

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church

App Ref: PL/26/0001 Householder planning permission

Address: 5 SYCAMORE ROAD, READING, RG2 7LX

Proposal: Retrospective single storey detached residential annexe

Applicant: Mr Bashir Ahmed

Received date: 2 January 2026

Target Decision date: 26 March 2026

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a semi-detached dwelling located on the eastern side of Sycamore Road, Reading. The application site abuts the rear gardens of properties along Cressingham Road, and Hawthorn Gardens.

The main property has had a substantial rear extension measuring 7m in depth, and being the full width of the host dwelling.

The property includes a separate gate access to the rear garden via the side of the property.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks retrospective permission for the construction of a residential annexe to the rear of the site. The outbuilding as constructed includes a main living/sleeping area, a fully fitted kitchen, and bathroom. The outbuilding measures 7m x 7m, and is 2.7m tall, with windows on the front and rear. The applicant reports that the outbuilding is to support a multi-generational household.

The following plan and documents were submitted with the application:

Application form

CIL form (Revised 10 February 2026)

Biodiversity Statement

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 2 January 2026

Drawing No:A-L-001 – Rev A – Proposed Plan and Elevations

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 29 January 2026

Drawing No:A-L-001 – Rev B – Proposed Plan and Elevations

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 10 February 2026

3. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the front of the site, and a site notice was placed in the letterboxes of adjoining properties (3 and 7 Sycamore, and 1 and 2 Hawthorn Gardens). No comments have been received.

4. 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.

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'. 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)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
TR3 (Access Traffic and Highway-related Matters)
TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

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 listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

6. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policy H9 states other household development will be acceptable where it represents the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design. In, ancillary accommodation,

such as granny annexes, will be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately. Policy CC7 seeks to ensure all development maintain and enhance the character of the area in which it is located.

Policy H10 seeks to ensure that dwellings are provided with functional private open space suitable for its needs.

The outbuilding which has been constructed is significant, being ~50m² in floor area. The design, includes a flat roof and large openings to the front. The remaining garden area for the host property would be ~72m². The annexe is constructed in close proximity to the side and rear boundaries (~1m on all sides).

The building has been constructed with the express intent of being used as a primary residence, and the remainder of the original dwelling to be used as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). An application for a HMO license for the main dwelling was made to Reading Borough Council separately (since withdrawn). Notwithstanding that the proposal is currently intended for use as a multi-generational property. The property is capable of being used as an independent dwelling, with all facilities required for separate use, including a separate access by the side of the property. The proposal would introduce an additional dwelling by stealth as described in the supporting text of the Local Plan (paragraph 4.4.76). Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to Policy H9 in this respect.

In terms of the design and appearance, the proposal is a very large building in the rear garden, set off the boundary as little as possible. The plot coverage of the annexe, in tandem with the significant rear extension would be uncharacteristic of the area, and amount to a significant built footprint over the site. The scale of the outbuilding therefore fails to respect the character and appearance of the house.

Policy H10 seeks to ensure that dwellings are provided with suitable amenity space. The guide with policy H10 seeks that the outdoor space be the same as the floorspace for the dwelling it serves. The remaining garden space of 70m² which would be shared by the larger main dwelling and the proposal would be insufficient for the future users contrary to policy H10.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that a development will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy CC8 states development will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

Though close to all neighbouring properties, the development would not be considered to harm the living conditions of neighbours due to boundary treatments.

The proposal would present large openings toward a shared communal open space. Given the separate occupation capable between the properties, this would likely result in the lack of use of the garden space harmful to the amenity of occupants of the main dwelling, and the proposal.

Trees

Policies CC7 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 seeks to protect existing trees. The development is in close proximity to neighbouring trees. Given the retrospective nature of the development, any harm to the neighbouring trees will have regrettably already occurred, and therefore cannot be controlled through condition should approval have been recommended. However, the proposal may result in pressure to prune the trees.

Ecology

Policies H9 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 seeks that development result in no net loss of biodiversity. It is acknowledged that mandatory biodiversity net gain would not apply to this type of development (householder development/retrospective development).

No information has been provided to demonstrate the pre-development biodiversity value on site, and the methodology for offsetting the presumed loss of biodiversity on site. This will form a reason for refusal.

Transport and highways related matters

Policies TR1, TR3, and TR5 seek to ensure development does not have a detrimental impact on highways safety or operation. The proposal does not seek to alter parking arrangements, nor ability for provision of bicycle storage, or waste storage and collection. As such, the proposal is not consider to have a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway.

7. CONCLUSION

Due to the scale, plot coverage, and form of development, including internal layout. The proposal is considered to be capable of separate accommodation, and therefore contrary to, inter alia, policy H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.