

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove

App Ref: PL/26/0076 Full planning permission

Address: 17 Christchurch Gardens, Reading

Proposal: Retrospective application for a temporary outbuilding, for a period of 2 years. (Amended description)

Applicant: Mr Harris

Received date: 23/01/2026

Target Decision date: 20/03/2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located on Christchurch Gardens, set within the Christchurch Conservation Area.

The existing house is a characterful three storey semi-detached Victorian house with distinctive polychromatic brickwork, that has been split into 3 self contained flats. The neighbouring property at 15 Christchurch Gardens has also been sub divided into flats. The flats at 15 and 17 Christchurch Gardens are being refurbished.

An unauthorised outbuilding has been constructed in the rear garden that is built up to the rear of the dwelling.

It is not a listed building but is a building of townscape merit.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for permission for the retention of the retrospective ancillary outbuilding, for a period of 2 years. The application form states that works on the outbuilding started on 15 August 2025 and that its construction was completed on 6 October 2025.

The outbuilding measuring 3.144m in width, 6.070m in length and set away from the boundary wall by 0.5m is constructed from a timber frame with timber cladding, guttering and the roof is covered with slate, with a timber door. The outbuilding is being used in connection with the refurbishment works at 15 and 17 Christchurch Gardens and the structure is in ancillary use to the original dwelling.

Site visit 10 February 2026



Plans considered
2025-78-L01 The location plan
2025-78-L02 Block plan
2025-78-S02 Elevation (Side) – Existing
2025-78-S01 Floor Plan – Existing
Planning and Heritage Statement - 26.01.22. DOH Architecture
CIL
As received 23 January 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

Officer Note:

The supporting information suggests that the host building contains a number of self-contained flats. However, no such permission appears to exist for this development. The applicant is advised to seek retrospective permission for the unauthorised change of use, or a certificate of lawfulness should the flats be immune from enforcement action.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation officer – objection to long term retention of the outbuilding. Concerns were raised regarding the size, materials, design and construction of the outbuilding and an objection raised against the long term retention of the outbuilding as it is not in keeping with the building at 17 Christchurch Gardens, a building of townscape merit and its location within the Christchurch Conservation area.
- RBC Enforcement team – An enforcement investigation is in progress but awaiting the outcome of the Full planning application PL/26/0076
- Conservation Area Advisory Committee Consultations – no comments have been received at the time of writing this report

A site notice was displayed on 6 February 2026 for the required period, and an advert was placed in the local newspaper. No letters of representation have been received.

Communications with the agent

Following communications with the agent, the description was amended as a temporary application with agreement on a condition requiring the structure to be removed at the end of the temporary period. This amendment was considered acceptable to the RBC Conservation officer, ensuring that there is no long term harm to the Conservation Area, whilst allowing completion of the refurbishment works.

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'.

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. A pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 9th of May 2025 and is currently at examination.

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 (aside from Policy H1, which is acknowledged to be out-of-date) and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the submission 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’ (aside from Policy H1).

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)
EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)
EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-related Matters)

SPD

- A Design Guide to House Extensions SPD

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

Design, construction and impact on the Christchurch Conservation Area

Policy CC7 states that ‘*All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.*’

Policy EN1 states ‘*Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced.*
This will include: • *Conservation Areas*’.

Policy EN3 states '*The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*'

The ancillary outbuilding is large in scale compared to the original building and through its materials, proximity to boundaries, and visual prominence detracts from the appearance of the existing building. The structure is not subservient to the main dwelling. The outbuilding structure can be seen within the rear gardens from Glebe Road.

The building is out of keeping with the Conservation area due to its size, use of materials and harm to the existing building, it is considered it would have a long term detrimental impact on the existing dwelling as it is not in keeping with the existing appearance and on the character of the area. The materials and quality of construction are likely to deteriorate in the longer term due to the temporary nature of the building.

The outbuilding is not an acceptable permanent addition, however, following an amendment to the description for a temporary use for a period of up to 2 years, after which time a condition would require the 'temporary' outbuilding including its base be removed from the site and the land reinstated to its original grassed, soft landscaped garden amenity. Due to the temporary nature of the proposed unit, it would have a reversible impact on the main dwelling and the character of the Christchurch Conservation Area.

For the reasons given above the ancillary outbuilding would not be acceptable to be retained as permanent feature next to the front entrance of the hospital. The proposal would only be acceptable as a temporary permission.

Impact on amenity

The ancillary outbuilding has no windows and is therefore not considered to result in overlooking of a loss of daylight and sunlight to neighbouring properties. The rear garden continues to provide sufficient garden amenity space current residents.

The scale of the structure is considered to dominate the garden and is overbearing in nature.

The structure appears to have been constructed to block the window that is provided to the pre-existing single storey extension. This is likely to reduce the useability of that extension, and would be detrimental to the amenity of the host dwelling.

Other issues

The use of the main building/buildings do not appear to be authorised, it is advised that this is regularised as soon as possible (i.e. seek full planning permission/Certificate of Lawfulness).

7. CONCLUSION

The retrospective ancillary building would be an unacceptable development for long-term retention, however a short term temporary use for a period of 2 years, with a condition attached requiring the temporary building to be removed and the site restored to its former condition at the end of the two year temporary period would reduce the impact of development. In this instance, given the temporary nature of the proposal, it is considered that planning permission should be granted.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission

Recommended Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Plans considered

2025-78-L01 The location plan

2025-78-L02 Block plan

2025-78-S02 Elevation (Side) – Existing

2025-78-S01 Floor Plan – Existing

As received 23 January 2026

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

2. The proposed use shall be ancillary to the dwellings at 15 and 17 Christchurch Gardens in C3 residential use only and for no other purpose.

REASON: In order for local planning authority to control the intensity of use of the ancillary outbuilding in the interests of protecting residential amenity, the setting of the residential dwelling and the character of the Christchurch Conservation Area in accordance with policies CC7, CC8 and TR5 and EN1 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

3. The building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition on or before 20 March 2028 in accordance with a scheme of work that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: The type of building is not one that the Local Planning Authority is prepared to approve in this location other than for a limited period, having regard to the materials and type of structure proposed. Permission is only given on a temporary basis because a retrospective permanent building attached to the existing dwelling in the Christchurch Conservation Area would be contrary to policy CC7 and EN1 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Informatives:

1. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.
2. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted within the prescribed target or agreed extended timescale for the decision to be issued.