

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Coley Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0251 Householder planning permission

Address: 3 DOWNSHIRE SQUARE, READING, RG1 6NJ

Proposal: Demolition of existing conservatory and rear chimney stack. Single storey rear extension and loft conversion with rear facing cottage style dormers and side roof lights. Proposed outbuilding to rear.

Applicant: Ms Shyamaly Sur

Received date: 24/02/2026

Target Decision date: 05/06/2026

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The property consists of a large 1950's two-storey detached property positioned in the southwest corner of the Downshire Square Conservation Area. The property is constructed from red and grey patterned brick with red tiled pitched roofs and retains various original 1950's features such as the ornate timber front door with stained glass glazing, chimney stacks and patterned grey and red brickwork. The neighbouring properties are predominantly residential. The property is set back from the road behind gates with a private frontage and off-street parking. The property is not listed but is within the Downshire Conservation Area. Unfortunately, at some point the windows and fenestration has been changed from timber windows to upvc windows. The property is largely in its original form apart from the later addition of the small conservatory to the rear.

Site visit date: 7th April 2026



Front elevation east facing



Rear elevation west facing

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal consists of demolishing the existing later edition conservatory and removal of the rear chimney stack. A single storey rear extension is proposed measuring 4m in depth, by largely the width of the rear elevation, 2.7m to eaves height and circa 3.8m total height. The proposed development includes a loft conversion with cottage style rear dormers and conservation style rooflights in the side facing loft roof slopes, side (north) facing first floor roof slope and rear facing ground floor extension roof slope. The

development includes a large outbuilding in the rear garden measuring 6.5m long by 4.5m wide, the outbuilding will have a pitched and hipped roof and be positioned towards the rear of the back garden but pulled away from the boundary treatments. The outbuilding is to be used as a home office, home gym and storage.

Plans and documents considered:

Drawing no: PH-3DS-01 OS Map & Block Plan of the site, dated Sept 25 **superseeded**
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-02 Existing Floor Plans & Elevations, dated Sept 25
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-03 Existing Floor Plans & Elevations, dated Sept 25
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-04 Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, dated Sept 25 **superseeded**
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-05 Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, dated Sept 25 **superseeded**
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-06 Proposed Outbuilding Plans & Elevations, dated Feb 25
 Design & Access Statement (DE Architectural Consultancy) dated Feb 26
 Photo images of Trees removed/to remove (already approved)
 Shrubs S1 (already approved)
 Sketch Plan (of Trees) for 3 Downshire Square (already approved)
 Reasons for proposed tree works at 3 Downshire Square (already approved)
 Received by the LPA on 24th February 2026

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (Arbtech) dated March 2026
 Received by the LPA on 10th April 2026

Drawing no: PH-3DS-01 Rev A OS Map & Block Plan of the site, dated Sept 25 **superseeded**
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-04 Rev A Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, dated Sept 25 **superseeded**
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-05 Rev A Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, dated Sept 25 **superseeded**
 Received by the LPA on 18th May 2026

Drawing no: PH-3DS-01 Rev B OS Map & Block Plan of the site, dated Sept 25
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-04 Rev A Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, dated Sept 25
 Drawing no: PH-3DS-05 Rev A Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, dated Sept 25
 Received by the LPA on 26th May 2026



03 - REAR ELEVATION

Originally proposed rear facing box dormer



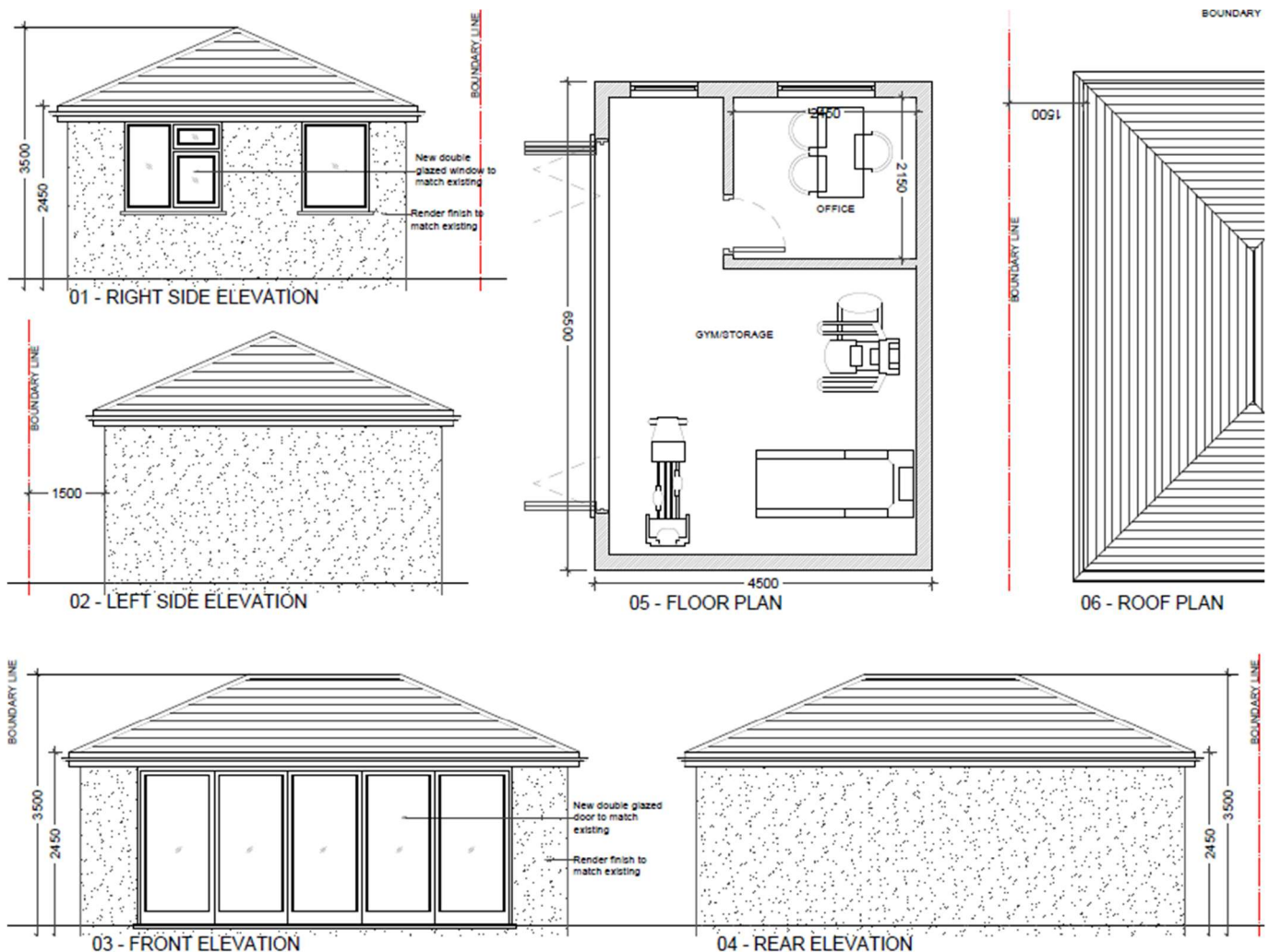
03 - REAR ELEVATION

First revision: box dormer swapped out for 2 large cottage style dormers



03 - REAR ELEVATION

Final revision: box dormer swapped for 3 smaller and narrower cottage style dormers in the roof. Single storey rear extension roof form amended.



Proposed outbuilding.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/25/1595 - Remove a group of young Lime trees, an Escallonia, two Lawson Cypresses and a Yew; Tree surgery to two groups of mixed shrubs, an Apple tree and a Yew tree – Approved Dec 2025

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

- Ecology officer

The application site is a detached dwelling located in a residential area west of Reading town centre/entre of Reading Town centre. The site lies adjacent to a Green Link as per policy EN12. The proposals include a loft conversion, single storey rear extension and removal of a rear chimney stack. A large outbuilding will be erected at the end of the rear garden and the existing smaller outbuilding removed.

The bat survey report (Arbtech, March 2026) concludes that both the dwelling and the outbuilding are 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.

- Trees - Planning Natural Environment

Verbally communicated at Natural Environment Surgery – no objections to the proposal in terms of tree matters.

- Conservation officer

I reviewed the submitted documents for the application above and did research on the history of the building and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area. In general, I have no objection to the proposal; however, I would prefer the proposed dormer to have a traditional roof form.

- The subject building is a substantial detached dwellinghouse from the early to mid 20th century in traditional suburban character, with Arts and Crafts or vernacular revival influences. The features most important to preserve would be the overall massing, roof form, chimneys, front elevation composition, original openings, traditional joinery, entrance feature, materials, front garden and boundary treatment.
- The removal of a chimney (loss of an original element), additional massing and elements would result in less than substantial harm to the character of the conservation area and the host building. The materials of the new elements, apart from the outbuilding, would match the existing, and the proposed alterations would not be visible from the public realm. As such, there would be no change to the perception of the streetscape and no visual impact on the area.
- The harm would be less than substantial at a low level, and to reduce this harm to the lowest level, I would suggest that the dormer(s) have a traditional roof form, as there is no heritage benefit from the proposed scheme. The scale and size of the dormer should also be revised. No objection to the outbuilding.

External

A planning notice was attached to the front gates of the property, and another notice attached to a streetlamp column in Brunswick Street adjacent to Florida Court located directly behind the application site. The notices were left in place for the statutory 21-day consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

5. 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. 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)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)

EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)

EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

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’.

7. 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 character and appearance the agent has worked with officers to protect the existing property as much as possible. The proposed ground floor rear extension is subservient in terms of the overall scale of the original property. The original box dormer was considered harmful to the host property and wider conservation area and against policy, even though nearby properties have box dormers officers felt the harm to the property and conservation was too great. The agent was requested to amend the plans and submit dormers with a more traditional roof form such as cottage style dormers. The final revisions to the plans show narrow cottage style dormers which are considered more appropriately sited than a full width box dormer. These could be further improved with a hipped roof to each dormer instead of the small gables shown. The cottage style dormers are a maximum of 2 glass panes wide, have traditional roof form and are set up the rear roof slope but also hidden from view in the streetscene – the 3 separate cottage style dormers are now considered less harmful to the character of the host property and wider streetscene. The removal of the rear centrally positioned chimney is unfortunate but is not considered sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal. A new triangular window is to be added at first floor

level serving the loft storage area, this window mirrors the existing and original triangular window found on the front elevation. Materials will match existing – this is confirmed in writing and on the approved plans.

The proposal is considered compliant with policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

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.

There is not considered to be any windows directly overlooking neighbouring properties. The conservation style skylights positioned in the loft store and loft conversion will be positioned at correct heights above floor level of the room they serve.

It is not considered that any elements of the proposal will cause overshadowing, loss of light, loss of sunlight or loss of privacy. The property retains ample outdoor amenity space for socialising and relaxing.

The outbuilding is to be positioned facing away from neighbouring boundaries, the roof form is soft and positioned away from neighbours.

The proposed development to the main property and the outbuilding is considered acceptable and complies with policies CC8 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 subject to conditions.

Ecology matters

The application site is located to a green link / green network and works to the existing roof space is proposed. Therefore, a Preliminary Bat Roosting Assessment is a requirement.

The ecology officer reviewed the preliminary bat roosting assessment, and confirms the report has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes the development poses minimal risk to Bats

Officers consider the proposal is compliant with policies EN12 & H9 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019).

Tree matters

Prior to this application, the applicant had undertaken tree works in the form of pruning and removal works under application no: PL/25/1595 approved in December 2025.

The natural environment officer concludes there are no objections.

The proposal is considered acceptable and is compliant with policies EN14 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 subject to conditions.

Conservation matters

The agent has worked with officers to minimise harm to the conservation area where possible. The chimney removal is harmful at a less than substantial level (as per NPPF) to the property or the wider



conservation area. The main, most prominent chimneys are retained. The degree of harm is considered low and would not warrant refusal in isolation in this particular case. The proposed development is largely at the rear of the property resulting in the original / existing main front elevation being protected from changes. Conservation skylights will be included.

8. 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.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

TL1
AP1
M2
PD6