

## **DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT**

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: PL/25/0927 Householder planning permission

Address: 184 UPPER WOODCOTE ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7JU

Proposal: Rear dormer by way of hip to gable conversion with rooflights on front slope plus raising the lower ridge to match main ridge

Applicant: Silpi Mitra

Received date: 30/06/2025

Target Decision date: Originally 26/08/2025 EOT agreed until 10/07/2026

**Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys / James Schofield**

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### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is a large, characterful two-storey detached dwellinghouse located on the eastern side of Upper Woodcote Road. The property is constructed using red brick and red hipped tiled pitched roofs. Upper Woodcote Road is made up of detached and semi-detached dwellinghouses of varying age, design and scale. Many properties in the street including both neighbours have been subject to refurbishments and extensions of differing styles. The property is not listed, nor within a conservation area.

### **2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

This application seeks planning permission for a rear dormer window / hip to gable roof extension with rooflights on the front roof slope. It is also proposed to raise the lower ridge to match the main roof ridge.

The materials would comprise stud wall clad with tiles, tiles and felt roof.

### **Plans and Documents Considered**

Ecological Survey Report

Received 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026

Existing Ground Floor Plan A01 Rev-2

Existing First Floor Plan A02 Rev-2

Existing Loft Plan A03 Rev 2

Existing Roof Plan A04 Rev-2

Proposed First Floor Plan A05 Rev-2

Proposed Loft Plan A06 Rev-2

Proposed Roof Plan A07 Rev-2

Existing Elevations A08 Rev-2

Proposed Elevations A09 Rev-2

Existing Section A-A A10 Rev-2

Proposed Section A-A A11 Rev-2

Location and Block Plan A12 Rev-2

Received 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026

### **3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

24/0568/CLP Loft Conversion and Dormer. Permitted.

24/0219/HOU Single-storey rear extension with conversion of existing conservatory. Front porch and interior alterations. Granted.

02/0176/HOU 2-storey rear extension; single storey rear conservatory. Granted.

#### 4. CONSULTATIONS

Ecology: Further to submission of preliminary bat roost assessment and emergence survey reports, no objection.

A site notice was displayed at the site. No neighbour letters of representation received.

#### **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 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

#### **Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)**

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)

EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)

#### **SPD**

Design Guide to House Extensions SPG 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. A submission draft 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

### Design Considerations

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.

Due to the nature of the proposals, there would be no increase in the actual footprint of the dwelling. The proposed hip to gable roof extension combined with flat roof dormer window would result in a somewhat stark and top heavy appearance that is not considered to integrate sympathetically with the host property. Furthermore, flat roof dormer windows generally fail to enhance the appearance of a property. However, it is recognised that there are a variety of room forms along this part of Upper Woodcote Road and there are larger properties (in both height and roof form terms) to the south. The building is large, with a large plot and it is considered the proposals can be accommodated in this specific plot without result in a harmful cramped appearance.

During the course of the application the dormer window was amended to reduce the width from the north edge and to incorporate a set down from the main roof ridge. Whilst still large, it would sit more comfortably within the roof slope.

There are examples of other properties in the vicinity with rooflights on the front elevation.

The materials would match those of the host property which would assist its integration and on balance, whilst the loss of the modest proportions of the existing property, is regrettable, it is not considered to be so significantly harmful to either the character of the host property or street scene to warrant a refusal on this basis.

### Impact on Neighbour Amenities

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. 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. Policy H10 also requires that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space.

The neighbouring properties potentially most affected by the proposals are No's 186 and 182 Upper Woodcote Road, located to the north and south of the site respectively.

With regard to No.186, given the position of the proposed dormer and roof works on the south side of the dwelling combined with the distance to No.186, no overbearing effects would arise. A roof light is proposed on the roof slope facing No.186. Given its position, no harmful loss of privacy is considered to arise.

With regard to No.182, this property is set further back than No.184 and the proposed changes to the roof would be more visible / pronounced. However, the house itself would be no closer to the common boundary than existing. Given the distance to the common boundary, the proposed hip to gable is not considered to result in any harmful overbearing effect. Similarly, as the dormer windows would be set in from the side, combined to distance to the common boundary, no harmful overbearing effect is considered to arise. No

windows are proposed on the flank elevation facing this property and as such there would be no loss of privacy.

No.184 has benefited from several extensions and whilst the plot itself is large any further works to the roof could impact the amenity of neighbouring properties. As such, a condition is proposed to be attached to remove permitted development rights in respect of Class B (enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof).

No other nearby occupiers are considered to be impacted by the proposals. The proposed dormer window would face down the application site. Given the significant distance to the rear gardens of properties of Gurney Close to the east, there would be no harmful overbearing effects or harmful loss of privacy.

#### Impact on Ecology

The building was considered to have features potentially suitable for roosting bats and due to the nature of the works to the roof and along with nearby trees, it was considered that the proposals could affect roosting bats. As such, a bat survey was requested during the course of the application. Given the seasons for such reports, the application was held in abeyance so the report could be undertaken. A bat survey report was submitted July 2026 and concluded that there would be no adverse impacts on bats from the proposals. This was reviewed by the Council's Ecologist who confirmed agreement with the report's conclusions and confirmed no objection on ecology grounds.

#### 7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and on balance is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

#### 8. RECOMMENDATION

Approve, subject to conditions.