

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Norcot Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0010 Householder planning permission

Address: 61 LAWRENCE ROAD, TILEHURST, READING, RG30 6BH

Proposal: Demolition of existing garage and construction of outbuilding

Applicant: Mr Vincent Lim

Received date: 06/01/2026

Target Decision date: 05/03/2026 EOT agreed until the 17/4/2026

Case Officer: Catrin Davies

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application relates to a semi-detached property located on the western side of Lawrence Road. The application site has an existing garage located within the rear garden; the garage is accessible via side access. There is a slight change in site levels and No.61 Lawrence Road is slightly higher than No.59 Lawrence Road to the south.

The house is not listed, nor is it within a conservation area. To the rear of the site lies an area of dense woodland which is allocated as Local Green Open space, Major Landscape Feature (West Reading Wooded Ridgeline) and Area of identified biodiversity interest.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks planning permission for the demolition of existing garage and the construction of an outbuilding incidental to the main dwelling. The outbuilding would be used as a store/study area with bathroom facilities. The proposed outbuilding would have a length of approx. 10m and a width of 4m. The outbuilding would have a height of 3.6m and an eaves height of 2.4 with a pitched roof.

Materials would comprise brickwork and roof tiles to match existing, with upvc windows and doors.

Plans

004 Rev B - Proposed Study/Store Outbuilding Layout & Roof Plan (amended) received 6th Mar 2026

004 Rev B - Proposed elevations (amended) received 6th Mar 2026

001- Location Plan Rev A (amended) received 9th of April 2026

Planning History

No relevant planning history

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

Ecology

The application site is an outbuilding formerly used as a garage within the curtilage of 61 Lawrence Road. It is proposed to remove this building and replace it with a larger building comprising storage, study and shower room/toilet.

The site is located adjacent to woodland associated with Lousehill Copse Local Wildlife Site and provides optimal habitat for foraging and commuting bats. Photos from the "Supporting Statement" submitted show that there are numerous potential bat roosting features on the building and these will be lost when the building is demolished. As such, the proposed works may affect roosting bats. A bat survey report prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist will therefore be required before the application can be determined. Further details are provided below..

Legislation

All species of bats receive protection under UK law and it is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (The Habitat Regulations), deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (the SNCO - Natural England in England).

Planning policy

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (this document was not revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted."

Survey requirements

A presence / absence bat survey is normally undertaken in two stages, firstly a preliminary roost assessment, whereby the inside and outside of the building is surveyed for bats and signs of bats. This survey can be undertaken at any time of year.

If bats are found or features within the building have the potential to support roosting bats and these will be affected by the proposals, further dusk emergence and or pre-dawn re-entry surveys during the bat active season (i.e. between May and the end of August/ sub optimally until mid-October) would need to be carried out. The applicant would then need to submit the results of the survey(s) along with any associated mitigation strategy prior to determination of any application.

Surveys should be carried out by suitably experienced ecologists who are a member of a professional organisation such as the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and / or are licensed or accredited by Natural England to survey bats.

Summary

The building may host roosting bats and to confirm whether this is the case, and if so, how bats will be affected by the proposals to convert the loft, a bat survey will need to be carried out. The survey will need to be provided prior to the application being determined.

A bat survey was submitted and the ecologist subsequently commented:

Thanks for sending that over . The bat survey report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, March 2026, ref: R3181_PRA_a 2018) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the garage has low potential to host roosting bats. However the survey also included an investigation of the identified potential bat roosting features and concluded that the building is unlikely to host roosting bats.

As such, since the proposals are unlikely to affect bats or other protected species, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

A site notice was displayed at the application site, and no neighbour letters of representations were received.

4. 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 2024
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)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021

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 submission draft of the Local Plan was submitted on 9th May 2025. 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 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 determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

5. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design and 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. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design. Policy H10 states that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space.

The existing outbuilding is somewhat rundown in appearance and does not currently make a positive contribution to the area. The proposed outbuilding would be in a similar location but larger, and it has been reduced in depth since original submission. However, it would remain single storey with a low eaves height.

Whilst it would have a significant length, the existing garden is deep and there is sufficient space to accommodate the outbuilding without it appearing cramped and without resulting in an overly dominant feature within the garden, and with meaningful visual amenity space remaining. The materials would match those of the host property which is appropriate and the outbuilding would not be visible from the public footpath given the meaningful separation distance to the front boundary. No material harm to the character or appearance of the host property or street scene. There would remain space at the front of the site for car parking following the loss of the garage (which does not currently appear accessible for the parking of cars). In compliance with Policies CC7, H9, and H10.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 states that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space. Policy CC8 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.

As discussed above, albeit the outbuilding would be large, it is considered that meaningful outdoor amenity space would remain to ensure the existing occupiers have sufficient outdoor space in compliance with Policy H10.

The outbuilding would be used as a store and study and proposed to be incidental to the residential use of the main dwelling. Due to the size of the footprint of the outbuilding and en-suite facility, it is considered necessary and appropriate in this instance to condition that the proposed development remains ancillary to the host property.

The proposed outbuilding would be sited approx. 1.25m from the shared boundary with the neighbouring property No.59 Lawrence Road, located to the south of the site. Whilst larger than the existing outbuilding and clearly visible to occupiers of No.59, given the distance, combined with the low eaves height of 2.4m and that the roof would be pitched away to minimise the impact, no material loss of amenity is considered to arise in terms of overbearing effects. Whilst at a slightly elevated level, No.59 has a long rear garden of approx. 50m and as such there is considered to be meaningful spaces remaining within the rear garden which is not adjacent to the outbuilding to ensure amenities are safeguarded. No.59 also has a relatively large outbuilding close to the common boundary, albeit slightly further into the garden, indeed this property appear to have several outbuildings within its garden. The window proposed on the flank elevation facing the boundary with No.59 is proposed to be obscurely glazed. Given its position close to the boundary, and that it is at a slightly elevated level, it is proposed for this to be conditioned as such to soften and reduce any feel of overlooking. For these reasons the proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on No.59.

Regarding No. 63 Lawrence Road the adjoining property located to the north, given the significant separation distance to the common boundary, their amenities are considered to be acceptably safeguarded in terms of privacy and overbearing effects.

In compliance with Policies CC8 and H9 in particular.

Other Matters

RBC Ecology were consulted and originally raised concerns regarding the possible impact on bats following the demolition of the garage. The applicant subsequently submitted a report which concluded that the building is unlikely to host roosting bats. This was confirmed to be acceptable by the Ecologist, with no further concern raised in this respect. In compliance with Policy EN12.

6. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

Time Limit

Materials

Approved Plans

Ancillary

Obscure Glazing