



DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Emmer Green Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0462 Full planning permission

Address: 136 GALSWORTHY DRIVE, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 6QJ

Proposal: Internal alterations to combine the existing basement flat with the dwelling above to form a single C3 dwellinghouse

Applicant: Mr Lawrence Bird

Received date: 03/04/2026

Target Decision date: 02/06/2026

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site is located on Galsworthy Drive in Caversham. The building is an end of terrace property, with two storeys at the front and three storeys at the rear. It is one of a number of properties of similar style and design on the same side of the road, with dwellings of a different style on the opposite side of the road. The basement level of the application property is currently in use as a separate flat. The application site is not listed, nor is it located within a conservation area. The surrounding area is predominantly residential.

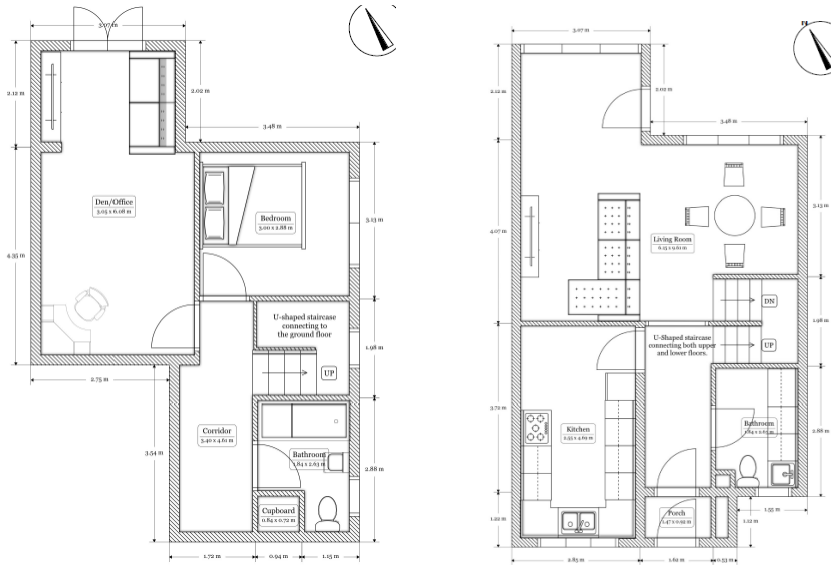
PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the change of use from 1 x two-storey dwellinghouse and 1 x basement flat to 1 single dwellinghouse. The proposal does not involve enlarging the existing building or any external changes.

Existing Basement Floor Plan (left) and Existing Ground Floor Plan (right):



Proposed Basement Floor Plan (left) and Proposed Ground Floor Plan (right):



A site visit was carried out on the 23rd April 2026. The internal layout appears to match accurately with the existing plans provided.

Plans/documents considered:

Location Plan received 03/04/2026

Block Plan received 03/04/2026

Drawing No. 001 – Existing Basement Floor Plan received 03/04/2026

Drawing No. 002 – Existing Ground Floor Plan received 03/04/2026

Drawing No. 003 – Proposed Basement Floor Plan received 23/04/2026

Drawing No. 004 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan received 03/04/2026

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/89/0677 - Conversion of voids below ground floor to living accommodation. WITHDRAWN 12/11/2008

PL/21/0815 - Certificate of Lawfulness for Existing Use as a self-contained basement flat (C3 use) at 136 Galsworthy Drive (amended). WITHDRAWN 03/08/2021

CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the front of the site by the case officer on 23/04/2026.

Letters of representation have been received as follows: **None**

RBC Transport

Local parking standards are set out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the site. In line with the adopted parking standards, two parking spaces must be retained for the residential dwelling.

The proposal will retain the existing driveway parking which provides 2no. off-street parking spaces in accordance with the Council's requirements.

In view of this, there are no transport objections to the proposal.

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.

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

H2 Density and mix

H7 Protecting the Existing Housing Stock

H8 Residential Conversions

H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

SPDs

Residential Conversions SPD (2013)

Revised Car Parking Standards (2011)

APPRAISAL

The key issues are considered to be as follows:

- a) Principle

- b) Residential Amenity
- c) Character and appearance

a) Principle

The proposal is for the conversion of one house and one flat into a single four bed family dwelling. The principle of this change needs to be assessed against Policy H7, which states that *"Planning permission will not be granted for any loss of residential accommodation or land unless there are exceptional circumstances. Planning permission will not be granted for a net loss in the number of residential units or gross floor area."*

The supporting text at paragraph 4.4.56 gives some examples of exceptional circumstances including *"where a loss of a limited amount of general residential would help to meet other key identified needs, for instance for a specific identified need for accommodation for vulnerable groups (see policy H6) or to reinstate a use more appropriate to the significance of a heritage asset, and this should be clearly demonstrated as part of any planning application."* It is considered that whilst the proposal results in the net loss of one residential flat, the conversion results in a number of improvements, which are material to the assessment, and are considered to weigh in its favour in the planning balance and are set out below.

The conversion of the property back to its original use as a single family dwelling ensures a positive contribution to the character of the area, compared to a sub-divided dwelling, and would accord with criteria set out under Policy H8, which requires that conversions do not result in the loss of single family housing nor harm the mixed and sustainable communities. Furthermore, there does not appear to be any available planning history regarding the sub-division.

The thrust of the RBLP policy is the provision of family housing and Policy H2 states that "Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms". The provision of a four bed house, therefore, fulfils this need.

b) Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 states that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.

Reverting the property back into one comprehensive family dwelling reduces the intensification of activity associated with the site, which in turn improves the amenity for adjoining residents. It also reintroduces an improved internal layout with the additional floor space for the occupants of the family dwelling to enjoy. As well as one suitable external garden area.

As just one single family unit it, therefore, improves the quality of the accommodation for occupants and has positive benefits for neighbouring residents.

The proposal does not involve enlarging the existing building or any external changes, therefore, there are no identified risks in relation to overbearing effects, loss of light, or privacy concerns.

It is considered that the conversion of this site into a single family dwelling does not have any detrimental impacts on the parking arrangements on the street.

c) Character and Appearance

Policy CC8 states all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.

The proposal to convert the property back to a single family dwelling does not involve any external changes, and therefore, there are no impacts on the character and appearance of the building. The property would be revert back into one single dwelling, as originally built, and more in keeping with the character of the street.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies and acceptable on that basis.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT