

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1832 Householder planning permission

Address: 34 RICHMOND ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7PR

Proposal: Loft conversion and partial hip-to-gable roof extension; New front entrance porch and rear extensions. (amended)

Applicant: Mr N. Burgess & Ms C. Banks

Received date: 19/12/2025

Target Decision date: 06/03/2026 (EXT)

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a detached bungalow in Caversham Heights. It is located to the west of Albert Road Recreation Ground and lies within the AQMA. The surrounding area is characterised by large detached bungalows and two-storey dwellinghouses. The site benefits from a spacious front garden and a modest rear garden. The property is not listed and is not within a Conservation Area. Permitted development rights have not been removed from the property.



Fig 1: Front view of 34 Richmond Road, taken 22/01/2026

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application is mainly for a new front entrance porch and a single-storey rear extension, as well as a loft conversion (extension) into habitable space, and relevant internal alterations.

The proposed front porch would project from the existing front entrance by approximately 1.36 m in depth. The western wall of the new porch would measure approximately 65.3 cm in depth, as it would be clad onto the side wall of the existing front projection. The proposed width of the porch would be approximately 2.6 m. The proposed eaves height would be the same as the existing, while the overall height would be approximately 3.9 m.

With regard to the proposed single-storey rear extension, it would project from the symmetrical side of the existing rear outrigger, featuring the same footprint at approximately 1.7 m in depth and 3.89 m in width.

The proposed loft conversion would add two gable-roof rear extensions on either side and one flat-roof rear extension in the middle, linking the two gable-roof extensions, including alterations to the existing roof hips. The proposed roof extensions would be partially within the main roof and partially on top of the

existing and proposed ground floor rear extensions and would be slightly lower than the existing ridgeline of the host dwelling. There would be a covered area formed by the proposed flat-roof dormer.

The existing rear conservatory, chimney and side extension would be removed. The proposal would change the existing two-bedroom family house into a four-bedroom family house, with three bedrooms within the new loft extension. The existing garage would also be converted into a utility or boots room, with the garage door replaced with brickwork and a window.

The fenestration of the property would be significantly altered accordingly. Based on the proposed elevations, the loft conversion's walls would be timber frame with a cladding finish; doors and windows would be off-white painted joinery; pitched-roof tiles would match those of the existing house; and the flat roof would be an EPDM membrane. The proposed front porch would feature materials matching those of the existing ground floor of the main house.

Plans/documents considered:

- Drawing No. 4010-200-A-Block and Location Plans, dated 11/2025 and received 19/12/2025.
- Drawing No. 4010-202-A-First Floor and Roof Plans, dated 11/2025 and received 19/12/2025.
- ~~Drawing No. 4010-203-A-Proposed Elevations, dated 14/08/2025, received 19/12/2025.~~
- Drawing No. 4010-102-Existing Ground Floor Plan, dated 11/2025 and received 19/12/2025.
- Drawing No. 4010-103-Existing Elevations, dated 11/2025 and received 19/12/2025.
- 4010-34 Richmond Road-RBC Sustainability Statement, prepared by STL, dated 12/2025, received 19/12/2025.
- Bat Survey Report, prepared by NK Musgrave & Associates Ltd, dated 14/08/2025, received 19/12/2025.

Following the communication regarding trees and materials, revised plans were submitted as follows:

- Drawing No. 4010-101-A-Existing Site, dated and received 16/02/2026.
- Drawing No. 4010-201-D-Site and GF (including TPP), dated and received 16/02/2026.
- Drawing No. 4010-203-A-Proposed Elevations, dated and received 26/12/2025.



Figures 2-6: Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Planning history:

None.

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Transport Development Control – No objection.

The proposed works do not change the existing parking or access arrangements and do not impact the Highway.

- RBC Ecology Consultations – No objection.

The bat survey report (NKM, August 2025) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and conclude that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. There are therefore no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

- Site Notice: A site notice was displayed near the application site. The 21-day consultation period was from 13 January 2026 to 2 February 2026. No letters of representation have been received.



Fig 7: Site Notice photo

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.

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 (NPPF)

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (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 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’.

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 EN14 also requires that new development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change.

The proposed front porch with a gable roof would be the smallest front projection on the frontage of the application site and is considered to be in proportion with the existing dwellinghouse. The proposed single-storey rear extension would be symmetrical to the existing rear outrigger, featuring the same projection depth. Given its symmetrical design and small scale, with a depth of approximately 1.7 m, it is not considered to have any harmful impact on the character of the host dwelling. The proposal would also remove the chimney and widen the roof.

Following the roof alterations and the single-storey rear extension at ground-floor level, the proposal would introduce two gable-roof extensions above the ground-floor outrigger and a central flat-roof element to the rear of the main roof. Together, these elements would visually form an upper-floor extension when viewed from the rear elevation. Although the combined roof extension is relatively large in scale compared with the main roof of the host dwelling, the redesigned roof form—comprising two small symmetrical gable roofs with a central flat-roof section set lower and recessed from their rear elevation—helps to mitigate the harm of its overall scale. The resulting design is, therefore, considered complementary to the main roof and the character of the host dwelling, and represents the maximum level of development acceptable on this property. The arrangement of the new windows and floor-to-ceiling doors on the rear elevation is also considered a positive design feature that further supports the proposal's acceptability in terms of character and appearance.

Although the fenestration of the entire property would be significantly altered as a result of the proposal, the size, scale, placement and colour of the new windows and doors—as well as the proposed wall and roof-tile materials—are considered appropriate and complementary to the host dwelling.

The proposal includes demolition of the existing rear conservatory and the single-storey side extension, while retaining all trees in the front and rear gardens. This could enhance the outlook of the application site while softening the visual impact of the roof extension.

Therefore, the proposal overall is not considered to cause significant harm to the host dwelling in terms of character and appearance. The main element of the proposed roof development would be largely invisible from the street; as such, the proposal would have only a limited impact on the streetscene.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 seeks to ensure that the amenity of gardens and other outdoor areas are not compromised. 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. Policy H9 also requires that ancillary accommodation will only be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately.

The introduction of the proposed first-floor rear extension would reduce the back-to-back distance between the application site and No. 15 Woburn Close compared with the existing situation. The window arrangement on the rear elevation would also change. However, the resulting back-to-back distance would be approximately 20 m upon completion of the proposal, which aligns with the guidance set out in the Design Guide to House Extensions 2021. In addition, there is a line of tall trees at the bottom of the rear garden, all of which would be retained and would effectively mitigate overlooking between the two properties.

With regard to the adjoining properties on either side—No. 32 and No. 36 Richmond Road—although two rooflights are proposed within each gable-roof extension, these are not considered to give rise to any privacy concerns. The rooflights would primarily serve to provide natural light to the ensuite and family bathroom.

There are no identified risks in terms of loss of light or an overbearing impact on neighbouring properties, given that the proposal is detached in nature and benefits from adequate separation distances. Furthermore, the proposed development is largely at first-floor level and would not result in any significant change to the existing spatial relationship between No. 32, No. 36 Richmond Road, and No. 15 Woburn Close.

The property would become a four-bed family house upon completion of the proposal. The remaining part of the rear garden is modest. Therefore, to secure the living conditions of existing and future residents at the application site and neighbouring properties, conditions removing permitted development rights would be imposed.

Other matters – Highway and Ecology

Highway and Ecology teams have confirmed there are no objections regarding this proposal. There are trees within the curtilage of the application site; however, the proposed development would not fall within their root protection areas. As such, no harmful impacts on trees have been identified. To prevent any potential risks arising from construction activities, protective scaffold-frame fencing would be erected prior to the commencement of development and retained in place until all works are completed.

Overall, the proposal would increase the living space for existing and future residents. Based on the reasons outlined above, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies CC7, CC8, H9, H10 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

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

Approve with conditions

Time Limit

Approved Plans

Materials (As Specified)

PD Right Removed

No New Openings