

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

In support of a planning application for the
PROPOSED REAR EXTENSION AND LOFT CONVERSION WITH REAR DORMER AND SINGLE
STOREY OUTBUILDING

at 3 Downshire Square, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 6NJ

Prepared by **DE Architectural Consultancy**
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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Householder Planning Application for the property known as 3 Downshire Square, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 6NJ.

The application seeks permission for the single storey rear extension, loft conversion with rear dormer, side roof lights, and the erection of a detached outbuilding to be used as a Gym and office space and demolition of existing conservatory.

The site lies within the Downshire Square Conservation Area, as designated by Reading Borough Council. The proposals have therefore been developed with careful regard to the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The overarching design approach has been to ensure that the principal elevation, established roof form, building line, and overall character of the dwelling as experienced from the public realm remain preserved. All extensions are confined primarily to the rear and are designed to appear subservient to the host building, with materials and detailing proposed to match the existing dwelling.

The proposal seeks to improve the functionality and long-term adaptability of the dwelling while maintaining its contribution to the architectural character and spatial qualities of Downshire Square.

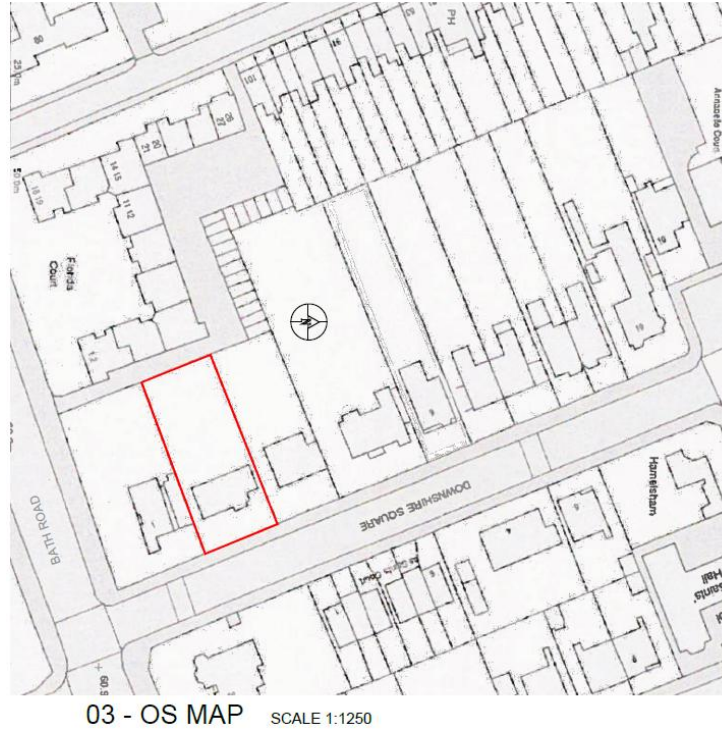


Fig. 1 OS MAP

2. Site & Surroundings

2.1. Site Location

The application site comprises a detached two-storey dwelling located at 3 Downshire Square, Reading, Berkshire. The property forms part of a well-established residential enclave characterised by substantial detached and semi-detached houses set within generous plots.

Downshire Square is a predominantly residential area situated off Bath Road and is defined by its spacious layout, mature landscaping, and consistent architectural character. The application property occupies a regular-shaped plot with a defined frontage to Downshire Square and a substantial private rear garden.

The dwelling maintains a clear setback from the highway consistent with neighbouring properties, contributing to the established building line and open suburban character of the area.

2.2. Surrounding Character

Downshire Square is characterised by:

- Detached and semi-detached early 20th century dwellings
- Red brick façades with traditional detailing
- Prominent chimney stacks
- Hipped and pitched roof forms
- Symmetrical principal elevations
- Mature trees and landscaped front gardens

- Spacious side gaps between buildings

The area has a strong and coherent architectural identity, with properties sharing similar proportions, materials, and roof profiles. The rhythm of development is defined by consistent setbacks, generous plot widths, and landscaped settings that collectively contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

The public realm experience is primarily derived from views of the principal elevations and roofscapes from Downshire Square itself. Rear elevations and garden areas are generally private in nature and not readily visible from the public domain.

2.3. Existing Property

The host dwelling is a two-storey detached house constructed in red brick with a traditional hipped roof form and prominent chimney stacks. The principal (front) elevation displays a balanced arrangement of windows and a central entrance feature consistent with the architectural character of the surrounding properties.

The rear of the property includes later additions and garden structures typical of residential evolution over time. The roof form remains largely intact when viewed from the street, forming part of the established roofscape rhythm along Downshire Square.

The dwelling makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through its scale, materials, roof form, and landscaped setting.



Fig. 2 Existing Plans & Elevations



Fig. 3 Existing Roof Plans & Elevations

3. Planning Policy & Conservation Area Context

The site lies within the Downshire Square Conservation Area. In accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special attention must be given to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area when determining applications. National planning policy set out in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to conserve heritage assets in a manner proportionate to their significance. The character of Downshire Square is defined by spacious plots, consistent building lines, red brick detached and semi-detached dwellings, hipped and pitched roof forms, prominent chimneys, and landscaped front gardens. The public appreciation of the Conservation Area is primarily derived from the principal elevations and roofscape when viewed from the street. The proposal has therefore been developed to retain the front elevation and dominant roof form, confining alterations largely to the rear to ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved.

4. The Proposal

4.1. Amount of Development

The application relates to alterations and extensions to the existing single-family dwelling at 3 Downshire Square.

The proposed development comprises:

- A single-storey rear extension with pitched roof
- Conversion of the existing loft space incorporating a rear dormer
- Installation of conservation-style rooflights
- Erection of a detached outbuilding within the rear garden
- Associated internal reconfiguration
- Demolition of existing conservatory and rear chimney stack

The proposals result in a modest increase in space through the addition of rear ground floor floorspace and the conversion of the existing roof space. The overall increase in floorspace is proportionate to the size of the host dwelling and remains consistent with a single-family residential use.



Fig. 4 Proposed Internal Changes & Elevations

4.2. Layout

The proposed layout seeks to improve the internal functionality of the dwelling while utilising the existing footprint efficiently.

At ground floor level, the rear extension enables improved kitchen and living accommodation, creating a more practical and connected arrangement of family spaces.

At first floor level, internal reconfiguration improves bedroom arrangements and circulation.

The loft conversion provides additional bedroom accommodation within the existing roof envelope, allowing clearer separation between private and shared spaces within the dwelling.

The overall layout maintains logical circulation between floors and ensures that habitable rooms benefit from natural light and ventilation.



Fig. 5 Proposed Loft plans, Rear Dormer position, and Elevations

4.3. Scale, Design and Appearance

The proposed development has been designed to remain subordinate to the host dwelling in both scale and appearance.

The single-storey rear extension is modest in projection and clearly secondary to the main two-storey structure. The loft conversion is contained within the existing roof envelope, with the rear dormer set below the ridge line, inset from the eaves, and limited in width to ensure it remains subordinate and does not dominate the rear roof slope. No alterations are proposed to the principal (front) elevation, and the established building line and roof silhouette when viewed from Downshire Square are preserved.

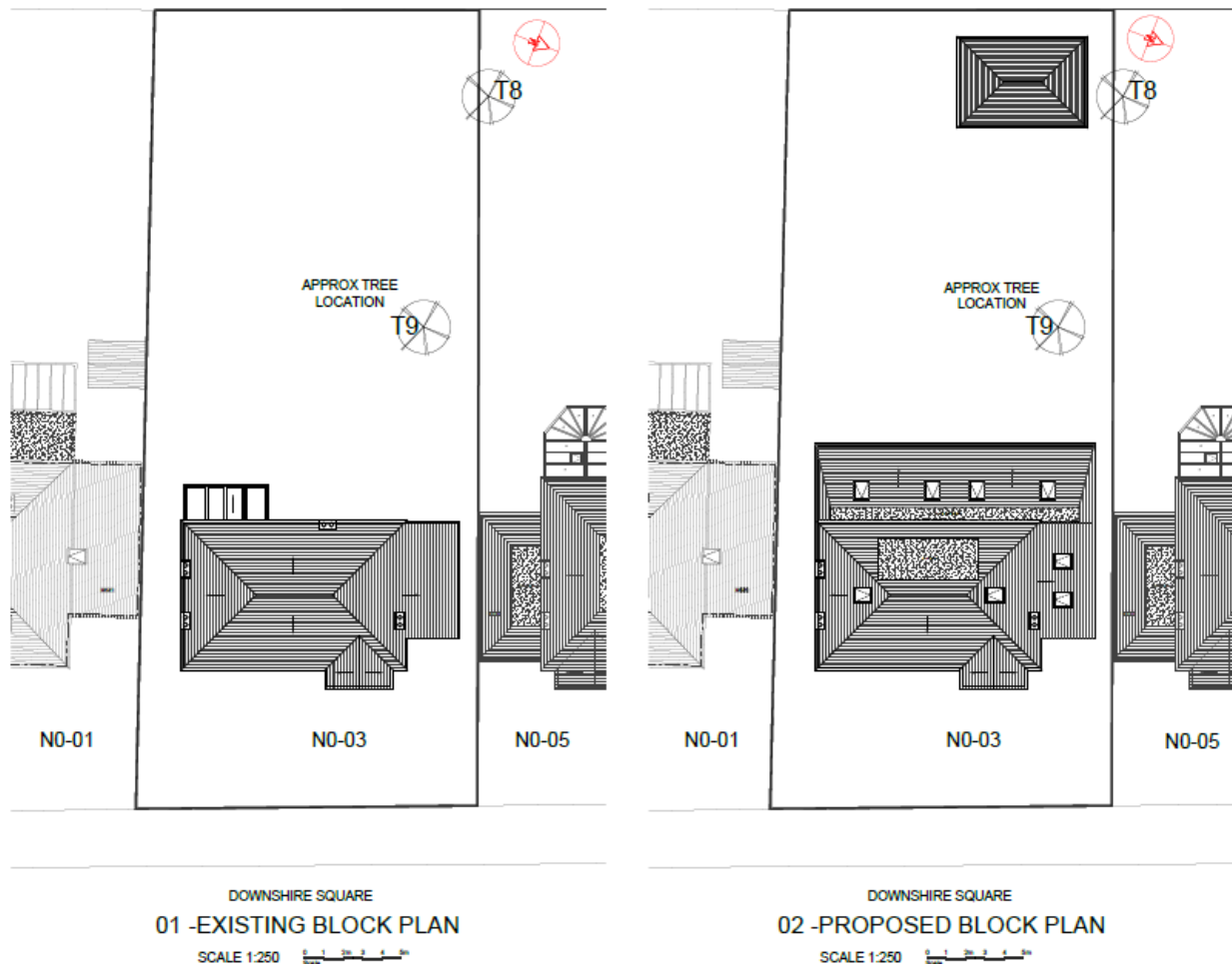


Fig. 6 Existing & Proposed Block Plans

The proposed outbuilding is modest in footprint and height and is clearly ancillary to the main dwelling. Its position within the private rear garden ensures it does not compete visually with the host property. It creates a balanced work from home environment within the perimeter of the dwelling but outside the main house, with additional space for Gym facility.

Materials will match the existing dwelling, including brickwork and roof tiles, ensuring visual continuity and integration with the surrounding properties.

The proposal retains the generous rear garden depth, existing boundary treatments and mature landscape setting that are identified within the Downshire Square Conservation Area Appraisal as key contributors to its spacious suburban character. The separate tree application has been submitted and approved where trees are marked for removal and pruning. This work to trees has been already carried out.

By retaining the principal elevation, maintaining the dominant roof form, and confining new built form primarily to the rear, the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the Downshire Square Conservation Area.

4.4. Access & Bin facility

The proposal does not alter the existing access arrangements to the dwelling. Pedestrian access will continue to be provided via the established front entrance from Downshire Square, and existing vehicular access and off-street parking within the site are retained. No new access points are proposed. The development relates to extensions and internal reconfiguration of a single private dwelling and does not result in a material increase in traffic generation. Refuse and recycling storage will continue to be accommodated within the site and presented for collection in the usual manner as per the existing arrangement. The proposal therefore maintains safe and suitable access arrangements without impact on the public highway.

5. Conclusion

The scheme has been designed to retain the principal elevation unchanged, preserve the established building line and spatial character of Downshire Square, and maintain the dominant hipped roof silhouette when viewed from the public realm. All new built form is confined primarily to the rear of the property and constructed using materials that match the existing dwelling to ensure visual continuity. The rear extension, loft conversion and ancillary outbuilding are subordinate in scale and largely outside public view, ensuring that the key character-defining elements of the Conservation Area — including its streetscape rhythm, roofscape profile and architectural symmetry — remain unaffected. The proposal therefore represents a proportionate and sympathetic improvement to the dwelling that enhances internal functionality while preserving the character and appearance of the Downshire Square Conservation Area in accordance with statutory and national policy requirements.

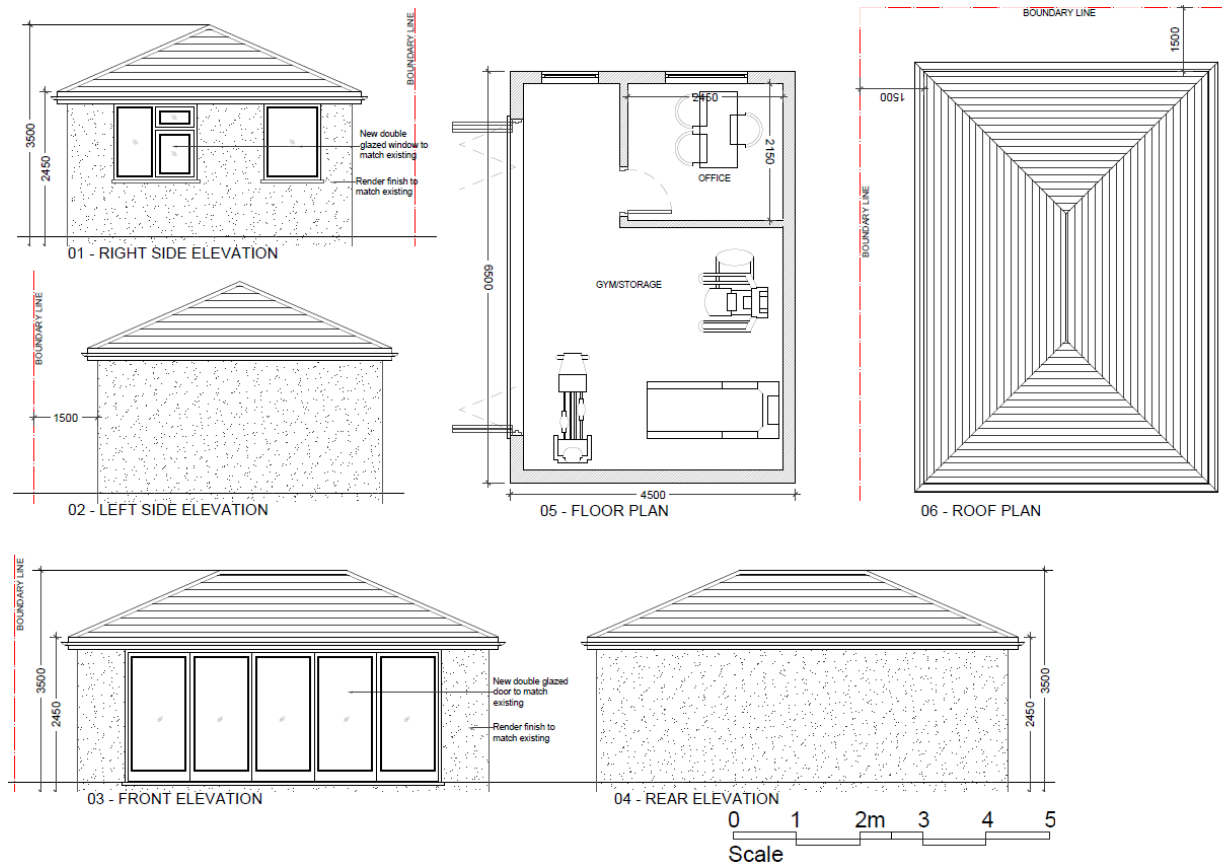


Fig. 7 Outbuilding Plans & Elevations