

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: PL/25/1412 Householder planning permission

Address: 73 WOODCOTE ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7EY

Proposal: Proposed garage conversion, part double part single rear extension, single storey side extension, single storey front extension, following demolition of existing conservatory along with changes to fenestration.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs J and M Bhatt

Received date: 02/10/2025

Target Decision date (agreed extension): 16/01/2026

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a detached property located on the west side of Woodcote Road in Caversham. The property has a pitched roof, with a flat roof front facing dormer and an integral garage below. A single storey extension projects at the rear of the dwelling and there is a detached outbuilding in the rear garden. At the front of the site there is a large area of hardstanding. The road comprises large, detached and semi-detached dwellings varying in terms of scale and design, with a range of extensions. The surrounding area is predominantly residential. The application site is not listed, nor does it fall within a conservation area. There are trees on and adjacent to the site, none of which are covered by a tree protection order (TPO).

Google earth images:

Location Plan:



Site visit date: 18/11/2025

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling comprising a part double storey and part single storey rear extension, a single storey side extension, a single storey front extension, and the conversion of the existing garage into habitable space. The existing single storey rear conservatory extension will be demolished, along with detached outbuilding in the rear garden.

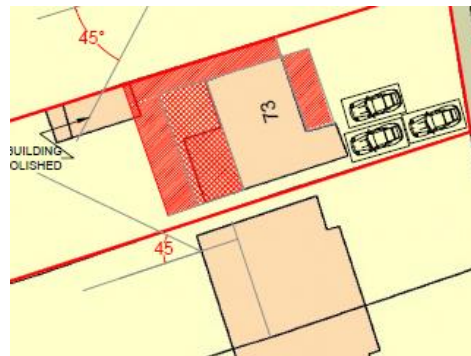
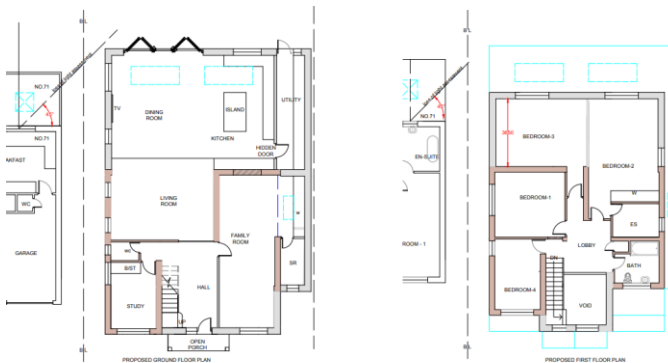
The proposal also includes changes to the fenestration, including a gable feature in the front elevation of the property, as shown on the plans below.

The agent confirmed in an email (dated 12/01/2026) that there will be no change in the appearance of external materials. The external finish will be render as per the existing house.

Existing Elevations



Proposed Elevations



Plans/documents considered:

Drawing No. WA-03 R – Existing Elevation Plans received 22/12/2025

Drawing No. WA-04 R1 – Proposed Floor Plans received 22/12/2025

Drawing No. WA-02 – Existing Floor Plans received 22/12/2025

Drawing No. WA-05 R1 – Proposed Elevations received 22/12/2025

Drawing No. WA-06 – Proposed Elevations and Roof Plan received 22/12/2025

Drawing No. WA-01 R2 - Location and Block Plan received 22/12/2025

Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment received 19/12/2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed by the case officer on 18th November 2025 for a period of 21-days.

One letter of objection has been received with regards to the following: Loss of light, overbearing, consistency with previous application at neighbouring property, overlooking, boundary issues, harm to trees/shrubs, asbestos concerns (demolition of outbuilding), access onto neighbouring land, missing elevation plans.

Officer note: Material considerations will be explored in more depth below.

RBC Transport

The application consists of the erection of a two storey side extension and single storey rear extension; and conversion of the existing garage to habitable space.

Local parking standards are set out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the site. In line with the adopted parking standards, two parking spaces must be retained for the residential dwelling. The proposal will retain the existing driveway parking which provides off-street parking in excess of the Council's requirements.

In view of this, there are no transport objections to the proposal.

RBC Natural Environment

Information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal is acceptable in relation to trees. Therefore, there are no objections, subject to a pre-commencement condition for the submission an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan.

Officer note: there is an incorrect address quoted in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. It should be ensured that this is amended in the future AMS.

Ecology

The application site comprises a detached house with integrated garage and outbuilding in the rear garden, located in a residential area of Reading. The proposals include the demolition of the outbuilding, garage conversion and the addition of a two storey rear extension and single storey side and front extensions. The bat survey report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, October 2025, ref: R3053_PRA_a) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and conclude that the works are unlikely to affect roosting bats. As such, there would be no ecological objections to the application.

Discussions with applicant/agent

Officers had concerns with regards to the original plans submitted. From a design perspective it was considered that the proposed front elevation of the property was overly busy with competing gables. There were also concerns that the rear extensions would be overbearing to neighbouring amenity.

Subsequently, revised plans were submitted reducing the depth of the first floor rear extension and redesigning the front elevation of the dwelling to show only one gable element.

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)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
TR (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)

SPD

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

In term of design, although more modern in appearance, the revised scheme is considered acceptable. It is recognised that the proposed development would, in effect, result in the appearance of a new dwelling, however, the surrounding area is made up of a number of detached and semi-detached dwellings, varying in terms of scale and design. The dwellings are all set back from the road with no distinct building line. As such, as the character of the area is varied, the proposed development would not be considered out of context. Although the window arrangement in the central gable in the front elevation of the dwelling is atypical, it reflects the unique character of the existing central windows. At the rear of the site, the two storey extensions are set down from the existing roof ridge in line with guidance and subordinate in terms of appearance.

On balance, the overall scale of the proposed development is considered appropriate given the size of the plot. The existing detached outbuilding and the single storey rear projection will be demolished to accommodate the extensions. The maximum depth of the rear extension would be 6.5m at ground floor level and 4m at first floor level. Although the ground floor depth exceeds the 4m guidance within the design guide to house extensions SPD it is considered that the application site can take a development of this scale and size. Furthermore, the rear building line of the existing dwelling is set back from the rear building lines of the neighbouring dwellings either side of the site.

The application form states that the materials proposed are render and facing brick work, uPVC windows, and rooftiles to match the existing. There is a variety of render and brick within this part of the street. The materials proposed are therefore deemed acceptable as are the size, scale, and placement of the proposed windows.

For the aforementioned reasons it is considered that the proposed development will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area and the proposed development is in accordance with Policies H9 and CC7 and the advice contained within the NPPF.

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.

Although the single storey side extension would be positioned close to the boundary with number 77 Woodcote Road, the property at number 77 is set well back from the shared boundary. Given this separation and the single storey nature of the proposed side extension, combined with its modest height and roof form sloping away from the boundary, this element of the development is not considered to cause any significant harm to number 77. As the gap between the proposed single storey side extension and the boundary with this neighbour is minimal, an informative is attached to this permission to remind the developer that during the course of construction, the developer should take care to ensure that no part of this development (foundations, eaves, guttering, etc.) would encroach on, under or across the boundary line with the adjoining property, as the requisite Notice has not been served on the owner of that property. This permission does not confer any right of access onto land that is not under the developer's control. The two storey element of the development is set away further from this neighbour, and the plans illustrates that the 45 degree line of light would not be breached for the closest windows at the rear. Regarding the windows in the side elevation of number 77, historic plans indicate these windows serve a garage, utility, and study. Whilst the study is classed as a habitable room, it also benefits from rear facing patio doors to provide an additional source of natural light. Moreover, as mentioned above, it is considered that there is sufficient distance between the proposed development and the main dwelling at number 77.

The proposed porch and the front extension are considered fairly minor with a sufficient distance from the neighbouring properties, and, therefore, no adverse impacts are anticipated.

With regard to the rear extensions, the plans illustrate that the proposals would not breach the lines of light from the neighbouring windows and therefore there are no identified in relation to loss of sunlight and daylight. This also indicates that the proposed rear extension would not be overbearing to neighbouring amenity. There is a distance of over 1m between the two storey element of the rear extension and the side boundaries. Although the proposed development will be more noticeable to the residents of the neighbouring properties, it is not considered to be visually dominant.

The proposed north side elevation includes two windows at first floor level, it is considered appropriate to add a condition to this permission to ensure that these windows are obscure glazed to avoid any overlooking/loss of privacy concerns for the neighbouring property at number 77 Woodcote Road. The proposed south elevation also includes two windows at first floor level. While this represents one additional window compared to the existing single opening, the windows would overlook the blank side elevation wall of the neighbouring property at number 71 Woodcote Road and therefore there is no identified risks in relation to loss of privacy for this neighbour. Two additional windows would also be located in the ground floor side elevation facing this neighbour, however, due to the ground floor nature of the windows and the current boundary treatment, the additional openings are not considered harmful.

For current and any future occupiers of the host building, the proposed works will facilitate an improved standard of accommodation, via the additional space created, and the amount of remaining amenity space is considered acceptable.

Overall, the proposals are considered in accordance with Policies H9, H10 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Trees

As the development is located close to existing trees both on and off site, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment was submitted with the application. The Natural Environment Team reviewed the submitted documents and initially requested further clarification in relation to the pruning of overhanging trees, the removal of the garage, and the foundations of the side extension within Root Protection Areas. The assessment was subsequently amended to address these matters, and the Natural Environment Team concluded that the information was sufficient to demonstrate that the proposals are acceptable in relation to trees, subject to a condition requiring an Arboricultural Method Statement.

The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

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

Arboricultural Method Statement
Obscure Glazing