

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames

App Ref: PL/26/0475 Householder planning permission

Address: 5 ST STEPHENS CLOSE, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 8BX

Proposal: Proposed roof extension to increase the height of the existing loft space

Applicant: Mr Dermot Duncan

Received date: 08/04/2026

Target Decision date: 03/06/2026

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of a mid-terraced dwelling, which is three storey in nature at the rear, and two storey in nature at the front. The property is accessed via a public pedestrian pathway which runs along the front of the terrace row. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with Christchurch meadows located to the rear of the site alongside the River Thames. The site falls within Flood Zone 2. The property is not a listed building, nor is it located within a conservation area.

Site visit date: 23/04/2026

Site visit photos:

(front view below)



(rear view below)



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the extension and reconfiguration of the existing roof to form additional habitable space. The materials proposed would match those of the existing.

The proposal also includes relocating the existing AC unit into a timber louvered enclosure on the front elevation of the dwelling.

Existing Elevations (left), Proposed Elevations (right).



Plans/documents considered:

Application Form
Cil Form
Cover Letter
Design and Access Statement
Bat Survey
Flood Risk Assessment
Drawing No. 2602-EX-100 A – Location and Block Plan
Drawing No. 2602-EX-001 – Existing Floor Plans
Drawing No. 2602-EX-002 – Proposed Floor Plans
Drawing No. 2602-EX-120 – Existing Elevations
Drawing No. 2602-GA-120 – Proposed Elevations
Noise Assessment

3. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed on the nearest lamp column at the front of the property by the case officer on 24th April 2026 for a period of 21 days. No letters of representation have been received at the time of writing this report.

Ecology

The application site is a mid-terrace dwelling located in a residential area of Caversham Reading, adjacent to Christchurch Meadows. The proposals include the addition of an infill first floor extension. The bat survey report (Windrush Ecology, March 2026) has been undertaken to the appropriate standard and concludes that the dwelling is unlikely to host roosting bats. As such, since the proposed works are unlikely to affect bats or other protected species, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

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)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

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. The submission version 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’.

6. 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.

In terms of scale and design, the proposed development is considered acceptable. The roof height would be raised to align with the neighbouring terraces either side of the application site, and therefore, the roof height would not be considered excessive in size or out-of-keeping within the context of the area. The materials proposed would match those of the existing terraces to help aid its integration.

Within the surrounding area, rows of similarly styled dwellings do not appear to follow any consistent pattern with regard to the dwellings with the lower-level roofs. The roof heights are varied, and as a result, modifying the roof would not disrupt the overall character or appearance of the host dwelling, neighbouring dwellings, or the wider area.

The proposed application site is set back from the roadside with a public footpath in front and then a row of garages in front of that. The proposed works to the roof are not considered to be significantly harmful to the street scene.

At the rear of the site, the terraced row backs onto a large, grassed area in front of the River Thames. Given the varied clusters of dwellings and roof forms along this section of the Thames, the increase in the roof height is not considered to be visually prominent or harmful to the character of the area.

The relocation of the existing AC unit into a timber louvered enclosure at a lower level on the front elevation of the dwelling is considered to be less harmful to the street screen and surrounding area due to its less prominent location. At present, the AC unit is positioned higher than the existing garage row at the front of the site so it can be seen when driving down The Willows towards the property. The new location would be shielded from the street scene by the existing garages, furthermore, it would be housed in a water-resistant, treated timber louvered enclosure. The plans also illustrate that a new hedge would be planted in front of the enclosure.

Overall, the proposal is not considered to cause significant harm to the character of the existing dwelling or the wider area and therefore complies with policies H9 and CC7.

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.

The upward extension to the roof would not adversely affect neighbouring properties, as it would infill the space between the two adjoining dwellings. Therefore, there are no identified risks with regard to overbearing impacts to loss of light.

One new window would be located in the front elevation of the dwelling at third floor level. However, the outlook it provides would not be significantly different from that of the first floor windows below. It would not directly face neighbouring windows or overlook rear gardens. Therefore, there are no identified risks relating to overlooking or loss of privacy.

With regard to the existing air conditioning unit, it is proposed that it be relocated to the front elevation of the dwelling at ground floor level, positioned 3 metres from the nearest neighbouring window. Officers are satisfied with the noise data provided in the submitted assessment, which indicates that the unit would operate within the permitted development threshold of 42dB. This is prior to taking into account the additional acoustic mitigation offered by the proposed louvred enclosure.

Other matters

The proposal would not impact parking or access, nor would there be any harm caused to nearby trees.

As the proposal does not enlarge the footprint of the existing dwelling, there are no flood risk concerns.

7. 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.

8. RECOMMENDATION - GRANT

Recommended Conditions:

Time Limit

Materials

Approved Plans

Noise Limit