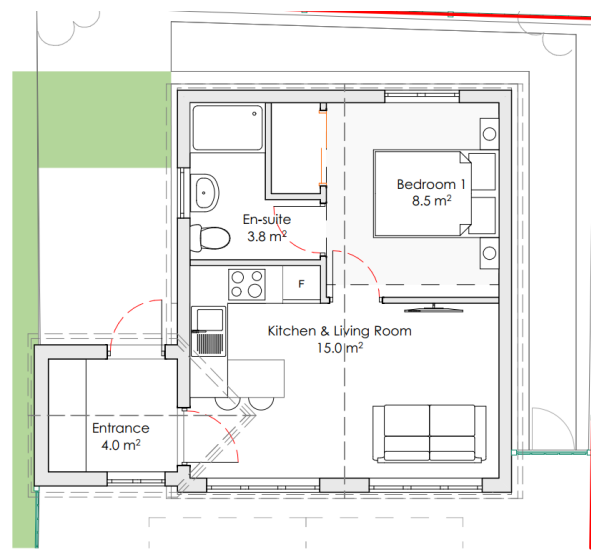


Planning Statement
Full Planning Application for the Change of Use of Existing Ancillary Accommodation to a
Self-Contained Dwelling
130 Westwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6LL



1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of an existing ancillary residential building to a self-contained dwelling at 130 Westwood Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6LL.

Planning permission was granted by Reading Borough Council under application 220544 on 24 June 2022 for the conversion of the garage to ancillary living accommodation. That permission was granted subject to a condition restricting occupation of the building to use ancillary to the main dwelling at 130 Westwood Road.

The building was converted and used for residential accommodation by the owner's daughter. She has now moved away and the accommodation is no longer required for that purpose. The proposal therefore seeks permission for the building to be occupied as an independent residential unit which may be rented, whilst remaining within the same ownership as the main dwelling.

No operational development is proposed. The building already exists, has already been converted, and already contains the facilities associated with day-to-day residential occupation. The application therefore concerns the planning status and occupation of the building, rather than its physical form.

This is an important distinction. The built form, scale, massing, design and visual presence of the development have already been assessed by the Local Planning Authority and found to be acceptable in the context of the site and surrounding area when permission 220544 was granted. The present application does not seek to revisit or intensify that built form. Instead, it seeks a pragmatic and sustainable reuse of existing accommodation.

2. Pre-Application Advice and Procedural Position

Pre-application advice was sought from Reading Borough Council under reference PL/25/1785 in relation to a proposal to vary Condition 4 of permission 220544 to allow the building to be occupied as a self-contained dwelling that may be let separately from, but not sold separately to, 130 Westwood Road.

The Council's response dated 27 January 2026 advised that this could not be dealt with by way of a Section 73 application because the original permission related to ancillary accommodation, whereas the proposed occupation would amount to use as a separate dwelling. The officer advised that, procedurally, a new planning application would be required, and that the converted garage would need to be assessed as a standalone dwelling.

This application has therefore been prepared as a full planning application in accordance with that advice.

The pre-application response also indicated that the Council would be likely to consider matters including:

- the character of the area,
- the layout of the site,
- the amenity of future occupiers,
- the privacy of existing occupiers,
- additional bin storage requirements, and
- car parking demand.

This statement addresses each of those matters in turn.

3. Site and Surroundings

130 Westwood Road is a residential property within an established suburban part of Tilehurst. The surrounding area is characterised by dwellinghouses set within individual plots, with a clear and longstanding residential character.

The site comprises the principal dwellinghouse known as 130 Westwood Road together with its residential curtilage and a detached outbuilding positioned separately from the main house. That detached building was formerly a garage and has since been converted, pursuant to planning permission 220544, into habitable accommodation.

The building is physically detached from the main dwelling and, by reason of its layout and positioning, has a clear degree of separation from the principal house. It is this physical relationship that originally made it suitable for ancillary family occupation and which now makes it capable of being occupied independently.

The site lies within a sustainable urban area where residential development is the established and prevailing use. Occupiers of the proposed unit would have access to the same local services, shops, facilities and transport opportunities available to existing residents in the area.

4. Relevant Planning History

Application Ref. 220544

Proposal: Conversion of garage to ancillary living accommodation

Decision: Approved 24 June 2022

The decision notice records that permission was granted for the conversion of the garage to ancillary living accommodation. Condition 4 states:

“The extension and conversion of the building hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling known as 130 Westwood Road...”

The reason given for the condition was tied to the terms of the application and the need to ensure that separate occupation of the extended building could not take place, having regard to the amenities and living conditions of 130 Westwood Road and neighbouring residential properties and the character of the locality.

The pre-application response further confirms that the original assessment considered the proposal acceptable under Policies CC7, CC8 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Council’s House Extensions Design Guide.

5. The Existing Building and Proposed Development

The application building has already been converted and now provides self-contained accommodation, including:

- independent access,
- living space,
- kitchen facilities, and
- bathroom facilities.

It was occupied by the owner's daughter and has therefore already functioned as genuine day-to-day residential accommodation.

The current application does not propose:

- any increase in footprint,
- any increase in height,
- any new windows or doors,
- any external alterations of significance,
- any subdivision of the wider site by way of sale.

The proposal is therefore simply for the lawful occupation of the existing building as an independent dwelling that may be rented.

The applicant confirms there is no intention to sell the building separately from the main dwelling. The building will remain within the same ownership as 130 Westwood Road.

Should the Local Planning Authority consider it necessary, the applicant would be willing to accept an appropriately worded condition preventing separate disposal of the building from the main dwelling. This is capable of addressing any concern that the proposal might otherwise lead to an undesirable subdivision of the plot.

6. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework supports sustainable development, efficient use of land, and the delivery of homes in appropriate locations. In broad terms, national policy supports:

- making effective use of land,
- reusing existing buildings where appropriate, and
- boosting the supply of homes.

These objectives are directly relevant here. This proposal would not involve sprawl,

encroachment into open land, or an incongruous new built form. Instead, it would regularise and optimise the use of a building that already exists and already provides residential accommodation.

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

The pre-application letter identifies the key local policy context as including Policies CC7, CC8 and H9.

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

This policy is concerned with good design and positive response to local character. The proposal involves no meaningful change to the external appearance of the building. The visual effect of the development is therefore exactly as previously assessed and approved.

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

This policy requires development to protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers. This is a key consideration in the current application and is addressed in detail below. Policy H9 – House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation.

The pre-app letter quotes the part of Policy H9 stating that ancillary accommodation is acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately.

That policy wording explains why the original proposal was conditioned as ancillary accommodation. However, the present application is not seeking consent for ancillary accommodation under H9. It is instead a full planning application for use of the existing building as a separate dwelling. The proper question is therefore not whether the building meets the policy test for an annexe, but whether its occupation as a small dwelling would cause identifiable planning harm.

That is a materially different planning exercise.

Affordable Housing

The application proposes the change of use of an existing ancillary residential building to a single self-contained dwelling within the curtilage of 130 Westwood Road. As set out within this statement, the proposal does not involve any new build development, increase in footprint, or subdivision of land, but rather the reuse of an existing structure for residential purposes.

Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) requires the provision of affordable housing on residential developments above defined thresholds. For developments of fewer than 10 dwellings, affordable housing contributions are not normally required unless the

site area exceeds 0.5 hectares or specific circumstances apply.

In this case, the proposal comprises:

- The creation of one additional dwelling only, and
- A development well below the policy threshold for affordable housing provision.

Accordingly, the scheme does not trigger a requirement for on-site affordable housing provision or a financial contribution.

Furthermore, the nature of the proposal is materially relevant. The application relates to:

- The reuse of an existing building,
- A form of small-scale intensification within an established residential curtilage, and
- A development that does not create a new planning unit through subdivision or new build construction.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports the efficient use of land and the optimisation of existing buildings to deliver additional housing supply. In this context, the proposal makes a modest but positive contribution to housing delivery without giving rise to the scale of development that would justify affordable housing obligations.

It is also relevant that:

- The building has already been implemented and used for residential purposes in an ancillary capacity, and
- The proposal simply regularises its occupation as an independent dwelling.

On this basis, seeking affordable housing provision would neither be proportionate nor consistent with the policy framework.

7. Principle of Development

The principle of using the building for residential occupation has already been accepted. The only distinction between the previously approved use and the use now proposed is the nature of the relationship between the unit and the main house.

That distinction is important, but it does not alter the fact that:

- the site is in a residential area,
- the building already exists,
- the building has already been converted to habitable accommodation, and
- the use remains residential in character.
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The proposal therefore does not introduce a wholly new or alien land use. Rather, it seeks a modest intensification within an established residential context.

The unit would make a small but worthwhile contribution to housing supply through reuse of an existing building in a sustainable location. The planning system should generally look favourably on such proposals where they do not give rise to unacceptable impacts.

8. Character of the Area

The pre-application response indicates that the Council may have concerns regarding the character of the area if the building is used as a separate dwelling.

With respect, any such concern must be grounded in the actual physical and visual consequences of the proposal. Here, there are none of substance.

The character of the area is defined by residential use and domestic built form. The proposal would not change the appearance of the site, would not create an incongruous extension, and would not alter the street scene. There is no new building proposed and no visual manifestation by which the site would appear materially different from the approved and implemented development.

In practical terms, the use of the building by a family member for day-to-day living and the use of the building by a tenant for day-to-day living are not fundamentally different in visual character. Both involve ordinary residential occupation. The comings and goings associated with a single small unit would remain domestic in nature and scale.

The proposal would therefore preserve the prevailing residential character of the area.

9. Layout of the Site and Relationship to the Main Dwelling

The pre-app letter suggests the Council may have concerns regarding the layout of the site. The layout needs to be considered as it actually exists, not as a theoretical objection to any detached residential accommodation within a curtilage. The building is already physically separate from the main house and already contains the facilities needed for independent occupation. It is not a bedroom extension or a physically dependent wing of the main house. It is a detached building that has already been adapted for living purposes.

That physical arrangement is precisely why the proposal is workable.

The relationship between the building and the main dwelling does not give rise to a cramped or confused form of development. The building already exists as part of the site's established arrangement. There is no new insertion into the plot and no erosion of the established built pattern through additional construction.

The fact that the building is detached and self-contained should not, in itself, count against the proposal. Rather, it demonstrates that the occupation sought can occur without the awkwardness that may arise where a unit is overly dependent on shared internal

arrangements or where future occupants would have poor practical separation.

The applicant's position that the building will remain within the same ownership as the main dwelling also materially reduces concern about harmful subdivision. The proposal is therefore best understood as the use of an existing detached residential outbuilding as a modest independent dwelling within an established residential curtilage, not as an attempt to create a wholly severed and unrelated backland plot.

10. Amenity of Existing Occupiers

The pre-application response refers to concerns about privacy of existing occupiers and the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Those concerns must be assessed against the physical reality that the building has already been approved and implemented.

There would be no new overlooking because no new openings are proposed.

There would be no additional overshadowing because no increase in scale or height is proposed.

There would be no additional overbearing effect because the built form remains unchanged. The key remaining question is whether occupation by an independent tenant, rather than a family member, would lead to a materially greater level of activity harmful to the occupiers of the main dwelling or neighbours.

In this case, the answer is no, or at least not to any degree that would justify refusal. The occupation of a single small residential unit generates domestic activity of a familiar and generally low-level kind: coming and going, day-to-day living, and ordinary household use. Such activity is not unusual or incompatible in a suburban residential setting.

Any use of the building for ancillary accommodation would itself involve comings and goings, use of outdoor space, visitors and day-to-day domestic living. The difference between ancillary occupation by a relative and independent occupation by a tenant is therefore one of planning status, not one that necessarily translates into material harm in amenity terms.

Accordingly, there is no sound basis to conclude that the proposal would materially harm the living conditions of occupiers of 130 Westwood Road or neighbouring properties.

11. Amenity of Future Occupiers

The pre-application letter suggests the Council may also examine the amenity of future occupiers.

This is a legitimate consideration and the application should make clear that the building provides genuine residential accommodation rather than compromised or poor-quality space.

The building already contains the essential components of independent living:

- a private entrance,
- internal living accommodation,
- kitchen provision, and
- bathroom facilities.

It has already been used for residential occupation, demonstrating its practical functionality. The level of amenity available to future occupiers must be judged on the actual characteristics of the accommodation. The fact that the building has been occupied by a family member does not make the accommodation inherently unacceptable as a dwelling. Rather, it demonstrates that it is capable of providing real living accommodation. Future occupiers would have the benefit of a small self-contained unit in an established residential environment. The application does not seek to force an unsuitable or makeshift arrangement into use; it seeks to regularise the occupation of an already completed residential space.

Provided the submitted plans confirm an acceptable internal arrangement and reasonable outlook, there is no reason in principle why the building should not provide satisfactory living conditions.

12. Privacy and Functional Relationship

It may be suggested that use as a separate dwelling would compromise the privacy of the main dwelling because both buildings sit within the same wider site. However, this concern should not be overstated.

Residential properties routinely exist in close relationship with one another in suburban settings. The key issue is whether the arrangement results in unacceptable overlooking, mutual disturbance or a poor sense of enclosure. Here, those impacts do not newly arise from this application because the physical arrangement is already established.

The applicant's confirmation that the building will remain in the same ownership and will not be separately sold is also relevant. It means that the application is not seeking the creation of a severed plot with wholly competing and artificial boundaries. The site can continue to operate as a coherent residential holding, even if the detached building is rented separately.

That approach significantly reduces the force of any objection based on awkward plot subdivision.

13. Parking Demand

The site benefits from existing vehicular access and off-street parking provision, as illustrated on the Proposed Site Plan (Drawing 9119-110 Rev 01).

Access to the site is taken via existing dropped kerbs from Westwood Road, providing established vehicular access points that currently serve the property. The site already accommodates two off-street parking spaces, positioned within the frontage of the site and accessed directly from the highway.

The proposal does not introduce any alterations to the access arrangements or the layout of the parking area. The existing parking provision will remain in place and will continue to serve the site.

Given the modest scale of the proposed dwelling, which comprises a small one-bedroom unit with a total internal area of approximately 33.5m², the level of parking provision available at the site is considered appropriate. The existing parking spaces are capable of accommodating the parking demand associated with both the main dwelling and the proposed unit.

It is also relevant that the building has previously been used for residential occupation by a family member of the main dwelling. The site has therefore already functioned with a similar level of residential activity without giving rise to parking or highway safety concerns.

Accordingly, the proposal would not result in unacceptable pressure on on-street parking or create adverse impacts on highway safety. The existing access and parking arrangements are considered sufficient to accommodate the modest increase in residential occupation associated with the proposed development

14. Bin Storage

Provision for refuse and recycling storage has been incorporated within the site and is shown on the Proposed Site Plan (Drawing 9119-110 Rev 01).

A dedicated bin storage area is located adjacent to the proposed dwelling, positioned close to the site boundary and within convenient access of the existing driveway and highway. This location enables bins to be stored discreetly within the site while also allowing straightforward collection arrangements.

The bin storage area is situated so that:

- it remains within the curtilage of the site,
- it does not adversely affect the appearance of the development, and
- bins can be easily presented for collection at the site frontage without requiring

excessive movement through private garden areas.

Given that the proposal relates to a single small residential unit, the additional waste generation associated with the development will be limited and typical of a small dwelling. The dedicated storage area shown on the site plan provides sufficient space for the required refuse and recycling containers in accordance with normal residential waste arrangements. The proposal therefore provides an appropriate and practical refuse storage solution that would not result in harm to visual amenity or the functioning of the site.

15. No Separate Sale and Willingness to Accept Control

The applicant confirms that there is no intention to subdivide the site or dispose of the building separately from 130 Westwood Road. The purpose of the application is simply to allow the existing accommodation to be occupied independently through rental following the departure of the owner's daughter.

The building will remain within the same ownership and control as the main dwelling. If the Local Planning Authority considers it necessary, the applicant would be willing to accept an appropriate planning condition preventing separate sale of the building from the main dwelling.

This is an important point because it addresses a likely underlying concern: namely, that approval would facilitate an undesirable severance of the site into two unrelated plots. That is not what is proposed.

Instead, the application seeks a practical and sustainable form of occupation while maintaining a continuing ownership link between the two buildings.

16. No Material Physical Change and Limited Additional Impact

A central consideration in the planning balance is that the application proposes no new operational development.

The Council has already accepted the physical presence, scale and design of the building through permission 220544. The present proposal does not reopen those built-form impacts.

That matters because many of the usual concerns associated with creation of an additional dwelling — overdevelopment, visual intrusion, loss of garden land through new built form, overbearing mass, and design incongruity — simply do not arise here.

The proposal is therefore materially less harmful than many applications for new dwellings in residential gardens because the building is already present and already converted.

The principal issue is occupancy status, and on that point the impacts are modest and manageable.

17. Sustainability and Efficient Use of Existing Buildings

The proposal represents a sustainable form of development. It makes use of an existing building in an urban residential location, close to services and facilities, without requiring demolition, substantial rebuilding, or new land take.

That is inherently efficient.

It would also avoid the under-use of an already converted residential building. Restricting the building indefinitely to ancillary occupation when that purpose has fallen away would risk leaving viable accommodation underutilised for no compelling planning benefit.

The planning system should not resist efficient reuse of existing residential accommodation unless there is clear and demonstrable harm. In this case, such harm has not been identified.

18. Planning Balance

The planning balance weighs clearly in favour of the proposal.
In support of the application:

- the building already exists and has already been converted to habitable accommodation;
- the site is in an established residential area;
- the use remains residential in character;
- no harmful physical alterations are proposed;
- there is no meaningful visual impact;
- impacts on neighbouring amenity are limited;
- the building is capable of providing genuine living accommodation;
- the proposal makes efficient use of an existing building; and
- the applicant is willing to accept control preventing separate sale.

Against the proposal, the pre-application response identifies concerns that may be raised relating to character, layout, privacy, bins and parking. However, on proper examination these concerns are either not substantiated by the physical reality of the site or are matters capable of practical resolution.

The proposal is modest, contained, and materially different from constructing a brand new dwelling within the curtilage. It should be judged accordingly.

19. Conclusion

This full planning application seeks permission for the change of use of an existing ancillary residential building to a self-contained dwelling at 130 Westwood Road, Tilehurst.

The building was approved and converted under planning permission 220544 for ancillary living accommodation and has been used for residential purposes by the owner's daughter.

That family need has now ceased, and the application seeks a sensible and sustainable ongoing use for the accommodation.

The proposal does not involve new building works. It would not alter the visual character of the site or the surrounding area. It would not introduce material harm to neighbouring amenity. Any concerns regarding parking, refuse or control over separate sale are limited in scale and capable of being addressed appropriately.

The proposal therefore represents a proportionate and sustainable form of residential development through reuse of an existing building in a residential location. Planning permission should accordingly be granted.