

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames ward

App Ref: PL/26/0252 Full planning permission

Address: 2 MILL GREEN, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 8EX

Proposal: Retrospective single storey rear extension and change of use to small HMO

Applicant: MR RAJIV KHANNA

Received date: 05/01/2026

Target Decision date: 06/05/2026

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwarska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a two-storey semi-detached dwelling on the corner of Mill Green and Mill Road. The property is locally listed, and the listing description reads as follows:

This is an exceptional and rare example of unaltered 1930s suburban architecture in the 'moderne' style. Two-storey, semi-detached house constructed from facing red brick under a hipped clay tile roof. The house remains unaltered externally and preserves all of its original features. The semi-detached design positions the main entrance at the far ends of the front elevation, with a distinctive Art Deco-inspired curving bay featuring sun trap windows. The first-floor window design and timber casement windows are defined by strong horizontal divisions, enhancing the style, while the entrance door follows a standard form up to the 1930s, with the upper third glazed and the lower section panelled. Its tall, hipped roof, a plain chimney, and the only Edwardian detail of a continuous porch that extends over the bay, supported by a corner timber post, characterise other original elements of the 1930s house.

The spacious green garden, marked by a low brick wall, creates an attractive setting for the main building and constitutes the detached garage as an impact of the automotive industry. The garage design is also thoughtfully designed, matching the care and attention given to the main house. It features period-appropriate details: metal casement windows, a metal lift-up garage door, concrete lintels, and a flat roof. As such, the design of 2 Mill Green, enhanced by Art Deco elements, distinctive details, and a fine setting, represents the recognised architectural taste of twentieth-century British culture.

The site is not located in a conservation area. The site is located opposite the Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature.



Figure 1 Street view images of the site in 2022, taken from Google Maps.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought retrospectively for a single storey rear extension and the change of use of the property to a small HMO (C4 use class). The application has been submitted as a result of an ongoing

Planning Enforcement investigation. The proposed plans were found to be incorrect once the site visit was conducted, as the ground-floor front room labelled on the plans as “living room” is an additional bedroom, making this a 5-bedroom HMO. The dividing wall between the first-floor front bedrooms has also been relocated to allow one of the bedrooms to meet the minimum space standards for adult occupation, and the dividing wall cuts across one of the existing windows. All external fenestration and timbers, and the entirety of the garage have been painted in grey.



Figure 2 Images of the exterior of the property, taken by RBC Planning Officer on 31 March 2026.

2.1. Information submitted:

Design & Access Statement

HMO Management Plan

PL/SAK/1 Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations, Location and Block Plan

Received 24 February 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Transport Development Control – Clarification required regarding parking layout and bin and cycle storage areas.
- Environmental Protection – No comments to make.
- Conservation Officer – Objection.

Site notices were displayed on Mill Road and Mill Green, and a total of 11 comments were received on the application of which all objected to the proposal, although it is noted that some comments received are duplicates. Concerns were raised as follows:

- Harm to the street scene especially due to the prominent positioning of the property on the junction.
- The property is locally listed and the features that prompted the listing are being lost/damaged.
- The quality of the work is poor and damaging to the character of the site and area.
- Existing anti-social behaviour issues since conversion of the property to HMO.
- The external works do not match the original façade.
- Garden now resembles a construction yard.
- Increased traffic affects already poor condition roads, parking pressures.

- Vehicles associated with the property park on pavements and obstruct pedestrian access, damage the pavement surface and limit visibility on the junction.
- No party wall agreement with adjoining property.
- Part of the garden wall was knocked through to allow the tenants to drive over the pavement, bump down the kerb and into the road.
- Poor waste management on site, pest concerns.

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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

H9: HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide to House Extensions 2021

Revised Parking Standards and Design 2011

Residential Conversions 2023

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 was submitted to the Secretary of State on 9th 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 remain 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'.

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.

6. APPRAISAL

6.1. Land use matters

The previous use of the application site was a single-occupancy, C3 use class dwelling, which has been converted to a 5-bedroom small HMO (Class C4) under Class L, Part 3, Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 as amended. The local listing of the property does not restrict the Permitted Development rights afforded to the site. However, as planning permission has been sought retrospectively for the change of use, the proposal has been assessed against Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) and the Residential Conversions SPD.

Policy H8 states “Proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing.” Appendix 4 of the Residential Conversions SPD contains the checklist for the full assessment of applications for residential conversions.

While the conversion itself falls under permitted development and is, therefore, a significant material consideration in the assessment of the proposal, there are several considerations under local policy which make the conversion unacceptable, particularly in relation to design. These are discussed in the next section.

6.2. Design and heritage implications

Policy CC7 requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the local character. Policy EN4 states *“Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.”*

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF states *“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”*

Several external and internal alterations have been made to the property. Internally, the original wall between the front two bedrooms on the first floor has been relocated to make one of the bedrooms larger (presumably to meet minimum space standards for adult occupation) and the wall cuts through the large front elevation window (see indication on the photo below). The living room has been converted into an additional bedroom and there is no communal space within the property apart from the kitchen.



Externally, a single storey rear extension measuring 4m in depth and 2.85m in height across the width of the rear elevation has been constructed with a render finish. The rear elevation of the dwelling has also been rendered, and all external fenestration, timbers and the entirety of the garage have been painted in grey. The quality of the workmanship and painting is very poor.

The external character and appearance of the property were the most attractive features which contributed to the significance of this locally listed property. The works which have been carried out obscure and diminish these features, leading to a deterioration of character and significance of the property. The local listing considers the house, the "thoughtfully designed" garage, and the "spacious green garden" as a single integrated composition. The relationship between these three elements is what constitutes the site's value. The construction of the rear extension is, therefore, detrimental to the composition of the site. The loss of the green space around the dwelling which made up the garden, and the boundary treatment, for facilitating additional vehicular access, are also detrimental to the character of the site and the setting of the dwelling. The change in character and appearance of the site is quite stark.

The site boundary treatment (low-brick wall) was removed to facilitate additional parking during the construction process (see image below).



The boundary wall has not been reinstated. Checklist item 16 states *"Removal of boundary treatment to accommodate parking or access to parking will not be permitted where it makes a valuable contribution to the character of the area."*

There are no public benefits in the provision of one small HMO identified which would outweigh the harm identified to the non-designated heritage asset. The proposal is, therefore, not acceptable in design and heritage terms and forms a reason for refusal.

6.3. Residential amenity

Policy CC8 requires all development to have no detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties nor future occupants of new developments. Policy H10 requires the provision of private or communal outdoor amenity space. The Residential Conversions SPD includes detail in checklist items 4, 7-13, which relate to residential amenity.

There are little risks to amenity for neighbouring residents identified. Irrespective of the design concerns, the internal arrangement of rooms and the number of occupants do not raise any concerns relating to noise for the adjoining neighbour nor the occupants of the site. While the lack of communal space is not considered ideal, there are no requirements for the provision of a communal room in a small HMO conversion under permitted development rights. The rear extension does not create any new views and therefore there are no risks of loss of privacy or overlooking. While the outdoor amenity space has been deteriorated, it is still accessible to occupants. As such, there are no amenity concerns to raise.

6.4. Transport and refuse

Policy TR5 requires development to provide car and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities. The Residential Conversions SPD includes detail in checklist items 14-19 which relate to transport and refuse.

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. Typically, this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. The Council's Parking SPD seeks a general parking standard for HMOs at 0.25 spaces per lettable room. This would equate to 1.25, rounded up to 2, on-site parking spaces for this development, which are provided on the existing driveway and, therefore, meets relevant parking standards. Had the scheme been otherwise acceptable a condition would have been recommended to limit occupants' eligibility for parking permits to prevent additional pressure for on-street parking. Occupants will not be eligible for parking permits in this location to prevent additional pressure for on street parking.

The existing garage can be used for secure covered cycle storage. The number of refuse bins is appropriate to the number of occupants and there is adequate space on site for storage similar to other dwellings in the local area. There are no concerns to raise with regards to cycle or refuse storage.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposal has resulted in significant harm to the character and setting of a locally listed building through its unsympathetic and poor-quality external alterations and extensions, and the deterioration of the green space in its setting. The public benefits which arise from the provision of one small HMO do not outweigh the harm identified.

8. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

Due to the following reasons:

1. The proposal due to its unacceptable design in the form of poor quality and unsympathetic external painting and rendering, and extension, and the contrived internal layout results in significant harm to the character and setting of a locally listed building. The rear extension deteriorates the harmony

and composition of the site prior to the works which have been carried out, and the introduction of gravel to the side/rear garden and removal of the boundary treatment to facilitate additional parking spaces has deteriorated the green space which positively contributed to the setting of the locally listed building, and now results in visual harm to the setting and character of the dwelling, contrary to Policies CC7, EN4, EN6 and H8 of the Reading Local Plan (2019), Appendix 4 of the Residential Conversions SPD 2023 and Paragraph 216 of the NPPF 2024.