

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1324 Householder planning permission

Address: SPRINGWOOD, THE WARREN, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7TQ

Proposal: Erection of extensions and outdoor seating area

Applicant: Dr Abdulrahman Saadeddin

Received date: 18/09/2025

Target Decision date: 06/02/2026 (EOT)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

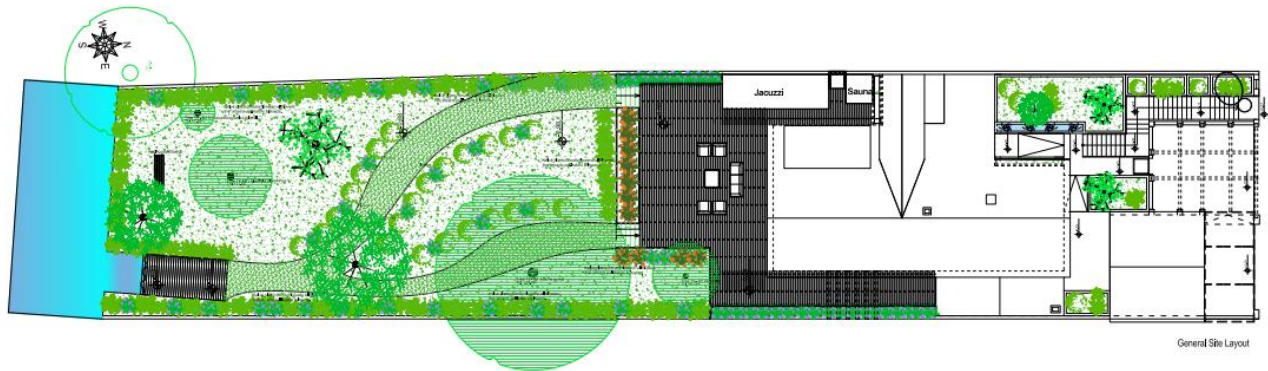
1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the south side of The Warren, backing onto the River Thames. The site is within an area of identified biodiversity interest and is part of a major landscape feature (Thames Valley). The site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3, and there are a number of trees within the rear garden, of which one is protected by a TPO. The surrounding area is residential, varying widely in character, design and scale.



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for a two storey rear extension, including a rear balcony, measuring 1m in depth across the width of the existing rear extension, extension of the single storey side extension on the east elevation, to measure 4m in depth from the front façade (including the existing side element) and 1.4m in width, a two storey front extension of the existing porch, to measure 1.34m in depth, and an upward extension of the existing western elevation.



2.1. Information submitted:

MS - 152020 – 13168 Sheet 1-5, Existing Plans and Elevations, received 18 September 2025
 Proposed Ground Floor Plans, received 21 January 2026
 Proposed First Floor Plans, received 18 September 2025
 BA0316-01a - Flood Measures Plan, received 21 January 2026
 83906.00.01R1 Flood Risk Assessment, FloodSmart Plus, received 18 September 2025
 24_PEA_05_90 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report - November 2025 - V3, received 20 November 2025
 Springwood - Arboricultural Impact Assessment v2.2 - 24_5837_05_89, received 4 December 2025
 Maha Alkos - 24_5837_05_89-TAP_v4 Tree Survey, received 4 December 2025
 Landscaping Plans Pack, received 21 January 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/92/0828 - Extension to bedroom and a new dining room. Application permitted.

PL/24/1281 – Erection of a two-storey rear extension to include a first floor balcony, extension of the eastern single storey area, a front two storey extension on the existing porch, and an upward extension of the existing western extension as well as alterations to the hard and soft landscaping. Permission refused due to the following reasons:

1. *The proposal by way of its excessive areas of hardstanding presents harm to existing trees on the site and the overall ecology of the site, which is an identified priority habitat (NPPF), as outlined in the submitted Arboricultural assessment. This is contrary to policies H9, EN11 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.*
2. *The proposal by way of its excessive areas of hardstanding in a prominent and highly visible location on the Thames River waterside harms the character of a Major Landscape Feature (Thames Valley), contrary to policies H9, CC7, EN11 and EN13 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*
3. *Insufficient or inaccurate information has been submitted relating to flood risk management and mitigation, and fails to demonstrate no increased risk of run off to neighbouring sites, contrary to Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and para 176 and Footnote 63 of the NPPF 2024.*

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Trees - Planning Natural Environment – Revisions requested. Agent submitted revisions therefore concerns resolved and there are no objections subject to conditions.
- Ecology Consultations – Revisions requested. Agent submitted revisions therefore concerns resolved and there are no objections subject to conditions.
- Environmental Health – No comments received.

A site notice was also displayed on site. Letters of representation were received as follows:

1. Objection - We are concerned about the addition of a ground floor window in the centre of the west elevation which appears to abut the boundary and will open directly onto our property, causing a significant privacy issue.
2. Objection - Addition of two windows on the eastern aspect of the house. One of these would be on the fence line the other would overlook our decking area. The objection is to the loss of privacy.

Officer note – the windows identified in the comments have been removed from the proposed drawings at the request of the case officer.

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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Guidance

Preparing a flood risk assessment: standing advice, Environmental Agency 2025

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

H9: HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

EN11: WATERSPACES

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN13: MAJOR LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND AREAS OF OUTSTANDING BEAUTY

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions 2021

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.

6. APPRAISAL

Character and appearance

Policy H9 states: *An extension to a house or other householder development will be acceptable where it:*

- *Respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design*

- *Respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and any important existing building line*
- *Does not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or a large blank façade to public areas; and*
- *Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens.*

The proposed rear extension is considered acceptable in its design and appearance. The extensions and external alterations to the character of the property are significant, however, this is not considered at odds with the wider character of the area. Properties along the Warren vary in their design and character, and an updated contemporary design would not appear out of place.

The site is within an identified Major Landscape (Thames Valley). Policy EN13 states *“Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature.”* The previously proposed extensive areas of hardstanding at the rear of the site were considered harmful in this regard, as the rear of the site is highly visible from the Thames Path across the river, however, these have now been omitted from the development which is positive and welcomed.



Rear of application site as seen from Thames Path across the river. Image taken from Google Maps.

The proposal is considered acceptable in terms in terms of design and character.

Residential amenity

Policy CC8 requires all development to have no detrimental impact on the residential amenity of nearby residents and future occupiers.

Two objections were received due to the addition of 3 ground floor windows to the previous design of the development. These have been removed from the proposed plans at the request of the case officer – while the additional windows were proposed for the purpose of flood relief, this was not necessary, and other mitigations are proposed to be implemented instead.

The proposal is considered in accordance with policy CC8.

Landscaping and flooding

Policy EN11 states *“Reading’s waterspaces will be protected and enhanced, so that they can continue to contribute to local and regional biodiversity and ecology, flood mitigation, local character, heritage and visual amenity, the provision of accessible leisure and recreational opportunities and, where appropriate, navigation. There will be no adverse impact on the functions and setting of any watercourse and its associated corridor.”*

Policies EN12 and EN14 are relevant and require development to have no detrimental impact on biodiversity or existing trees and hedges.

The site is located on the banks of the river Thames (a priority habitat) and is surrounded by habitat of high potential for commuting and foraging bats including The Thames, neighbouring large gardens lined with hedges and trees, woodland within The Warren Woodlands complex (a Local Wildlife Site) less than 5m metres to the north. The proposal includes a large outdoor seating area immediately at the rear of the dwelling.

The submitted Ecology Report (ROAVR Group, July 2024 updated August 2025) concludes that the proposals are unlikely to directly affect protected species such as bats. However, there are likely to be nesting birds on site as well as the nesting geese recorded at the bottom of the garden and the site could be traversed or used as a foraging resource by a range of protected and priority species including otter, water vole, badger, as well as bats. Other risks of the proposed development to priority habitats ie the River Thames and protected wildlife include:

- Pollution (including surface water runoff, dust, noise, littering etc.) during and after construction works
- Excessive illumination by new external lighting impacting the river Thames and other wildlife-sensitive areas
- Disturbance or damage to wildlife resting places, such as those of water fowl (as per the ecology report)

Without mitigation, the above risks would lead to a deterioration in the quality of the Priority Habitat River Thames and a loss of biodiversity. As such, should the application be approved, all works will need to be undertaken in accordance with an approved under a comprehensive Planning Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for biodiversity which details measures to protect wildlife and the river Thams during and after construction. This is proposed to be secured via a planning condition.

The River Thames is a habitat of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and is listed under s41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. It is a 'priority habitat' as defined in the NPPF. Paragraph 179 of the NPPF states that plans should safeguard and enhance "wildlife corridors" and "ecological networks", which in this case, include the River Thames.

The applicant has submitted a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which demonstrates landscaping principles. The proposed landscaping is acceptable, however, further details and an Arboricultural Method Statement will need to be secured via condition.

Policy EN18 sets out the Council's requirements for flood risk management on sites within Flood Zones.

The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Defence Plan. The FRA states that it is not practicable to raise the finished floor levels. The National Flood Risk Advice contained within the Environmental Agency's standing advice (see guidance for minor operations) states *"where you cannot raise the finished floor levels to the required height. Your building design should:*

- *prioritise excluding flood water where possible*
- *speed recovery in case water gets in"*

The Defence Plan includes the following measures:

1. Hard flooring throughout the ground floor.
2. Use of lime plaster internally or moisture resistant plasterboard installed vertically.
3. Utilities meters to be installed above predicted flood levels.
4. Communication infrastructure protected by suitable insulation in watertight ducts.
5. Flood proof doors and windows to be provided at ground floor level to prevent water ingress.

The above measures are considered sufficient to exclude flood water as far as practicable. The proposal is, therefore, considered acceptable.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed in line with national and locally adopted policies and is considered in accordance with those policies.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION

Recommended conditions:

1. Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials as specified
4. Flood mitigation as specified
5. AMS to be submitted to include protection of the existing hedges
6. Landscaping details to be submitted
7. CEMP to be submitted
8. Habitat enhancement scheme to be submitted
9. No external lighting