

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0393 Householder planning permission

Address: 15 LANCASTER CLOSE, READING, RG1 5HB

Proposal: Garage conversion, first-floor front extension, erection of a front porch, and replacement of the front canopy above the front bay window (amended).

Applicant: Mr Taha Gani Mohamed

Received date: 24/03/2026

Target Decision date: 12/06/2026; EOT agreed until 10/07/2026

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey detached dwellinghouse located in a cul-de-sac. The dwelling has a single double garage which extends at the front of the property. The dwelling is set within a sizable plot, set back from the roadside. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, generally comprising detached dwellings. The property is not listed, nor is it located within a Conservation Area. It is subject to Article 4 Direction, which removed the PD right regarding the conversion of C3 dwelling to C4 small HMO. It is also within the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).



Front view of 15 Lancaster Close, taken on 29/04/2026

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for a first-floor front extension above the existing garage, which would be set below the ridge line of the main roof. The proposed first-floor front extension would align with the existing front and side elevations. Two double windows and one single window would be installed in the front elevation. The external materials would match those of the existing dwelling.

The proposal would facilitate the conversion of the existing garage into a fifth bedroom, with the new first-floor extension providing a fourth bedroom. The proposal also includes the erection of a front porch measuring ca 1.5 m in depth and ca 1.76 m in width.

In addition, the existing canopy above the ground-floor front bay window would be replaced with a hipped roof overhang, finished with tiles to match the existing main roof.



Existing and proposed floor plans and elevations

Plans considered:

- Drawing No. P1728-02 Existing Plans Elevations, dated 03/2026, received 24/03/2026.
- Drawing No. P1728-03C Proposed Plans Elevations (REV 09/07/26), dated and received 09/07/2026.
- Drawing No. P1728-01C Location block Plan (REV 07/07/26), dated and received 07/07/2026.
- Ref: CE5172 Bat Survey, preliminary bat roost assessment, prepared by Chase Ecological Consultancy, dated 30/04/2026, received 18/05/2026.

Relevant Planning History:

Nearby sites - 3 Lancaster Close

PL/24/0706 - Proposed part first floor front extension. Approved 26/07/2024.



Approved proposed elevations under PL/24/0706

3. CONSULTATIONS

- RBC Transport Development Control: No objection subject to conditions

This application consists of the conversion of the garage to provide additional accommodation

In accordance with the Councils current parking standards a property in Zone 2 should be provided with a minimum of 2 off road spaces.

Submitted block plan illustrates 2 parking spaces on an area of existing hard standing which is in accordance with current standards. No changes to the existing vehicle access are proposed.

There are no Transport objections to this application.

DC1 VEHICLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)
IF3 Highways

- RBC Ecology: No objection

The site is adjacent to a Green Link as per Policy EN12, with habitat of high suitability for roosting and commuting bats – these include numerous surrounding mature trees and area of open space and trees associated with Cintra Park. The proposals include a two-storey side extension over the existing garage. Furthermore, we have records of bats in properties nearby.

As such, there is a risk that the proposals may affect roosting bats, and a bat survey report will need to be provided before this application can be determined.

Following the submission of the Bat Survey, the Ecology team confirms as follows:

The bat survey report (Chase Ecology, 30 April 2026, ref: CE5172) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal.

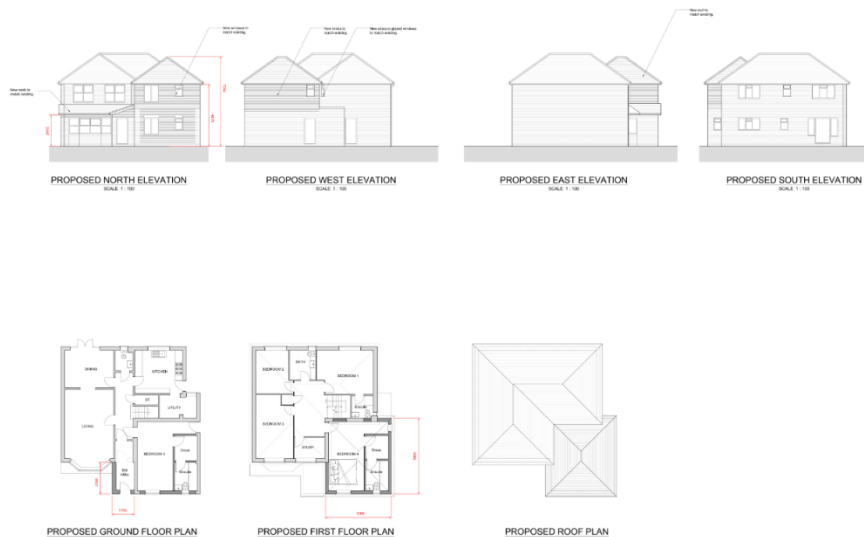
There are therefore no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

- Communication with the agent:

The originally proposed first-floor extension was not considered to integrate well with the host dwelling, resulting in a turret-like appearance. Due to its forward projection beyond the established building line, it would appear as a bulky and unduly prominent feature, causing harm to both the character and appearance of the host property and the street scene. The existing front projection at No. 3 Lancaster Close is noted. However, it is considered that there are differences between the two sites and proposals. The extension at No. 3 does not project forward of No. 2 so is not as visually dominant and the frontage also benefits from landscaping which assists in screening the development. Furthermore, the proposals at No. 15 Lancaster Close incorporate additional built form beyond that seen at No. 3, including a front porch and canopy. It is also considered reasonable to expect proposals involving additional built development to provide an increase in soft landscaping rather than a reduction, as was apparent on the site visit (with loss of front garden and rear garden). In this case, the loss of landscaping would result in a more stark and urbanised appearance and would also have a detrimental impact on biodiversity. The extension at No. 8 is likewise not considered a comparable example, as it was constructed in the mid-1980s, prior to the adoption of the current Design Guide and Local Plan policies.

The agent was advised that the overall scale of built development should be reduced, including the first-floor front extension and front porch. Additional soft landscaping to the front and rear of the site was also sought to mitigate the harmful impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the street scene and the wider environment.

Following discussions, revised plans were submitted for consideration, as set out in Section 2 above.



Original proposed floor plans and elevations, submitted on 24/03/2026

4. 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 (NPPF)
National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (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 pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 9th of May 2025 and is currently at examination.

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 listed above 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 appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

5. 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.

The proposed extension is located at the front of the application site and therefore would have no impact on the Christchurch Conservation Area, which lies near the rear of the site.

The proposed first-floor extension would sit on the existing side garage, aligning with the front elevation of the main house by setting back from the frontage of the garage. The proposed roof pitch is set down from the main roof ridge line appropriately, and the proposed materials would match existing materials. It is considered that the proposed extension would be subservient to the main dwelling and any harmful impacts on the character of the house and the streetscene are limited.

The proposed front porch and alterations to the existing canopy overhang are modest in scale and are not considered to constitute a substantial addition to the host dwelling that would harm its character or appearance. Further to discussions with the agent, the proposal would also include the installation of planting and hedges within the front and rear gardens, which are considered to contribute to mitigating the impact of the proposed extensions on the street scene and the wider environment. The proposed planting and hedgerow would be secured through a pre-occupation condition, including the provision of at least one new tree within the front garden and the reinstatement of the front landscaping. Given the additional massing and built form proposed at the frontage, enhanced landscaping is considered necessary to soften and mitigate the visual impact of the development. Without such landscaping, the cumulative effect of the extension and alterations to the front garden would result in a stark and unattractive appearance that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the street scene.

Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of the character of the host dwelling and the street scene, comply with Policies CC7, H9 and EN12 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 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.

Given the scale and siting of the proposed extension, it is not considered to result in any unacceptable overbearing impact on neighbouring amenity. With regard to privacy and overlooking, the proposed west-facing side window would be obscured glazing, serving an en-suite, which is considered to safeguard neighbouring privacy, and this will be secured through a planning condition. No additional side-facing windows are proposed within the development, and this will also be secured by way of a condition.

Other Matters

The Transport and Ecology teams have confirmed that they have no objections to the proposed development.

6. 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.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

Time Limit

Approved Plans

Materials (To Match)

Obscure Glazing

No New Openings

Landscaping Small Scale (To Be Approved)