

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Single-Storey Pitched-Roof Rear Infill Extension and single storey rear extension

at

20 Rectory Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7SH

20LUK_D_A

Rev B

17/03/26



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Document

This Design & Access Statement supports a planning application for a single-storey pitched-roof rear infill extension and small rear extension to the existing 2 storey outrigger extension at 20 Rectory Road, Caversham. It explains the site context, design rationale, relevant planning policy, and the proposal's compliance with the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD.

1.2 Site Address and Brief Description

20 Rectory Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7SH. The property is a terraced dwelling on a traditional residential road comprising early-20th-century housing. The property as an end-terrace house, built between 1900–1929, containing three bedrooms and two reception rooms.



1.3 Type of Application

Householder planning application for a single-storey pitched-roof rear infill extension between the outrigger and boundary, and a flat roof rear extension replacing an earlier rear structure.

2. Site Context and Assessment

2.1 Location and Surroundings

Rectory Road is a desirable residential street close to Caversham centre, within walking distance of Reading Train Station and local shops, restaurants, and amenities. Zoopla notes the area is quiet, centrally located, and characterised by Victorian/Edwardian terraced housing.

2.2 Site Description

Terraced dwelling with traditional patterned brickwork, subject to an Article 4 Direction (1988) removing certain permitted development rights due to the street's locally distinctive materials.

Property includes a typical outrigger and modest rear garden.

Access is from Rectory Road; rear access is pedestrian only.

Boundaries: brick walls and fencing typical for the area.

Topography: Generally, level.

2.3 Planning Context

Rectory Road (Nos. 1–17 odd and 8–32 even) is subject to an Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights relating to external alterations due to distinctive patterned brickwork.

Relevant Reading Borough Local Plan policies include:

- CC7 – High Quality Design
- CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity
- H9 – House Extensions

2.4 Planning Officer Comments during reject GOL application process.

During discussions about the previous applications merit and the impact of the Article 4 Direction the planning officers make the following comment:

"Unlikely to be any concern with replacement of rearmost addition in amenity terms given reduced depth compared to existing, and flat roof to minimise impact (and distance to neighbours). In design terms, flat roofs generally fail to enhance the appearance of a property – particularly of the style of house as existing. However, it would not be readily visible and subject to good quality material, could be acceptable.

I do have concerns with the side extension and the impact on No.22 Rectory Road. Whilst not shown on the plans it would breach a 45-degree line to neighbouring habitable room windows and given its combined height, depth and position immediately adjacent the boundary, I consider this to be overbearing.

I acknowledge the approval at 8 Rectory Road. However, each application is assessed on its merits. My concerns are with regard to Policies H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 that states proposals will be acceptable that "does not present an overbearing impact on neighbours" and CC8 that states proposals "will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential

amenities...in terms of access to sunlight and daylight, visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development" along with the Design Guide to Extensions SPD which states proposals should not result in "harm to neighbouring dwellings in terms of loss of light".

I do acknowledge the comments below. However, it would appear that this element of the proposals would obstruct light to both a dining room window (and noting this can be separate from the living room at front) and kitchen window (sole window), as well as result in a 'tunnelling' effect which would restrict outlook, creating an unacceptable sense of enclosure, harmful to the amenities of occupiers of No.22."

3. Design Principles and Proposal

3.1 Design Objectives

Provide a modest, high-quality single-storey extensions that respect the existing character.

Improve internal layout and functionality.

Minimise impact on neighbours.

Use materials that match or complement the existing property.

The planning officer previously suggested that the rear extension was acceptable, and this has not been changed.

Avoid the overbearing or tunnelling effect the Planning Officer previously identified. This has been addressed by making the infill extension have a pitched roof which means the maximum height of the roof at the boundary to no 22 will be 2.4m less than the 3m shown on the rejected COL application extension that the planning officer noted may cause a tunnelling effect.

This approach has been shown to be acceptable on a number of applications for infill extensions as shown in the precedents listed below including one recently at 8 Rectory Road (PL/21/1396) that noted the following about the application.

- No significant loss of light as existing shadows already occur
- No overbearing impact
- Materials in keeping
- Not visible to public realm

3.2 Use

Existing Use: Residential (C3).

Proposed Use: Residential (C3) = no change.

The extension enlarges the ground-floor kitchen/living space without altering the dwelling's use.

3.3 Amount

Single-storey rear infill extension and rear extension

Pitched-roof structure of modest size.

3.4 Layout

Functions as an infill between the outrigger and boundary.

Enhances internal circulation.

3.5 Scale

Height and depth designed to remain subordinate to the main dwelling.

Pitched-roof form of the side extension is selected to reduce perceived bulk and address officer concerns that flat roofs often fail to enhance appearance and the new flat roof extension was acceptable to the planner when commenting on the rejected Certificate of Lawfulness application.

Proposal avoids harmful dominance or overshadowing consistent with policies H9 and CC8.

3.6 Appearance

H9 states: An extension to a house will be acceptable where it:

- A: Respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design;

To assess this, the following has been considered – would the proposal:

- detract from the appearance of the original building through the use of ill-matching materials and by not fitting in with the design, scale and proportions of the original building; **NO, exterior finishes would closely match that on the original house.**
- reduce the amount of usable amenity space for the property to an unacceptable degree; **NO**
- require the loss of trees in the garden or put significant trees at risk; **NO**

- B: 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; Respects neighbour's amenities and does not present a large blank façade to public areas.

To assess this, the following has been considered – would the proposal:

- significantly reduce the amount of daylight and sunlight enjoyed by neighbouring properties; **NO, the proposed extension is single story with a maximum eaves height of 2.5m. In addition, due to the height and orientation of existing surrounding buildings, the site and the adjoining neighbour are currently shadowed by their own shadows and therefore it is considered that the extension would not make the living conditions of the neighbours significantly worse.**
- invade the privacy of neighbouring properties through overlooking from windows or balconies; **NO, the proposed extension is single story and therefore would not overlook the neighbour's property.**

- detract from the character of neighbouring properties through siting, excessive bulk, ill-matching materials or inconsistent design; **NO, the proposed extensions are smaller in scale than the existing and surrounding houses. In addition, the design and exterior finishing materials are in keeping with the character of the existing house and that of the neighbours.**
- detract from the appearance of the street or area by using ill-matched materials, glazing and detailing; **NO, proposed materials closely match that of the existing house. In addition, the extension would not be visible to the public realm.**

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity 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.

To assess this, the following has been considered – would the proposal cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking; **NO**
- Access to sunlight and daylight; **NO**
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; **NO**
- Noise and disturbance; **NO**
- Artificial lighting; **NO**
- Vibration; **NO**
- Dust and fumes; **NO**
- Smell; **NO**
- Crime and safety. **NO**

4. Precedents

Similar rear/side infill extensions have been approved locally, demonstrating clear precedents where proposals:

- Are single-storey
- Are subservient
- Match materials
- Do not result in overbearing, tunnelling or loss of light
- Are often built tight to boundaries
- Below is a summary of each cited precedent with relevant officer reasoning.

PL/21/0619 – 19 Priory Avenue

Rear and side infill extension approved because scale and materials complemented the house; not visible from public realm; no harm to amenity (screening, no overlooking, no loss of light).

PL/22/0015 – 34 Morgan Road

Single-storey infill extension (4.2 m deep). Accepted as materials matched, mono-pitch low-impact roof, and did not significantly affect daylight/sunlight or privacy.

PL/22/0074 – 14 Thames Side

Infill extension up to boundary. Officers confirmed no impact on daylight, sunlight, privacy or character; scale subordinate; matching materials.

PL/22/1335 – 32 Mill Green

Initially refused due to tunnelling effect and excessive depth/height; approved once eaves reduced to 2.0 m and projection reduced to 4.75 m. Demonstrates that adjusting scale/roof form resolves amenity concerns.

PL/22/1336 – 34 Mill Green

Single-storey infill extension with mono-pitch roof approved; height and materials appropriate; acceptable impact on amenity.

PL/23/0326 – 70 Donnington Road

Single-storey rear infill extension to HMO accepted; matching materials; no harm to privacy or overshadowing; large garden retained.

PL/23/1834 – 53 Oxford Street

Infill extension 1.3m wide × 4m deep. Approved after reducing parapet and lowering roof to avoid overbearing effects. Shows importance of modest height and roof pitch.

PL/24/0765 – 78 Basingstoke Road

Appeal outcome confirms single-storey rear extensions were acceptable, matching materials and subservient in scale—even though the roof enlargement was refused.

PL/25/0486 – 139 Cumberland Road

Approved once depth reduced to comply with SPD. Officer emphasised flat roof minimising impact and compliance with H9 & CC8.

PL/21/1396 – 8 Rectory Road (same street)

Extension filled the gap to boundary. Officers confirmed:

- No significant loss of light as existing shadows already occur
- No overbearing impact
- Materials in keeping
- Not visible to public realm

This scheme demonstrates acceptance of boundary-line infills on Rectory Road itself.

5. Access

5.1 Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

No changes to existing street access.

Property remains accessed via Rectory Road.

Construction access via front; rear access pedestrian only.

5.2 Inclusive Access

Level threshold where feasible.

Door widths and circulation to meet modern accessibility expectations.

6. Impact on Neighbours

The revised proposal has been specifically designed to avoid the issues previously highlighted by the Planning Officer during the Certificate of Lawfulness pre-application discussion. In particular:

- **Avoidance of overbearing or tunnelling effects:**
The reduced eaves height and the introduction of a modest pitched roof ensure that the extension does not appear over dominant. This approach is consistent with other similar approved applications, including reference PL/22/0074.
- **No significant loss of light:**
The proposed extension does not materially worsen the existing light levels experienced by neighbouring properties. As supported in comparable approvals (e.g. PL/21/1396), existing patterns of overshadowing already occur, and the revised design does not create any additional significant impact.
- **Impact on the rear windows of No. 22:**
The rear-facing window at No. 22 serves a dual-aspect room, with the primary source of daylight provided by the main south-facing window at the front of the property. The anticipated impact of the proposed single-storey rear extension—given its modest height—is comparable to that of the rear windows adjacent to the approved scheme at 8 Rectory Road, where the Planning Officer concluded that “no significant loss of light” would arise due to existing overshadowing patterns.
- **Side kitchen window at No. 22:**
The side-facing kitchen window at No. 22 looks directly onto the existing two-storey outrigger of No. 20. This window does not serve a habitable room. The proposed extension, with its low eaves height, will have no greater impact than the current situation created by the existing two-storey outrigger.

This proposal addresses those concerns by:

- Using a pitched roof, reducing height at the boundary.
- Designing a subordinate volume that maintains light/outlook.
- Avoiding excessive depth.
- Modest height and pitched roof reduce mass near boundary.
- No significant overshadowing expected.

Privacy

- No side-facing windows.
- Single-storey only; no overlooking.
- The
- Residential use unchanged; extension does not introduce new noise sources.

7. Landscaping

- Existing rear garden retained.
- Hard/soft landscaping unaffected except for localised adjustments near new wall.

8. Sustainability Measures

Pitched roof allows for improved insulation performance.

Materials selected for durability and energy efficiency.

9. Conclusion

This proposal represents a modest, high-quality, policy-compliant rear infill extension that:

- Respects the character and materials of 20 Rectory Road
- Maintains the appearance of the Article 4 street
- Avoids overbearing or tunnelling effects previously identified
- Aligns with Policies CC7, CC8, and H9
- Mirrors a long line of approved local precedents—including one on Rectory Road itself
- Accordingly, the proposal should be considered acceptable in design, heritage and amenity terms.