

Planning Statement

136 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6QJ

Amalgamation of Basement Flat with Main Dwelling

Applicant: Mr Lawrence Bird

Date: April 2026

Application Type: Full Planning Application

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the amalgamation of a self-contained basement flat with the main dwelling above at 136 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6QJ. The proposal seeks to reinstate the property as a single family dwelling, as it was historically before being subdivided by a previous owner.

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a two-storey residential property with a basement level, situated on Galsworthy Drive in a predominantly residential area of Caversham. The property currently operates as two separate dwellings: the main dwelling occupying the ground floor and above, and a self-contained one-bedroom basement flat consisting of a living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. The basement flat has its own external entrance accessed from the rear garden. The remainder of the site consists of a residential garden with trees and hedging.

3. Background and Justification

The basement was historically part of the main dwelling but was subdivided by a previous owner through the removal of the internal staircase. The two properties share hot water, gas and mains water supplies but have separately metered electricity. The shared services mean the basement flat does not function as a fully independent dwelling and is reliant on the main property for essential utilities.

The terms of the applicants' mortgage do not permit the basement flat to operate as a separate dwelling, and the amalgamation of the two properties was agreed as a condition of purchasing the property. The current tenants of the basement flat will be vacating on 9 May 2026 following the natural end of their tenancy, after which the flat will no longer be separately occupied.

We intend to restore the property to its original use as a single family dwelling. The proposal therefore represents the reinstatement of the historic arrangement rather than a novel change to the property.

4. Proposed Works

The works are entirely internal and comprise: reinstatement of the internal staircase in its original position to reconnect the basement with the ground floor; removal of the kitchen units from the basement; and reintegration of the separately metered electricity supply. The hot water, gas, and mains water supplies are already shared between the two properties and require no alteration. No external alterations are proposed. The existing external door to the basement, accessed from the garden, will be retained.

5. Planning Policy Context

The proposal results in the net loss of one residential unit, reducing the site from two dwellings to one. The applicants acknowledge that the loss of housing stock is a material consideration. However, the following factors are considered to provide sufficient justification:

The basement flat is not a fully independent dwelling, sharing hot water, gas and mains water supplies with the main property. It does not function as a self-sustaining residential unit.

The property was historically a single dwelling and the proposal reinstates the original arrangement, reversing an unauthorised or informal subdivision.

The applicants' mortgage conditions prohibit the continued operation of the basement as a separate dwelling. Maintaining two separate units is not a viable option.

The works are entirely internal with no external alterations, no impact on the street scene, no loss of amenity to neighbouring properties, and no impact on trees, biodiversity, or drainage.

6. Impact Assessment

The proposal has no external impacts. There are no changes to the building footprint, roof, external elevations, or site layout. No trees or

hedges will be affected. There is no change to vehicular or pedestrian access, parking provision, or surface water drainage arrangements. The existing waste storage and collection arrangements will continue unchanged, with demand reduced from two households to one.

The development does not impact any onsite habitat and qualifies for exemption from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements under the de minimis threshold set out in Section 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

7. Conclusion

The proposal seeks to reinstate the property at 136 Galsworthy Drive to its original use as a single family dwelling through entirely internal works. The amalgamation is justified by the property's history, the shared services arrangement, and the mortgage conditions which require the two properties to operate as one. The works will have no external impact on the character of the area, neighbouring amenity, or the environment. The applicants respectfully request that planning permission be granted.