

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: PL/25/1468 Householder planning permission

Address: SHIPNELLS FARM, GRAVEL HILL, EMMER GREEN, READING, RG4 8QL

Proposal: Garage conversion and Proposed Single storey link extension

Applicant: Mr and Mrs Richard and Charlotte Peacock

Received date: 15/10/2025

Target Decision date: 10/12/2025

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application property is a two storey residential dwelling located on the south side of Gravel Hill within Caversham Heights Ward in Emmer Green, Reading. The property is not listed, nor does it fall within a conservation area. The site is surrounded by fields, within some other residential properties nearby. The site is identified on the proposals map as a Major Landscape Feature or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A gravel track runs along the side of the site in between the application property and the closest neighbouring property at no.64 Gravel Hill.

Google earth image:



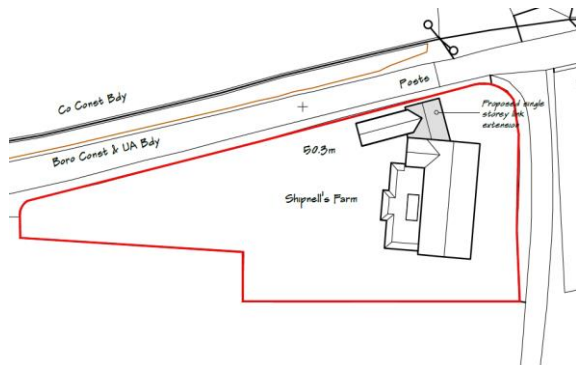
Site visit date: 29th October 2025

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought to extend and convert the existing garage into habitable space to create a bedroom with a dressing room and ensuite, and a gym. The proposed extension would link the existing detached garage to the main dwelling. The works also include replacing the window in the existing south elevation of the garage to a new half-glazed door, and a new window/blocking up to replace the existing double door.



Plans/documents considered:

Drawing No. 3955/200 rev C – Proposed Site and Location Plan received 15/10/2025
Drawing No. 3955/201 rev D – Proposed Ground Floor Plan received 15/10/2025
Drawing No. 3955/202 rev D – Proposed Elevations received 15/10/2025
Drawing No. 3955/100 rev B – Existing Site and Location Plan received 15/10/2025
Drawing No. 3955/101 rev C – Existing Ground Floor Plan received 15/10/2025
Drawing No. 3955/102 rev D – Existing Elevations received 04/11/2025

3. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the front of the property by the case officer on 29th October 2025 for a period of 21 days. No letters of representation have been received at the time of writing this report.

RBC Transport

The proposed works will result in the loss of the garage and therefore the loss of parking. In accordance with the Council's current parking standards the property would require 2 parking spaces. Plans have not been submitted illustrating the proposed parking layout, however aerial images confirm there is capacity within the curtilage of the site to accommodate 2 vehicles.

There are no objections to this application.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/00/0403 - Single and Two Storey Rear Extension and Detached Double Garage. APPROVED on 23/05/2000

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
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
EN13 (Major Landscape Features and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle)

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021
Revised Parking Standards and Design 2011

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. The submission version 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

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 proposed link extension is considered acceptable in terms of scale and is considered subservient to the application site. In terms of design, the proposed extension would be built of red brick and would have a pitched roof to match the original house. The proposed extension would be significantly set back from the existing building frontage and (due to the single storey nature of the development) the roof ridgeline would be significantly lower than the original house.

Given the design, size and the proposed finishes of the new link extension, the proposed development is considered to be in keeping with the existing house. By setting back from the existing frontage, the proposal would allow the original house to retain its character. Although visible from the road, the proposed extension is not considered harmful to the surrounding area. Furthermore, the proposed extension would be set away from the side boundary and partially concealed by the existing boundary treatment.

Overall, the proposals are not considered to cause harm to the character of the existing dwelling or the wider area and therefore complies with policies H9 and CC7.

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.

The proposed single storey extension is set far enough away from neighbouring buildings to ensure there would be no negative impacts on neighbouring amenity in terms of overbearing effects, overlooking, or loss of light.

A condition is attached to this permission to ensure that the use of the proposed extension and the converted garage will remain ancillary to the main dwelling at Shipnells Farm, Gravel Hill.

Other matters

EN 13 states that whilst no part of Reading Borough falls within an AONB, there are two AONBs in close proximity. Due to the scale and location of the proposed extension, it is not considered to detract from the nearby Area of Natural Outstanding Beauty.

With regard to bats, the area of the proposed extension falls outside of the area on the proposals map identified as an area of biodiversity interest. Furthermore, the proposals do not affect the roof of the main dwelling.

As per the Transport officers comments, the loss of the existing garage is considered acceptable as there is sufficient off-road parking space.

To ensure protection of retained trees on site, the applicant is advised through an informative to erect a protective fencing prior to commencement of any construction and/or demolition works.

7. 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.

8. RECOMMENDATION - GRANT

Recommended Conditions:

Time Limit

Materials

Approved Plans

Ancillary Use