detection in the commercial and residential premises installed in accordance with BS5839 Part 1. In the HMO, detection will be required in the hallways, kitchen and bedrooms. Where the escape route is long/complex, emergency lights will also be required.
- A 7-bed HMO would potentially have a minimum of 7 occupiers. The applicant/owner needs to ensure that the facilities for the storage, preparation and cooking of food comply with the Council's Guide To Amenity Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation, which is available on our website: [Houses in multiple occupation \(HMOs\) - Reading Borough Council](#).
- I note the room sizes of each bedroom. There does not appear to be any undersized bedrooms noted on the plans. The applicant/owner is reminded that the ensuite shower rooms and any floor area with ceiling heights less than 1.5m are to be disregarded as space. The latter is important when calculating the area of a room in the attic/loft rooms where there are sloping ceilings.
- All building works, where relevant, need to conform to the current Building Regulations and Building Control approval sought where required.
- All en-suite shower rooms need to have adequate ventilation and heating in compliance with Building Regulations.
- The HMO, when occupied by 5 persons (or more), will be subject to mandatory licensing and the applicant will need to make an application for an HMO licence to the Council. This can be made online on our website, [Houses in multiple occupation \(HMOs\) - Reading Borough Council](#).

4.3 RBC Environment Protection Consultations – no comments, received 21/07/2025.

4.4 RBC Waste Operations Consultations – no comments received.

4.5 Public consultation: A site notice was displayed near the application site. The 21-day consultation period was from 17th July 2025 to 7th August 2025. No letters of representation have been received.



Fig 6: Site Notice Photo

4.6 Discussions with agent:

The original proposal did not specify the potential number of occupants upon completion, nor did it include arrangements for bin and bike storage. Additionally, the combined communal room and kitchen did not meet the requirements for a proposed 7-bedroom large HMO.

In response, the agent submitted revised plans confirming that each bedroom would be for single occupancy only. The ground-floor store space would be internally enlarged to accommodate bin and bike storage. The communal room and kitchen have been separated. The agent considers that a single communal space is sufficient for this site, despite guidance generally recommending one communal space for 4–6 occupants. This justification is based on the fact that four of the seven proposed bedrooms exceed the minimum required floor area, offering additional private space for residents.

For further assessment, please refer to the appraisal section below.

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.

5. 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)

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

H8: Residential Conversions

H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

RL3: Vitality and Vitality of Smaller Centres

TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

Design Guide to House Extensions (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Residential Conversions (2023)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (December 2019)

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’.

6. APPRAISAL

Land Use Principles

The existing building at 288–290 Oxford Road comprises a food store on the ground floor and a 5-bedroom small HMO (C4 use) on the upper floors. The building is not listed, nor is it located within a Conservation Area. The proposal involves the erection of two rear dormers and one front rooflight, while retaining the mixed-use commercial and residential function of the building. Policies RL1 and RL3 support residential uses on upper floors within the centre area to promote diversity. As the proposal seeks to change the use from a 5-bedroom small HMO (C4 use) to a 7-bedroom large HMO (Sui Generis), there is no requirement to assess the proportion of HMOs in the surrounding area. Although the proposal would result in two additional residents, the overall floor space would be increased accordingly. Therefore, there is no in-principle objection to the proposed HMO use, subject to all other planning considerations being satisfactorily addressed.

Impacts on the amenity of existing and future residents

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. Additionally, there should be no unacceptable adverse impacts on residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance. Policy H10 states that dwellings should be provided with functional private or communal open space.

With regard to the impact on neighbouring amenity, the increase in residents within the site would not harm the operation of nearby businesses and commercial units along the road, or other residential units. There are five bedrooms on the existing first floor, and the proposed HMO would have seven bedrooms through the creation of two rear dormers. The intensification of activity is unlikely to affect the already busy area. The proposal would erect two gable-roof dormers at the rear; these are not considered to have negative impacts on nearby businesses and residents in terms of being overbearing, causing loss of privacy or light, or harming outlook, given their nature as rear dormers, their small scale, and the fact that the proposed windows are rear-facing.

The SPD refers to the nationally described space standards (Technical housing standards nationally described space standard’, 2015, DCLG) as a useful starting point, and where applications propose to

provide reduced standards there must be justification why this is the case. It should be noted, however, that Reading Borough Council has a “*Guide to Amenity Standards applicable to Houses in Multiple Occupation that require a Licence*” (i.e. those for 5 persons or more) which references the standards for HMOs as set out in ‘*The Licencing of Houses in Multiple (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018*’. Regulation 2 refers to national minimum standards for sleeping accommodation as:

- 6.51 square metres for one person aged 10 years or over;
- 10.5 square metres for two persons aged 10 years or over;

All the bedrooms proposed are for single occupancy and are the following sizes: Bed 1 – 7sqm; Bed 2 – 8.7sqm; Bed 3 – 6.8sqm; Bed 4 – 11sqm; Bed 5 - 11sqm; Bed 6 – 9sqm; Bed 7 – 12sqm. All room areas noted do not include the shower rooms. All of the proposed bedrooms are, therefore, acceptable in terms of size, and occupancy of the HMO will be restricted by condition. The proposed floor plan demonstrates that all habitable rooms will be served by windows, allowing for adequate levels of natural light.

The Council expects any proposals for non-self-contained accommodation to be of a good standard, with an appropriate level of facilities. The Residential Conversions SPD identifies that the amount of communal space considered appropriate is one communal room for every 4–6 bedrooms. The proposal includes a communal room in addition to a kitchen. Although the scheme is for seven bedrooms, the provision of a single communal room is considered acceptable, as four of the seven rooms exceed the minimum required floor space for single occupancy. This level of communal provision is therefore deemed acceptable. A condition would be included to ensure that the communal areas are retained for communal use only.

Based on the submitted and proposed floor plans, and the previously approved permission for a single-storey rear extension under reference PL/25/0667, there is no private outdoor communal space provided within the site. This reflects the existing arrangement, where no such space is currently available. As the proposal does not introduce any new external amenity provision nor reduce what already exists, it is considered that there would be no material change in this regard. Therefore, no objection is raised on this basis.

The level of noise and disturbance resulting from the proposal is unlikely to be significantly harmful to the residents of adjoining properties when compared with the existing situation. The use remains appropriate within this urban setting, where a degree of activity and background noise is expected. The Environmental Protection team has reviewed the proposal and confirmed that they have no objection. Accordingly, no concerns are raised in this regard.

The proposal seeks to increase the number of bedrooms from five to seven, resulting in an increase in occupancy from five to seven residents. The property is already in use as an HMO, and the change represents a modest intensification rather than a new use. Given that the management arrangements for the existing HMO are already established and the increase in occupancy is limited, it is not considered necessary to require a separate HMO Management Plan in this instance.

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

Policies CC7, 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.

The two proposed rear dormers would be fully set within the existing roof and are modest in scale, proportionate to the overall size and form of the host dwelling, including the shape and size of the proposed windows and the front rooflight. The proposed hanging tiles are to match those of the existing property, ensuring visual continuity. Furthermore, several nearby properties already feature rear dormers, which reinforces the acceptability of this design approach in the local context.

As such, the proposal is considered to respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would not detract from the streetscene. In compliance with Policies CC7, H8, and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Bin Storage

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.

The existing store space on the ground floor would be internally enlarged to accommodate three 240L bins, which is considered an appropriate size and would be easily accessible to both occupants and refuse collectors. The existing 5-bedroom HMO is currently served by one 240L general waste bin, which remains the same requirement for the proposed 7-bedroom HMO. Therefore, the collection arrangement would remain unchanged, with bins placed close to the roadside for collection. The kitchen/communal space within the HMO is considered to have sufficient capacity to facilitate general and food waste storage, with individual containers provided within one of the kitchen units.

Transport Matters

Policies TR1, TR3, and TR5 require that the proposal would contribute appropriately to meeting the objectives of the most up-to-date Local Transport Plan. Meanwhile, the development should not have a materially detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network or the safety of its users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities should be provided.

The existing ground floor lockable storeroom would be enlarged to accommodate four bicycles, which complies with the Council's current Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011). For a 7-bedroom HMO, cycle storage is required at a ratio of 0.5 spaces per lettable room. Although cycle storage is typically not expected to be housed with the bin storage area, in this case, they are separated by an internal wall, which is considered acceptable given the secure and accessible nature of the provision. In compliance with Policy TR5.

Furthermore, the site is located in a sustainable area with good bus links and convenient access to local amenities. As such, the shortfall in car parking provision for the proposed residential HMO is considered acceptable. Subject to conditions, the development is considered to comply with Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, as confirmed by the Transport Development Control Team.

7. CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed change of use from a 5-bedroom small HMO (C4 use) to a 7-bedroom large HMO (Sui Generis), along with the erection of two rear dormers and one front rooflight, is considered acceptable in principle. The mixed-use nature of the site (commercial at ground floor and residential above) would be retained, and the proposal aligns with relevant planning policies supporting residential uses in town centre locations.

The internal layout revisions, including the provision of a communal room and kitchen, are considered sufficient given the size of individual bedrooms. The absence of private outdoor communal space reflects the existing arrangement and does not introduce any material change. Subject to conditions, the proposal is not expected to result in harm to neighbouring amenity, transport safety, or the character of the area.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions



Recommended Conditions:

1. Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials (To Match)
4. Cycle Parking (As Specified)
5. Refuse and Recycling (As Specified)
6. Parking Permits 1
7. Parking Permits 2
8. HMO Communal Room
9. HMO occupation – maximum 7 occupants at any time

Informatives

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Encroachment
5. Positive & Proactive
6. HMO Management Plan
7. Highways
8. Parking Permits