

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Coley

App Ref: PL/26/0308 Householder planning permission

Address: 12 DOWNSHIRE SQUARE, READING, RG1 6NH

Proposal: Replacement windows in a conservation area

Applicant: Mr David Skuse

Received date: 09/03/2026

Target Decision date (agreed extension): 09/06/2026

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-story detached dwelling with a pitched roof located in Downshire Square in Coley Ward. The application property is not listed; however, it is located within the Downshire Square Conservation Area. There is hard and soft landscaping at the front of the property and a detached single garage at the side. The surrounding area is predominantly residential area characterised by a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties.

Site visit date: 14/04/2026

Site visit photos:



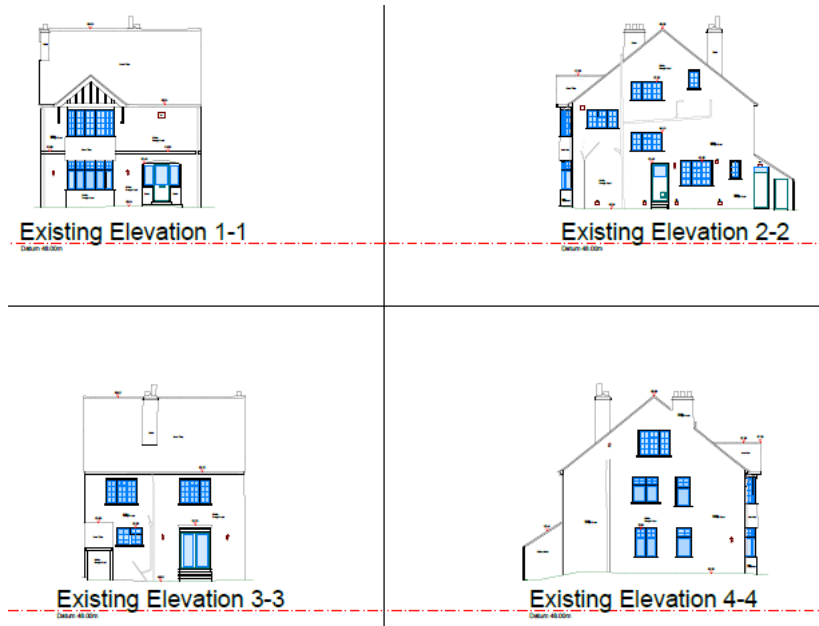
2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought to replace the existing wooden, single-glazed flush casement windows with uPVC, double-glazed, flush casement windows. The proposed windows would match the style of the existing windows.

The application form states that where the existing windows feature astragal (Georgian) bars, the proposed windows would incorporate internal Georgian bars. Where the existing windows have no bars, they would be replaced with windows that also have no bars.

The applicant wishes to replace the windows to improve energy efficiency.

Existing:



Proposed:



Plans/documents considered:

Application Form received 9th March 2026

Location Plan received 9th March 2026

Windows Speciation received 9th March 2026

Photos Montage received 9th March 2026

Existing Elevations received 7th April 2026

Proposed Elevations received 14th April 2026

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the front of the property by the case officer on 14th April 2026 for a period of 21-days. No letters of representation have been received.

Conservation Advisory Committee

No comments received

RBC Conservation Officer

No comments received

Discussions with applicant

As the application site falls within a Conservation Area, discussions were had with the applicant as to whether the proposal could include some timber replacement windows. No amendments were forthcoming. However, a significant material consideration is that the GPDO states "Development is permitted by Class A subject to the following conditions- (a) the materials used in any exterior work shall be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing dwellinghouse". The Guidance states that "the condition above is intended to ensure that any works to enlarge, alter or improve a house result in an appearance that minimises visual impact and is sympathetic to existing development. This means that the materials used should be of similar visual appearance to those in the existing house, but does not mean that they need to be the same materials.

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)

CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change)
CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of Historic Environment)
EN3 (Enhancement of the Conservation Area)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2019

Other documents

Downshire Square Conservation Area Appraisal April 2009

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. Policy EN3 requires development to enhance the appearance and significance of conservation areas.

The proposed windows have been chosen to closely match the appearance of the existing windows. The placement, size, shape, and colour will remain consistent with the current design. The windows will be installed flush, and where the existing windows feature Georgian bars, the proposed windows will incorporate internal Georgian bars. Where the existing windows have no bars, they will be replaced with windows that also have no bars. The applicant confirmed via email that the windows will replicate the thickness of the current windows and will sit on the same plane. It is considered that the windows selected will result in an appearance that minimises visual impact and is sympathetic to existing dwelling.

As such, the replacement windows are not considered to result in any significant detrimental harm in terms of appearance as to warrant refusal on this basis. Although timber-framed windows would be the preferred option in a conservation area, on balance, due to the minimal visual difference and the context of the area, the proposal is considered acceptable.

For the aforementioned reasons it is considered that the proposed development would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the host dwelling, neighbouring properties, or the conservation area and is in accordance with Policies H9, EN3 and CC7 and the advice contained within the NPPF.

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 are no identified risks of the proposed replacement windows causing any additional harm to neighbouring amenity with regards to loss of privacy or overlooking as the size, scale and placement of the windows will be the same as the existing arrangement and no new openings are proposed.

Due to the small-scale nature of the proposal, there are no neighbour amenity-based objections.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

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:

TL1 – Time limit

M1 – Materials

AP1 – Approved plans