

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0803 Householder planning permission

Address: 8 GURNEY DRIVE, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7LG

Proposal: Single-storey front and side extension including garage conversion and chimney stack removal

Applicant: Mrs Elitsa Boyadzhieva

Received date: 18/06/2026

Target Decision date: 13/08/2026

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a linked bungalow located at the end of the Gurney Drive cul-de-sac, off Upper Woodcote Road. The dwelling features a projecting flat-roofed garage to the front. Behind the garage, the gable roof of the main dwelling continues into a front-facing timber-clad mono-pitched end. This projected garage and roof form is a characteristic feature of properties along this section of Gurney Drive. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character.



Front view of 8 Gurney Drive from Google Street View, dated May 2025

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The amended proposed development comprises a single-storey front extension with a gabled roof, an infill side extension with a flat roof incorporating a rooflight, the conversion of the existing garage, and associated internal alterations.

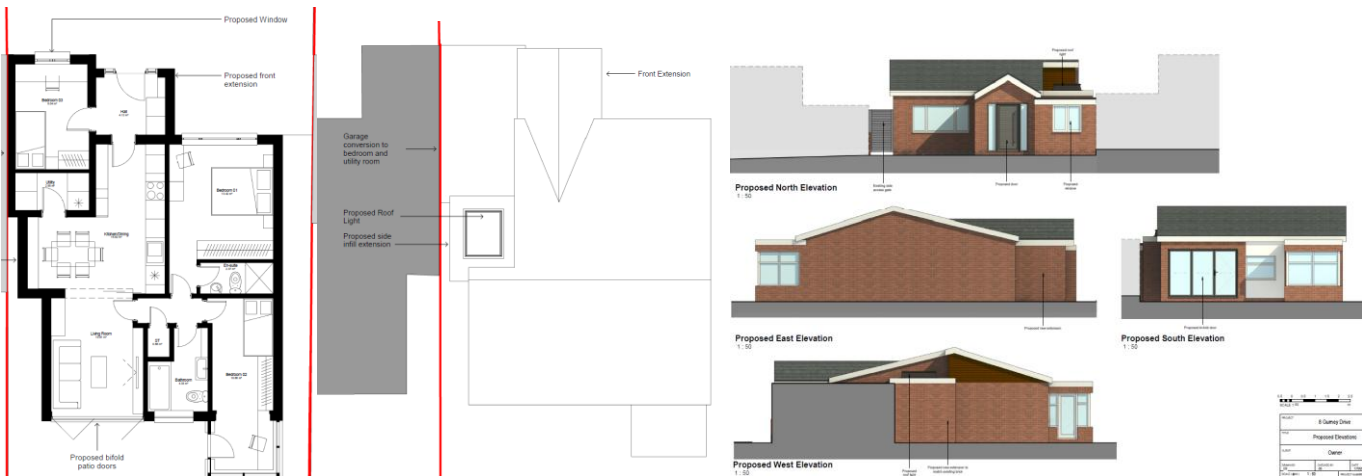
The proposed front extension would adjoin the existing projecting garage and would measure approximately 2.7m to the eaves and 3.5m in overall height. A grey entrance door with glazed side panels would be installed within the front elevation. The existing garage roller shutter door would be removed and replaced with a new white uPVC frame window, with matching brickwork. The proposed infill side extension would have a flat roof aligned with the existing eaves of the main dwelling. The extension would incorporate a rooflight projecting approximately 0.28m above the flat roof.

Following the proposed alterations, the dwelling would contain three bedrooms, a new utility room, an enlarged kitchen and an enlarged entrance hall. A new bi-fold door in grey would be installed in the rear elevation to serve the reconfigured living room. The existing chimney on the southeastern side of the dwelling would be removed.

All proposed brickwork would match the existing dwelling. The two new external doors would have grey uPVC frames, while all new windows would have white uPVC frames matching the existing windows.



Existing floor plans and elevations



Proposed floor plans and elevations

Plans considered:

- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-001-Location Plan, received on 18 June 2026.
- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-002-Existing Site Plan, received on 18 June 2026.
- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-003-Existing Ground Floor Plan, received on 18 June 2026.
- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-004-Existing Roof Plan, received on 18 June 2026.
- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-005-Existing Elevations, received on 18 June 2026.
- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-006-A-Proposed Site Plan, received on 31 July 2026.
- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-007-A-Proposed Floor Plan, received on 31 July 2026.
- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-008-A-Proposed Roof Plan, received on 31 July 2026.
- Drawing No. 200708-GD-XX-A-DR-009-A-Proposed Elevations, received on 31 July 2026.
- DAS 8 Gurney Drive Rev A, received on 31 July 2026.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/18/0557 – 1 Gurney Drive – Single-storey rear extension following the demolition of conservatories and erection of front porch. Approved 02/7/2018.

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed in front of the application site. The 21-day consultation period was from 10/07/2026 to 31/07/2026. No neighbour letters of representation have been received.



Site Notice

Communication with the applicant: The original submitted proposal was not considered acceptable in terms of the character and appearance of the front extension, as it would combine the existing garage with an increase in height which would not be proportionate to the main dwelling. It was considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing property and the street scene due to its excessive size and the arrangement of the proposed windows, door and canopy. The proposal was not considered to comply with Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. A revised proposal was subsequently submitted to address the concerns, and an email confirmed that external doors would be grey and all new windows would be white uPVC frames.

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 (NPPF) 2024
National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR3: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2021)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

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’.

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.

The proposed front porch and infill side extension are considered acceptable given their modest size and scale. The footprint of the existing garage would remain unchanged, with the proposals limited to the replacement of the roller shutter door with brickwork and windows.

The proposed front porch would feature a gable roof and project principally from the existing front entrance. As such, it would appear visually distinct from the garage and would remain small in scale and subordinate to the host dwelling. Furthermore, the porch would not project beyond the front building line of the existing garage, reinforcing its subservient appearance within the overall composition of the dwelling.

In respect of the infill side extension, it would project approximately 0.75m from the existing side wall and extend to a depth of approximately 2.6m, whilst maintaining the same eaves height as the main dwelling. Consequently, the extension is considered a modest addition that would not appear dominant or incongruous in relation to the scale and appearance of the existing property.

It is acknowledged that the gable roof serving the proposed porch would overhang part of the existing garage, resulting in a slightly unsympathetic relationship between the two elements when viewed from the

front. Whilst this feature is not considered to represent the most sympathetic design solution, the degree of harm arising is not considered sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.

Similarly, the raised rooflight and the visible eaves of the infill side extension are not considered to be particularly favourable additions from the proposed front elevation, as they introduce further variation to the existing roofscape. However, it is recognised that the increased height of the infill extension is necessary to provide functional internal living accommodation. In this instance, the benefits to the living conditions of the occupiers are considered to outweigh the limited visual harm arising. Furthermore, these elements would be set back behind the projecting garage and are therefore unlikely to be readily visible from the public realm.

The surrounding area contains a number of garage conversions, as well as an example of a front porch extensions. Accordingly, the principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable. Overall, the proposal would not result in material harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the wider street scene.

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 that 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 states that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space.

With regard to the proposed front porch, it would be constructed on an existing area of hardstanding within the front garden and would not be situated in close proximity to any adjoining properties. As such, the proposal is not considered likely to give rise to any adverse impacts on the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

In respect of the infill side extension, no unacceptable impacts have been identified in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing effects, or loss of light to the occupiers of No. 9 Gurney Drive, which is considered the most likely affected neighbouring property. This is because the proposed extension would have an eaves height comparable to that of the existing garage at No. 9 and would maintain a gap to the shared boundary.

The proposal would also retain a private rear garden area broadly comparable to the existing arrangement, thereby continuing to provide adequate external amenity space for the occupiers of the dwelling.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered to result in any material harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers or future residents. The proposal therefore complies with Policies H9, H10 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Parking

Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

The proposed garage conversion would result in the loss of one parking space. The site is located within Zone 3 and, upon completion of the development, would comprise a three-bedroom dwelling. In accordance with the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2021), a three-bedroom dwelling would typically be expected to provide two parking spaces.

However, it is noted that the existing garage measures approximately 2.3m by 4.8m and does not meet the minimum dimensions required for a usable parking space. Furthermore, a site inspection confirmed

that the garage is currently utilised for storage rather than the parking of a vehicle. As such, the existing garage makes little practical contribution towards meeting the parking needs of the property.

The site would continue to benefit from one off-street parking space within the front driveway. In these circumstances, the proposed garage conversion is not considered to result in a material change to the existing parking arrangement or give rise to unacceptable parking pressures on the surrounding highway network.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in parking and highway terms.

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

Approve with conditions

Time Limit

Approved Plans

Materials (As Specified)