

REPRESENTATION REGARDING PLANNING APPLICATION PL/26/0787

Proposed Single-Storey Rear Extension
5 School Terrace, Reading, RG1 3LS

Submitted by:

John & Clare Mullaney

6 School Terrace, Reading, RG1 3LS

on Tuesday 21st July 2026



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We wish to make a representation regarding the [proposed rear extension at No. 5, School Terrace, RG1 3LS](#).

From the outset, we would like to make clear that we fully support our neighbour's wish to improve and extend her home. Our concern relates solely to the current design.

Throughout this very recent process we have sought to work collaboratively with the applicant to find a solution that would allow the additional accommodation she is seeking whilst protecting the residential amenity of our own home.

We have even offered to contribute towards the reasonable costs of revised architectural drawings in the hope of achieving a mutually acceptable design.

Our principal concern is the height of the proposed extension and, to a lesser extent, its proximity to the shared boundary.

In our view, these aspects of the proposal would result in:

- Harm to the outlook from our principal living room & kitchen
- Loss of daylight
- Increased visual dominance from an overbearing and overshadowing structure
- An enclosed, tunnel-like relationship immediately outside our property.

We believe these impacts conflict with Policies CC8 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and with the objectives of the Council's House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The accompanying photographs provide unusually clear evidence of this impact by comparing our existing outlook with an almost identical extension already constructed on an equivalent neighbouring Victorian property.

Few planning applications benefit from an almost identical real-world comparison immediately adjacent to the site. This provides an unusually reliable indication of the likely effect of the proposal.

The purpose of this representation is not to oppose the principle of development. It is to demonstrate that the current design causes unnecessary harm where a less harmful alternative appears achievable.

The accompanying corrected drawings and photomontage have been prepared by the undersigned, John R. Mullaney FSAI, a Fellow and Council Member of the Society of Architectural Illustrators, to illustrate the relationship between the properties as accurately as possible using the applicant's submitted drawings.

2. EXISTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROPERTIES

Nos. 5 and 6 form part of a Victorian terrace with an open side return between the houses. This space performs two important functions.

Firstly, it acts as a light well, allowing natural daylight to reach the rear of the property.

Secondly, it provides an open outlook from the principal rear living room.

The proposal would substantially reduce both.

Although any extension inevitably changes the relationship between neighbouring properties, our concern is that the current design goes significantly further than is necessary to achieve the applicant's objectives.



Figure 1: Current view from our rear lounge window across the existing side return.



Figure 2: Current view showing our rear of property on the left and number 5's on the right.

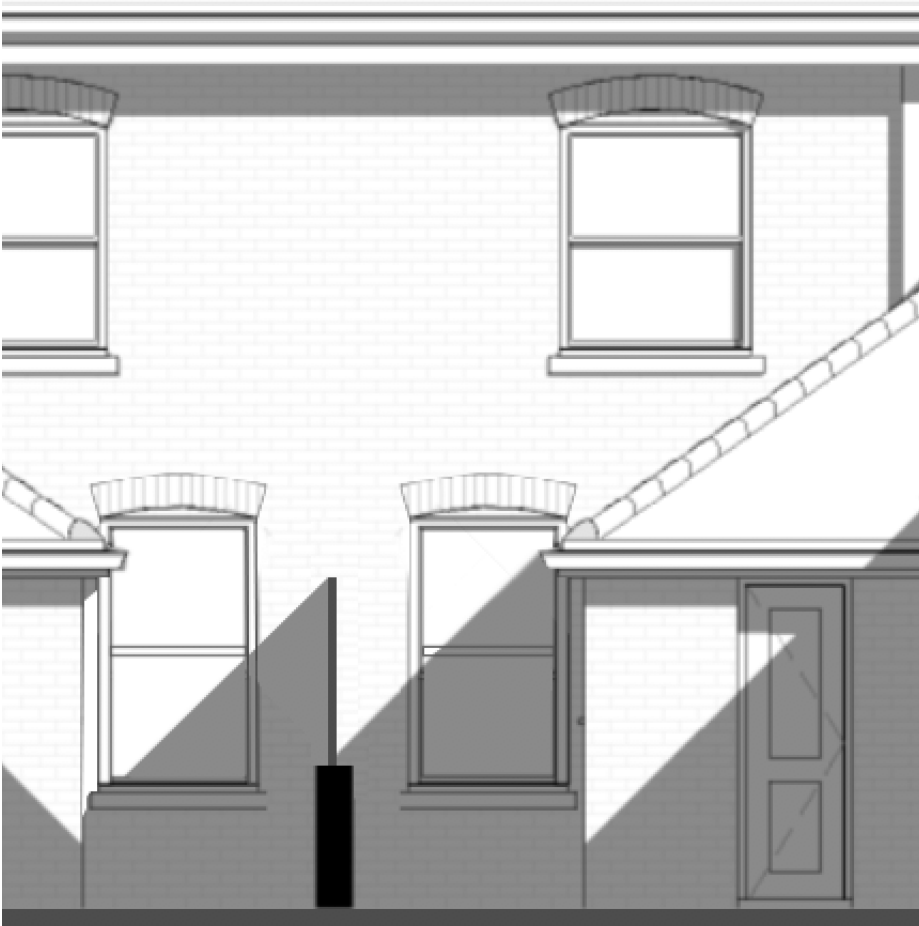


Figure 3: Rear elevation of existing ground and first floors.

Please note this is a corrected elevation, as the plans submitted with the applicant's proposal incorrectly depict the height of the window and boundary wall and do not include our property in either the existing or proposed design elevations. More detail on this in section 6.

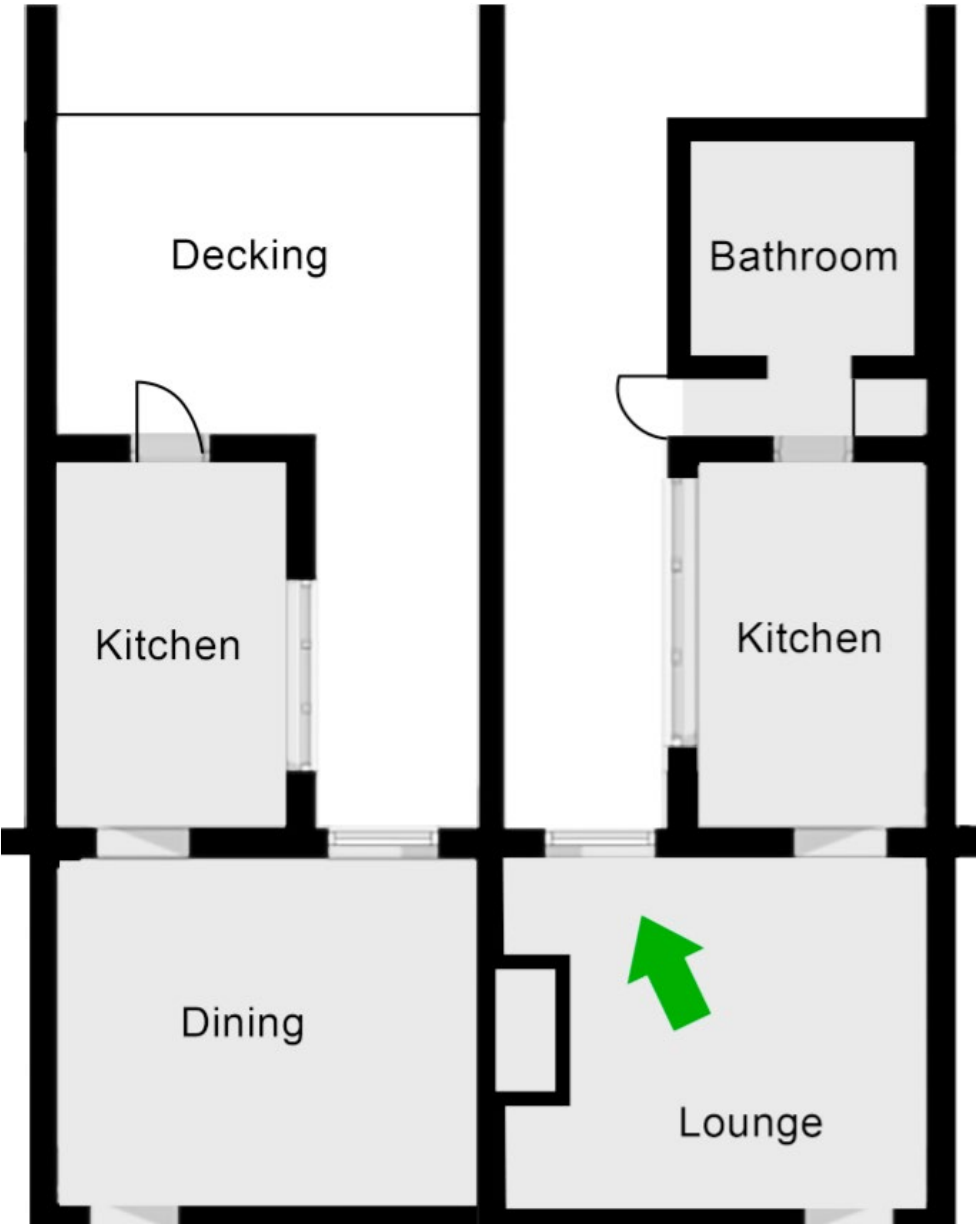


Figure 4: Floorplan of existing ground floor properties. Green arrow shows view from the lounge window of number 6 pictured right (figure 1) .

Please note this is a revised floorplan to the one submitted by the applicant in order to show both properties not just the applicant's.



3. IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

OUTLOOK FROM LOUNGE

Our principal concern is the loss of outlook. The rear lounge is our family's principal living room. Its window currently looks across the existing side return towards the garden.

Under the current proposal, much of this outlook would be replaced by the flank wall and roof of the proposed extension.

Policy CC8 specifically identifies harm to outlook as a material planning consideration.



*Figure 5:
Photomontage
Artist's impression
of figure 1 photo,
mocking up how the
extension will appear.*

Whilst a key planning concern relates to the rear lounge, the proposal would also significantly affect the outlook from the adjoining kitchen.

The upper photograph shows the existing view, including open sky and mature trees beyond the boundary.

The lower image is an illustrative photomontage, prepared using the applicant's submitted drawings and comparative site evidence, showing the likely outlook following construction. It demonstrates a substantial reduction in openness and visible sky, with the existing outlook replaced by the roof and flank wall of the proposed extension.



Figure 6: Existing view from kitchen window.



Figure 7: Illustrative photomontage showing the likely outlook from the kitchen following construction of the proposed extension. Produced using the applicant's submitted drawings, photography of number 7's extension from number 8, and comparative site evidence.

4. COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE

This application is unusual. The likely impact does not need to be imagined because an almost identical extension already exists on an equivalent neighbouring Victorian pair at numbers 7 and 8 School Terrace.

The following photographs of number 7's extension demonstrate:

- Reduction in outlook
- Increased enclosure
- Overbearing and overshadowing design
- Greater visual dominance
- Reduction in visible sky

This real-world comparison provides a far clearer indication of the proposal's likely effect than drawings alone.



Figure 8: Photo taken from Number 8 School Terrace showing how the extension at number 7 appears. This extension is almost identical to the one proposed for number 5.

DAYLIGHT

The side return currently functions as an important light well.

Replacing this open space with built development would inevitably reduce natural daylight reaching the rear of our property.

Section 6.2.2 of the House Extensions SPD advises that extensions should avoid causing unacceptable loss of daylight to neighbouring habitable rooms.

VISUAL DOMINANCE

The proposal introduces a substantial wall and roof immediately beside our principal living-room window.

Its scale, height and proximity would create a visually dominant relationship that, in our view, conflicts with Policies CC8 and H9.



Figure 9 : View of number 7's extension from the garden of number 8.

TUNNEL EFFECT

The proposal would also create an enclosed, tunnel-like relationship immediately outside our home.

We use this phrase simply to describe the physical enclosure created by replacing the existing open side return with a substantial wall close to the shared boundary.

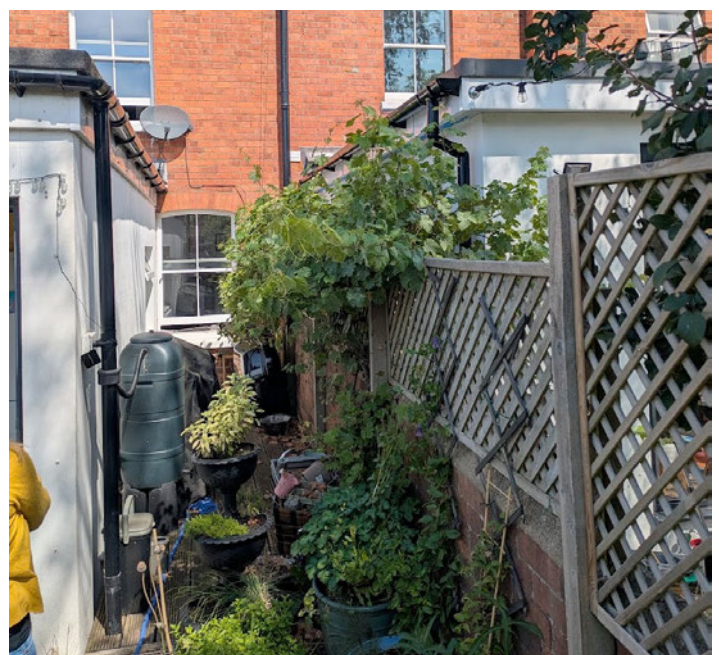


Figure 10 : View of number 7's extension from the garden of number 8.

5. ASSESSMENT AGAINST COUNCIL POLICY

Reading Borough Council's Local Plan requires development to safeguard neighbouring residential amenity.

In our view, the proposal conflicts with:

- Policy CC8 through harm to outlook, daylight and visual dominance.
- Policy H9 through creating an overbearing relationship with the adjoining property.

The Council's House Extensions SPD also asks applicants to consider neighbouring habitable-room windows, assess the effect on daylight and discuss proposals with neighbours before submitting an application in order to resolve potential difficulties.

We respectfully ask that the proposal is assessed against these policies, including the SPD's guidance relating to the 60° assessment for neighbouring habitable-room windows.

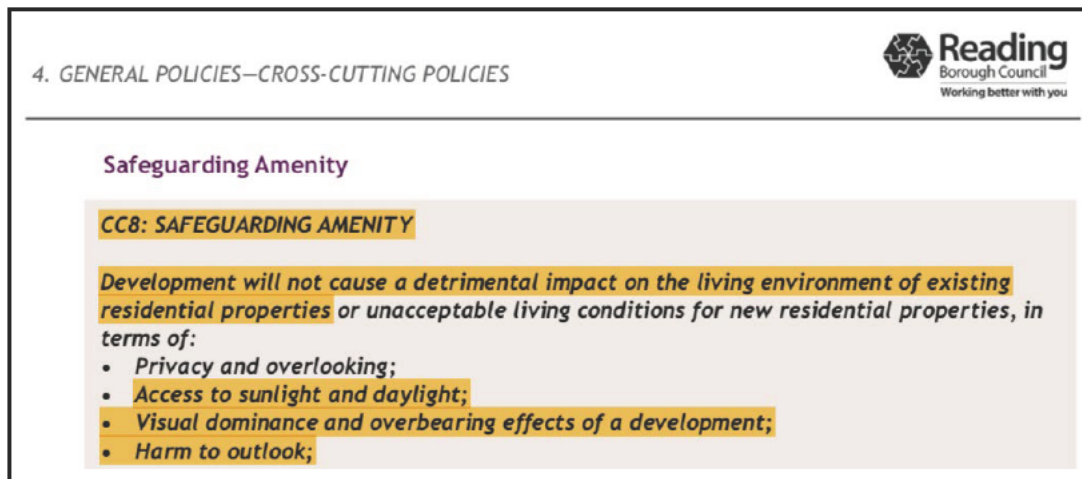


Figure 11 : Extract from CC8, pg 30 of RBC's Local Plan.

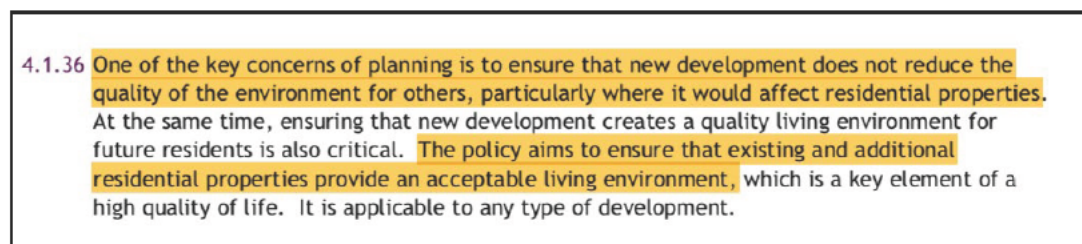


Figure 12 : Extract from CC8, pg 30 of RBC's Local Plan.

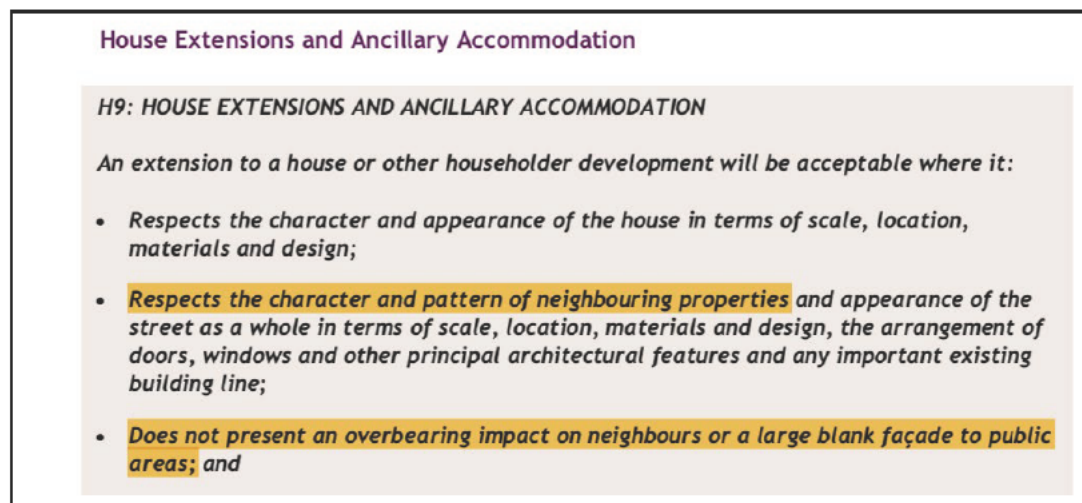


Figure 13 : Extract from H9, pg 90 of RBC's Local Plan.

Figures 13 & 14 illustrate the 60° assessment referred to in Section 7.1.1 of Reading Borough Council's Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - 2021.

Figure 14 : Extract from RBC's SPD (2021), pg.10.

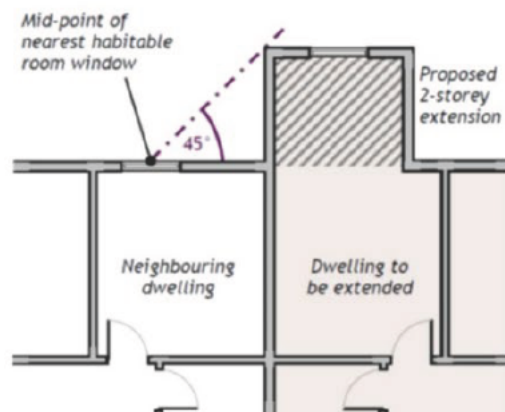
7.0 Specific extension type guidance

7.1 Rear extensions

7.1.1 When designing a rear extension, it is important to consider established patterns, and existing extensions to other developments in the street scene. Rear extension proposals would likely not be supported if they demonstrate any of the following:

- Harm to neighbouring dwellings in terms of overlooking. This can be avoided in most cases by not having windows on the side elevations of rear extensions.
- Harm to neighbouring dwellings in terms of loss of light. This particularly applies to two storey rear extensions. Two storey rear extensions should not be closer than a line taken at 45° (60° for a single storey rear extension) from the middle of any window of a habitable room in a neighbouring property.

7.1.2 The considerations outlined in section 6 of this document also apply to all forms of rear extension.



45° rule of thumb

Figure 15 : Extract from RBC's SPD (2021), pg.7.

6.2.2 Overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing

Care should be given when designing an extension of any scale that there is not a loss of daylight to habitable rooms in neighbouring dwellings. It is highly likely that an application will be refused unless it demonstrates that neighbouring dwellings will not suffer from a loss of light. This can be demonstrated in proposals by illustrating the 45° rule of thumb on proposed plans and an assessment of orientation in relation to direct sunlight to important habitable rooms.

The proposed extension intersects the 60° assessment line at a relatively early point along the side elevation, indicating a relationship that the SPD identifies as potentially giving rise to unacceptable effects on daylight and outlook.

The result shown here reinforces the conclusions reached elsewhere in this representation regarding loss of outlook, visual dominance and residential amenity.

A modest reduction in the width of the extension adjacent to the shared boundary would move the proposal further away from the 60° assessment line and reduce its impact on the principal habitable-room window at No. 6.

Although the submitted drawings show the side wall set approximately 300mm from the boundary, this clearance would largely be occupied by the roof overhang, soffit, fascia and guttering, meaning the outermost part of the completed structure would lie very close to the boundary.

A modest reduction in width, together with the reduction in height advocated elsewhere in this representation, would more closely align with the objectives of the Council's 60° guidance whilst reducing the impact on outlook, daylight and visual dominance.

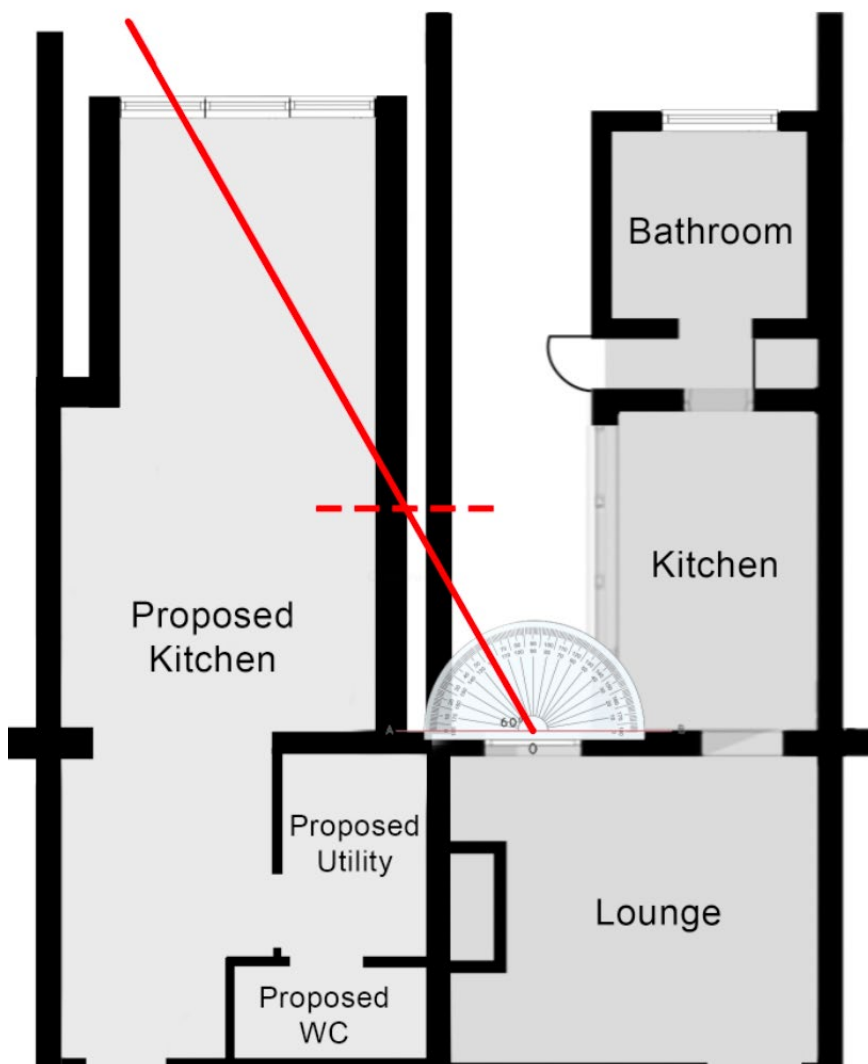


Figure 16: Application of the 60° assessment referred to in Section 7.1.1 of RBC's SPD.

This drawing has been prepared using the applicant's submitted floor plan, augmented to include No. 6 and the 60° assessment line for illustrative purposes.

It indicates that the proposed extension intersects the 60° assessment line from the principal habitable-room window less than half way along the proposed adjacent wall.

6. ACCURACY OF THE SUBMITTED DRAWINGS

We are concerned that the submitted drawings do not accurately represent the relationship between the proposed extension and our property.

The corrected elevation is illustrative rather than a measured survey. It has been prepared using the applicant's submitted drawings together with site photographs to provide a more representative illustration of the existing relationship between the two properties. Owing to inconsistencies within the submitted drawings, it has not been possible to reconcile every dimension precisely.

The submitted drawings contain two key inaccuracies:

- The rear living-room window is shown lower than exists on site. This understates the amount of outlook currently enjoyed from our lounge and, consequently, the extent to which the proposed extension would obscure that outlook. The corrected elevation more accurately illustrates the relationship between the neighbouring habitable-room window and the proposed roofline, which is central to assessing the proposal's impact on outlook, visual dominance and residential amenity.
- The height of the boundary wall is incorrect and does not show the fence above it, resulting in a less representative depiction of the existing relationship between the two properties.



Figure 17 : Detail photo of number 5 showing relative heights.

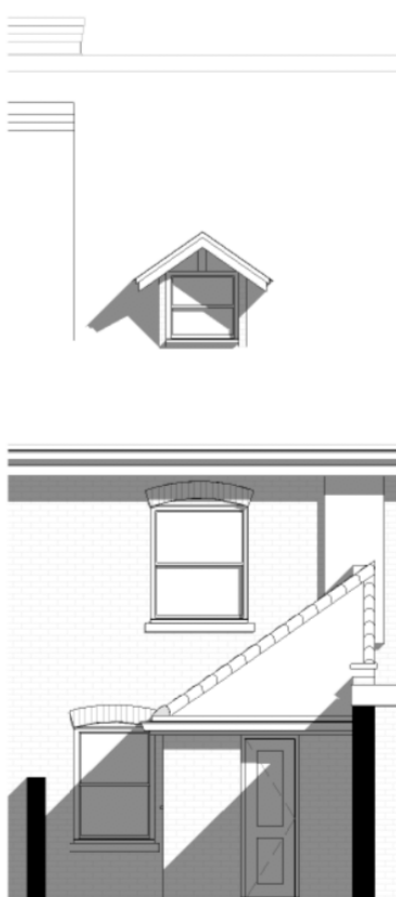


Figure 18 : Submitted elevation of existing.

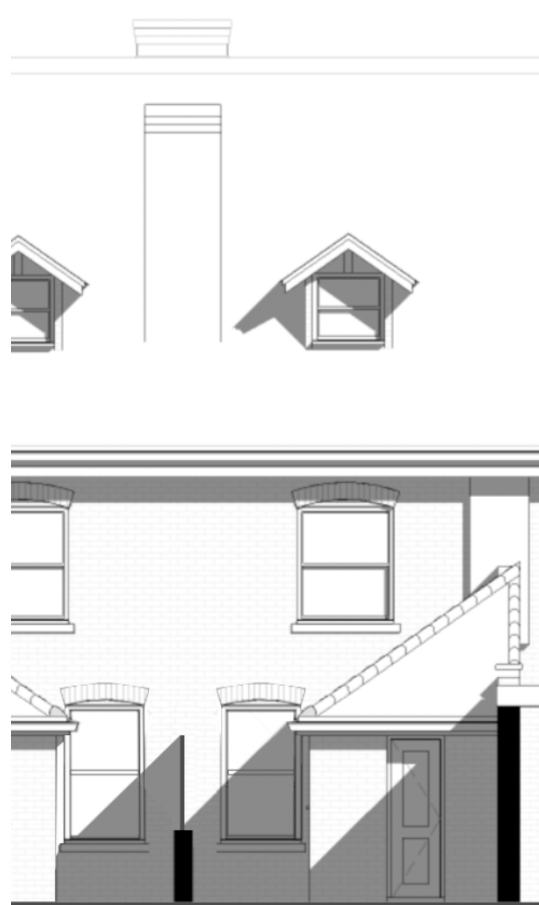


Figure 19 : Corrected elevation of existing.

RELATIVE HEIGHTS OF PROPOSAL AGAINST NUMBER 6

The drawings do not fully illustrate the relative height relationship between the two properties. By not showing our property, the submitted elevation does not illustrate the close proximity of the terrace design and hides the impact of the development on our property.

As Policy CC8 identifies the position of neighbouring habitable-room windows as being particularly important, we respectfully request that these relationships are verified before the application is determined.

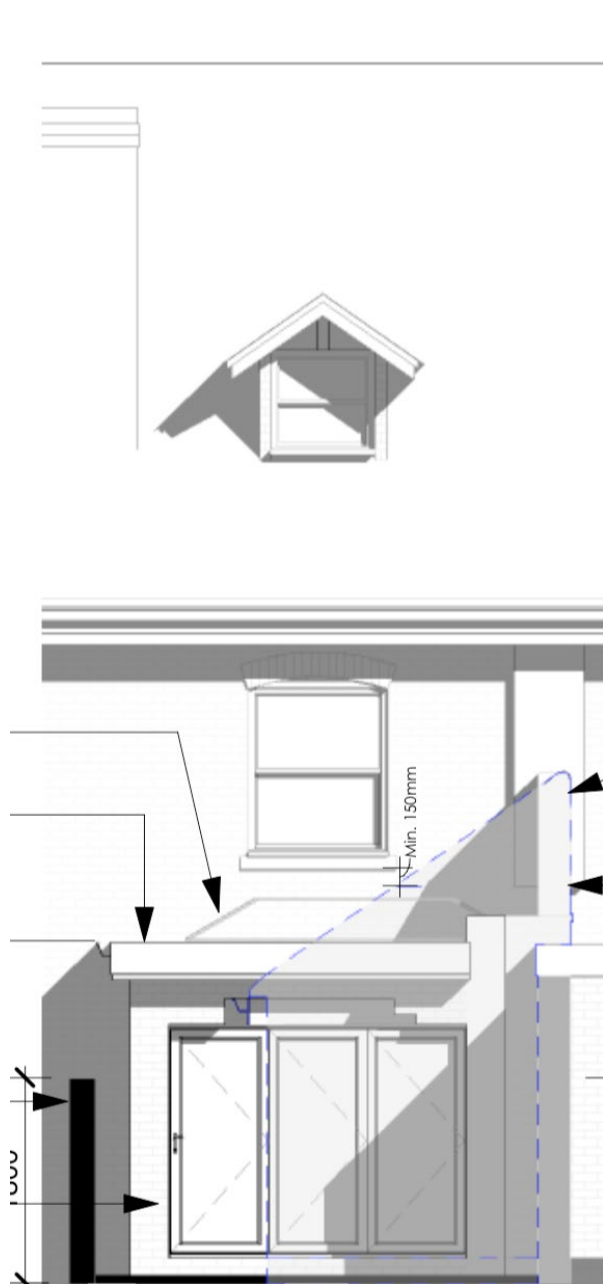


Figure 20 : Submitted elevation.

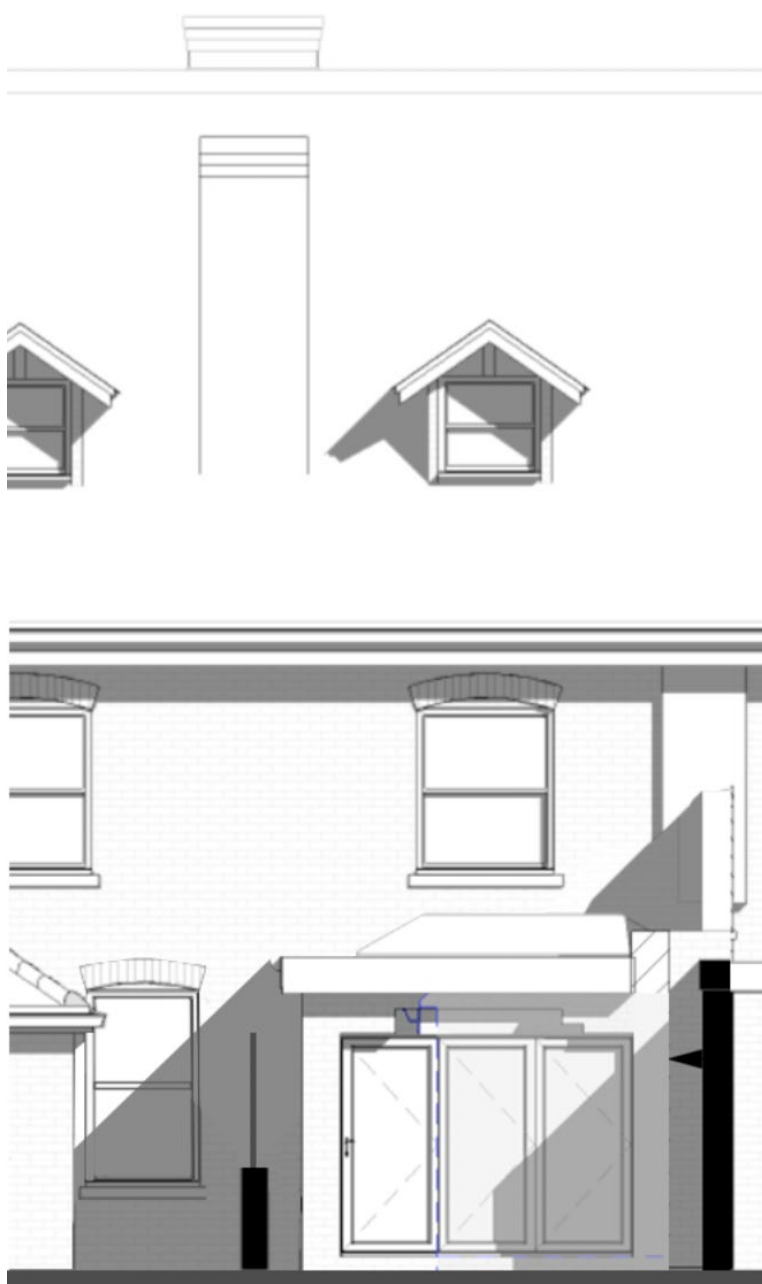


Figure 21 : Elevation extended to include number 6.

7. EXISTING DEVELOPMENTS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A BALANCED DESIGN

The applicant has suggested that the proposal follows an established pattern of development within School Terrace. While several neighbouring properties have been extended, the context and manner in which those extensions were built are important considerations.

Most full-width rear extensions on School Terrace form coordinated pairs, where both adjoining properties have extended at the same time as joint developments. This creates a broadly balanced relationship in which the change in outlook and enclosure is shared between the two properties.

The extension at No. 7 is an exception. It was constructed alongside the unextended property at No. 8, and the evidence presented in this representation demonstrates how differently a one-sided full-width extension affects the adjoining neighbour. Rather than creating a coordinated arrangement, it places the visual enclosure and loss of openness almost entirely on one property.

The proposed relationship between Nos. 5 and 6 would closely reproduce that one-sided arrangement.

For these reasons, we respectfully submit that the proposal does not strike an appropriate balance between enabling development and protecting neighbouring residential amenity.



Figure 22 : View of number 7's extension from the garden of number 8.

8. TIMELINE AND ATTEMPTS TO REACH A COMPROMISE

The Council's House Extensions SPD encourages applicants to discuss proposals with neighbours before submitting an application in order to resolve potential difficulties.

We first became aware of this proposal only when the statutory site notice was erected. We then made every reasonable effort to address our concerns directly with the applicant and following a constructive initial discussion, the applicant indicated that the height of the extension was not fundamental to the design.

She agreed to ask her architect to explore amendments, including reducing the height and moving the extension slightly away from the shared boundary. We were subsequently informed that the architect had advised against making any changes because of what was considered an established local precedent.

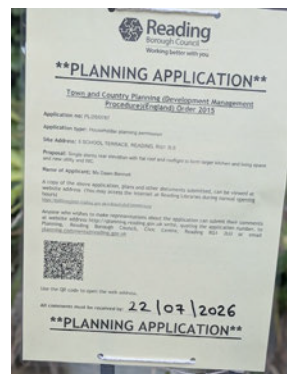
We then offered to contribute towards the reasonable costs of revised architectural drawings if that would help facilitate an agreed solution.

A request for a further meeting to discuss possible revisions was declined, leaving us with no option but to submit this representation.

Throughout this process, we have sought a constructive solution rather than opposing development in principle. Our objective has always been to encourage a design that better balances the applicant's aspirations with the protection of neighbouring residential amenity.

CONSULTATION DATES

We also wish to record a discrepancy in the consultation dates for this application. The site notice stated that representations should be received by **22 July 2026**, whereas the online planning portal displayed a deadline of 14 July 2026. We raised this with Reading Borough Council's Planning Helpdesk and were advised to submit our representation by email before 22 July 2026.



We respectfully ask the Council to consider this proposal in terms of its effect on the residential amenity of the adjoining property.

We do not object to the principle of extending No. 5. Our concern is simply that the current design would cause unnecessary harm where a less harmful alternative is clearly achievable.

The evidence presented in this representation demonstrates that a reduction in the height of the extension, together with a modest reduction in its width adjacent to the shared boundary, would substantially reduce its impact whilst still meeting the applicant's objectives.

Although we have ultimately had to object to the application, our preference throughout has been to achieve an agreed solution, reflected in our willingness to contribute towards the reasonable costs of revised drawings if that could help secure a less harmful design.

We therefore respectfully ask that planning permission for the proposal in its current form be refused and that a revised application be encouraged which better reflects the Council's planning policies and guidance, achieving a more appropriate balance between enabling development and protecting neighbouring residential amenity.

We respectfully request that the case officer undertakes a site visit to No. 6 before determining the application, as viewing the relationship between the properties in person will provide the clearest understanding of the impact described in this representation.

Should this application be considered by the Planning Applications Committee, we would be pleased to attend and answer any questions relating to the evidence contained within this representation.

Architectural drawing amendments and photomontage artist's impression produced by John R. Mullaney FSAI - Council Member and Fellow of the Society of Architectural Illustrators





REPRESENTATION SUBMISSION DATE : 21ST JULY 2026