

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0431 Householder planning permission

Address: SUMMERFIELD, RIVER ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7EH

Proposal: Proposed first-floor rear extension, new front porch, and rear dormer, with minor alterations to fenestration, and the construction of a swimming pool and changing room in the rear garden

Applicant: Juilitta Sofat

Received date: 30/03/2026

Target Decision date: 03/07/2026

Agreed Extension of Time until 25/08/2026

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of a two-storey detached dwellinghouse with a private frontage mainly laid to lawn and a substantial west, north-westerly facing rear garden. The property benefits from a carport and off-street parking for several vehicles accessed via a private gravel driveway, set behind a mature hedgerow to the front. The property has an original roof terrace facing the rear garden with wrought iron railings around – a feature of the property for this age. The property is not home to any trees protected with Tree Protection Orders (TPO) is not listed nor is it within a conservation area.

Date of site visit: 13th May 2026



Looking towards front elevation



Looking towards existing rear elevation



The rear garden looking westerly



The rear garden – looking easterly

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development consists of a first-floor rear extension, new front porch, and rear dormer, with minor alterations to fenestration, along with the construction of a swimming pool and changing room in the rear garden.

The proposed first floor rear extension consists of building above the existing lounge (on top of the original roof terrace) effectively squaring off the rear south-westerly corner of the property. The first-floor extension will have a pitched roof, with 3 No. skylights in the south facing roof slope with a rear facing inset balcony set back within the footprint, with floor to ceiling glazing and French doors with glass balcony screening balustrade. This extension will create a master bedroom with dressing room and ensuite.

The existing front porch will be extended to include a projecting pitched roof with additional supports.

At the rear of the property a new pitched roof dormer will be added to the original master bedroom to become bedroom 3.

The proposed development includes minor alterations to the fenestrations.

The development includes the construction of a sunken swimming pool in the rear garden measuring 8m in length by 4m in width with a new dedicated changing room facility. The existing summer house will be demolished, and the changing room extend to a footprint of 6m by 3m with an eave's height of 2.3m and a ridge height of 3m with a pent roof sloping down to the shared neighbouring boundary with 'Langtree'.

The proposed development includes hard and soft landscaping in the rear garden which includes areas of paving and hedge planting to improve screening to neighbouring properties and rear gardens.

Plans and documents considered:

Application Form

CIL Form

Drawing no: 02-00 Site Location Plan, dated Feb 26

Drawing no: 02-01 Block Plan As Existing, dated Feb 26

Drawing no: 03-00 Existing Floor Plans, dated Feb 26

Drawing no: 05-00 - Existing Elevations, dated Feb 26

Drawing no: 02-10 – Block Plan As Proposed, dated Feb 26

Drawing no: 02-11 - Proposed Pool Plan and Elevations, dated Mar 26 **superseded**

Received by the LPA on 30th March 2026

BS 5837:2012 Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Constraints Plan, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan (Advanced Tree Services) dated Apr 26 **superseded**

Received by the LPA on 6th May 2026

Preliminary Roost Assessment (Wessex Ecology Ltd) dated 6 May 26 **superseded**

Received by the LPA on 8th May 2026

Preliminary Roost Assessment Revised (Wessex Ecology Ltd) dated 6 May 26 **superseded**

Received by the LPA on 27th May 2026

Preliminary Roost Assessment Revised (Wessex Ecology Ltd) dated 19 May 26 **superseded**

Received by the LPA on 28th May 2026

BS 5837:2012 Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Advanced Tree Services) dated May 26

Arboricultural Method Statement (Advanced Tree Services) dated May 26

Tree Constraints Plan (Advanced Tree Services) dated 24th April 26

Tree Protection Plan (Advanced Tree Services) dated 28th May 26

Received by the LPA on 28th May 2026

Drawing no: 02-11 Rev A - Proposed Pool Plan and Elevations (with screw piles) dated Mar 26

Received by the LPA on 28th May 2026

Preliminary Roost Assessment Revised (Wessex Ecology Ltd) dated 19 May 26

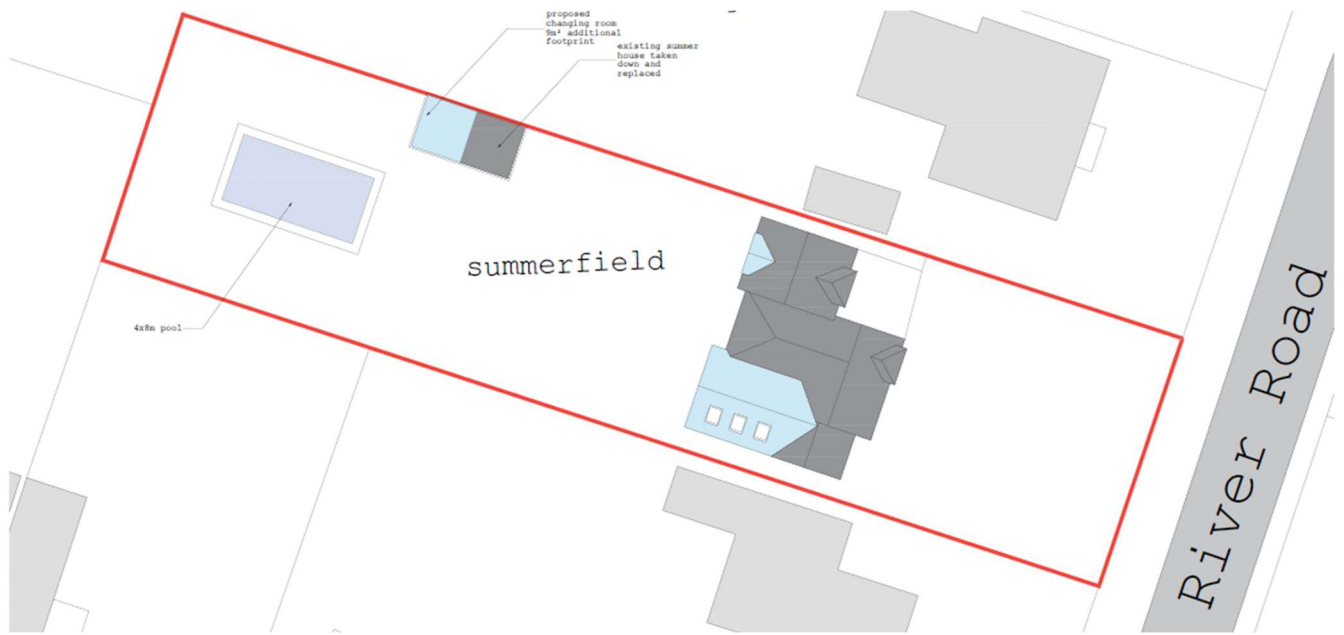
Received by the LPA on 4th June 2026

Drawing no: 02-12 – Proposed Landscape Intent Plan, dated Jun 26

Received by the LPA on 11th June 2026

Bat Emergence Survey (Wessex Ecology) dated 24th July 26

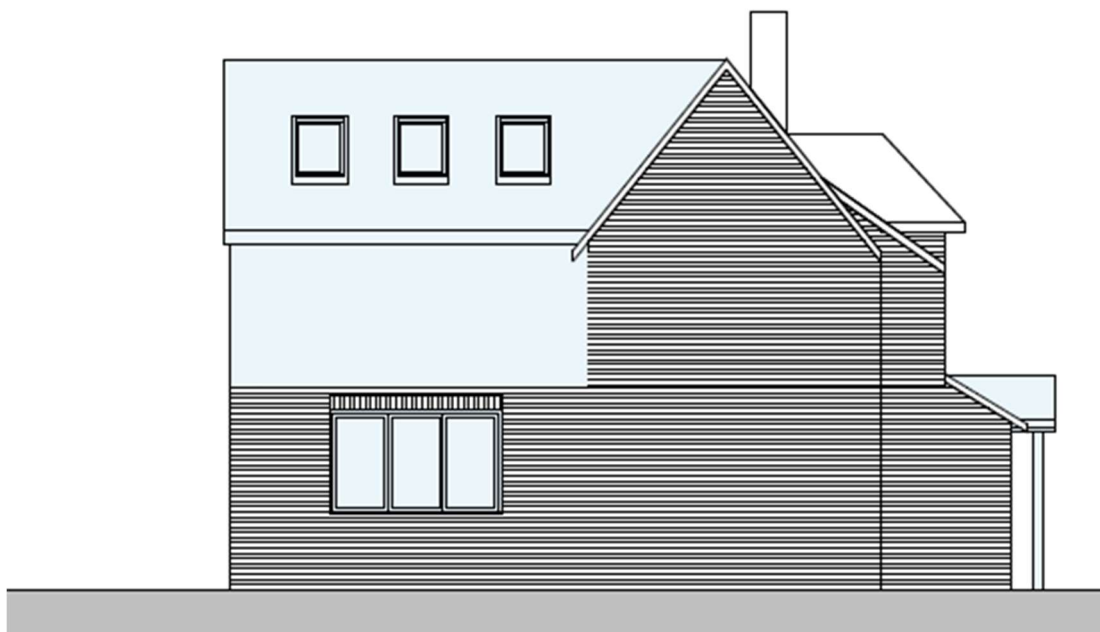
Received by the LPA on 3rd August 2026.



Proposed Block Plan



Proposed Front (East) Elevation



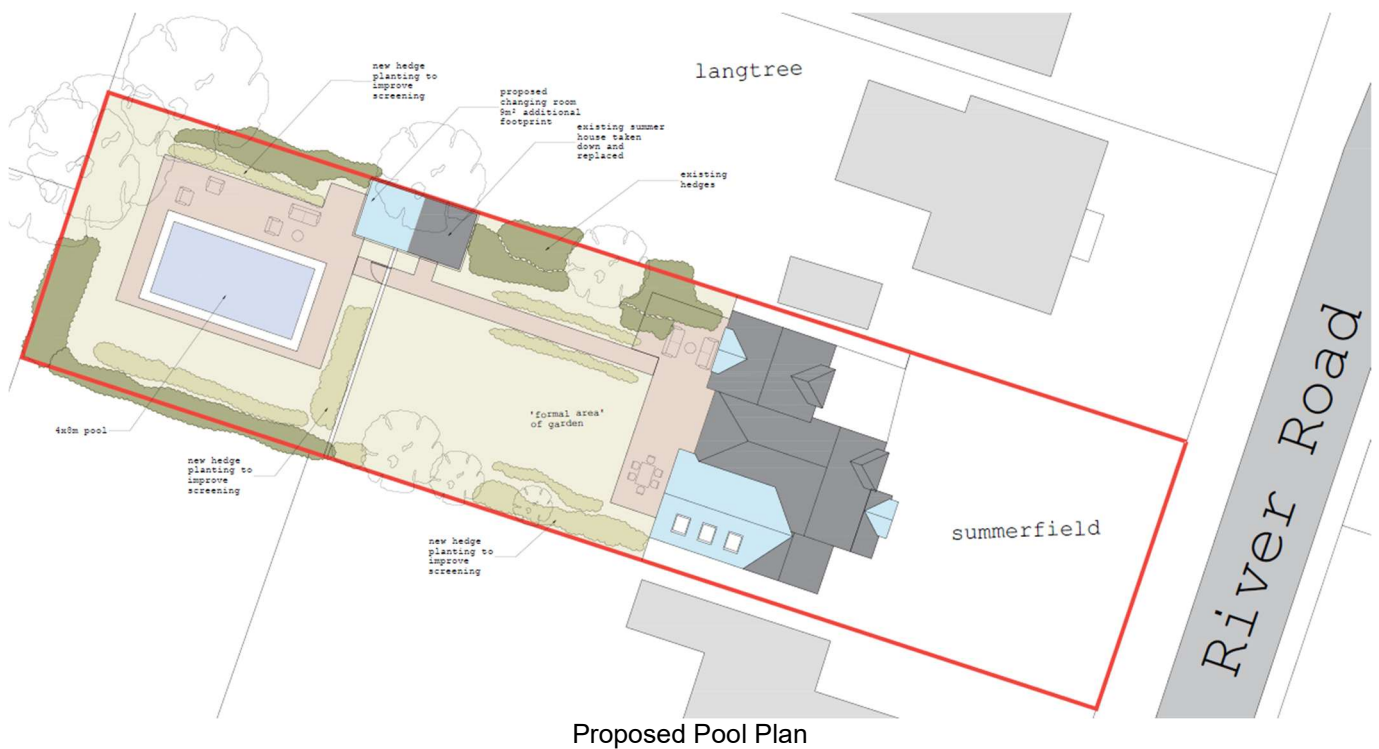
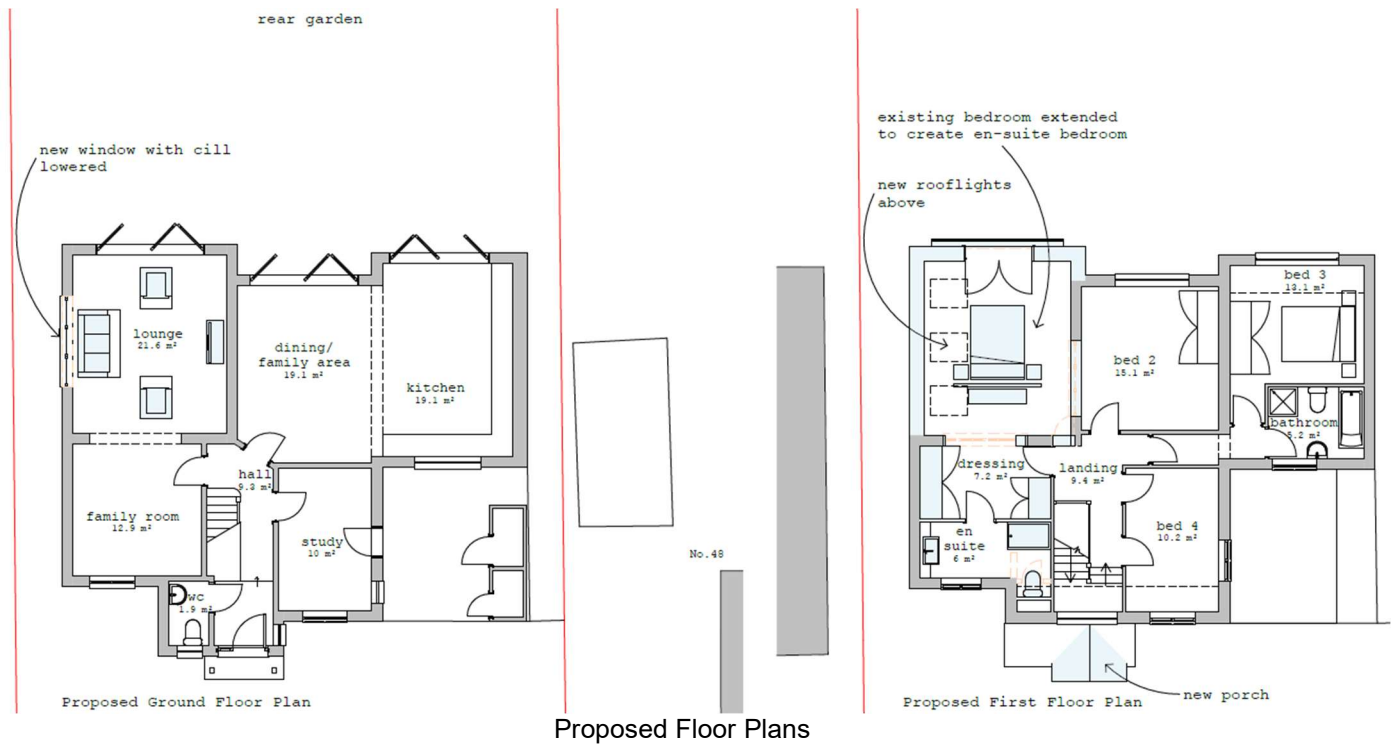
Proposed Side (North) Elevation

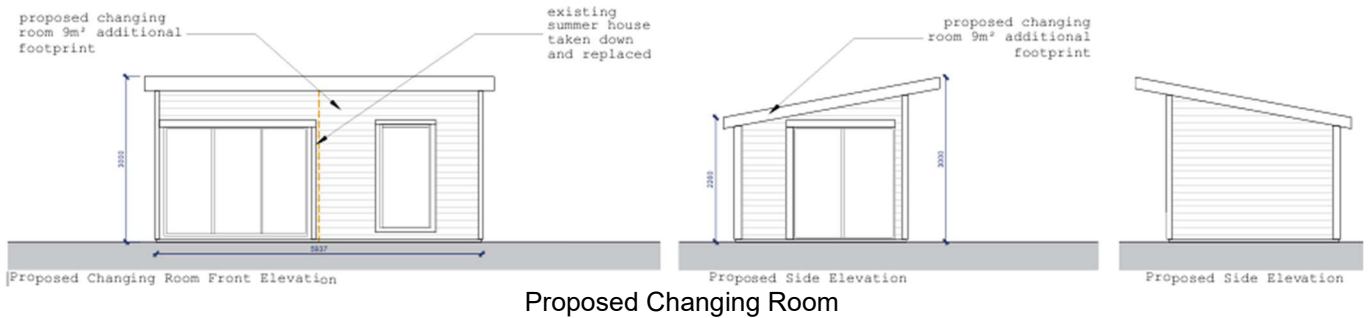


Proposed Rear (West) Elevation

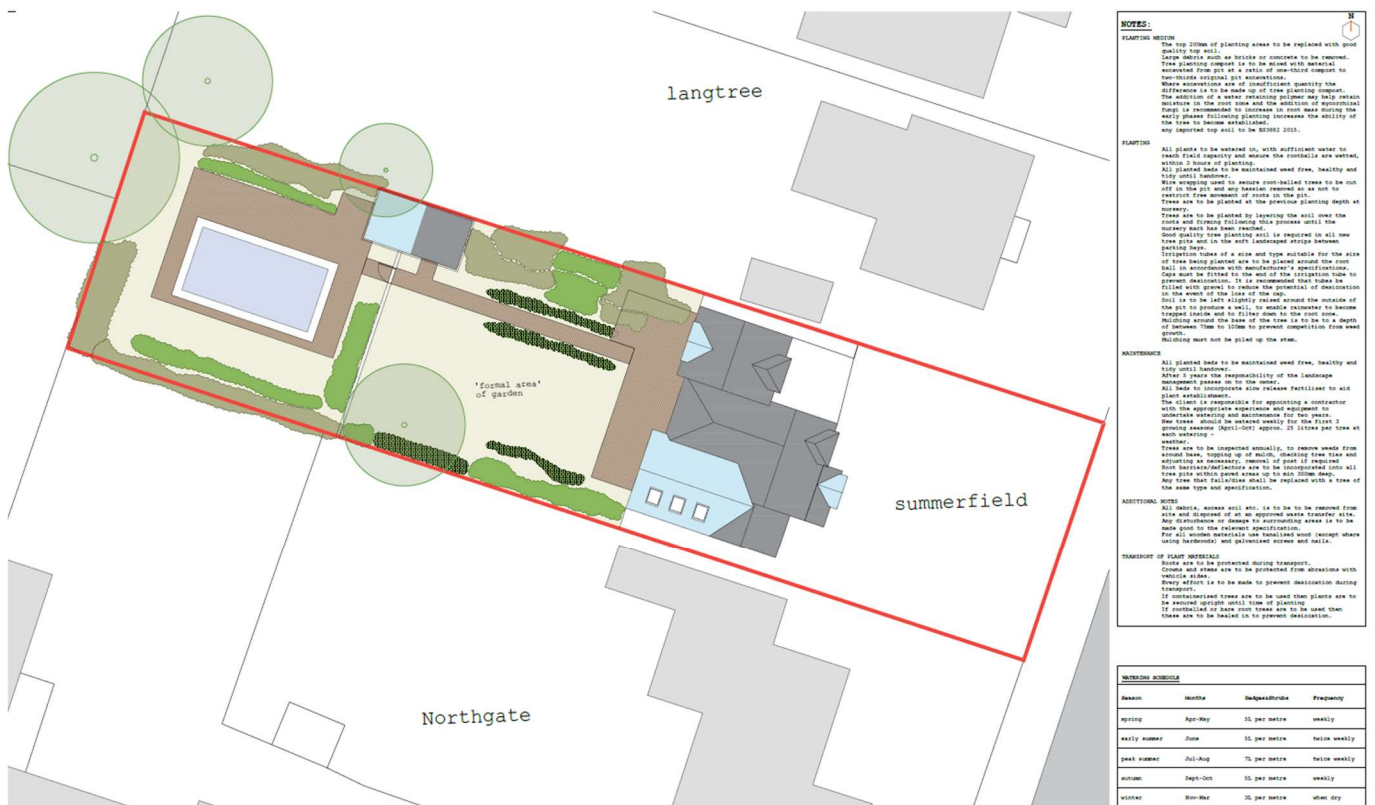


Proposed Side (South) Elevation





Proposed Changing Room



Proposed Landscaping Plan

NOTES:

PLANTING METHOD

The top 100mm of planting areas to be replaced with good quality top soil.

Large debris such as bricks or concrete to be removed.

Tree planting compost is to be mixed with material excavated from pit at a ratio of one-third compost to two-thirds original pit material.

Where excavations are of insufficient quantity the difference is to be made up of free planting compost.

The addition of a water retaining polymer may help retain moisture in the root zone and the addition of agricultural spirit is recommended to increase the root zone during the early phases following planting increases the ability of the tree to become established.

Any imported top soil to be BS3082 2011.

PLANTING

All plants to be watered in, with sufficient water to reach root capacity and ensure the substrate are wetted, within 3 hours of planting.

All planted beds to be maintained weed free, healthy and tidy until handover.

How wrapping used to secure root-balled trees to be cut off the pit and the material removed so as not to restrict free movement of roots in the pit.

Trees are to be planted at the specified planting depth at maturity.

Trees are to be planted by laying the soil over the roots and tamping the soil down.

Good quality tree planting soil is required in all new tree pits and in the soil landscaped strips between.

Stratification table of a site and top outside for the site of trees being planted are to be placed around the root ball to accommodate manufacturer's specifications.

Cups must be fitted to the end of the irrigation tube to prevent damage to the substrate.

Fill with water to ensure the potential of destination soil to be the best irrigator.

The pit to produce a well, to enable water to become trapped inside and to filter down to the root zone.

Building around the base of the tree is to be to a depth of between 10mm to 150mm to prevent competition from weed growth.

Building must not be piled up the stem.

MAINTENANCE

All planted beds to be maintained weed free, healthy and tidy until handover.

After 3 years the responsibility of the landscape management passes to the owner.

All beds to incorporate slow release fertiliser to aid plant establishment.

The client is responsible for appointing a contractor with the appropriate equipment and equipment to undertake watering and maintenance for the trees.

New trees should be watered weekly for the first 3 growing seasons (April-Sept) approx. 25 litres per tree at each watering - weather.

Trees are to be inspected annually, to ensure weeds from around base, clearing up of mulch, checking tree size and adjusting as necessary, remove 10% of require.

Root barriers/deflectors are to be incorporated into all tree pits within paved areas up to 100mm deep.

Any tree that fails/dies shall be replaced with a tree of the same type and specification.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

All debris, excess soil etc. is to be removed from site and disposed of at an approved waste transfer site.

Any disturbance or change to surrounding area is to be made good to the relevant specification.

For all exposed materials use reinforced wood (except where using aluminium) or galvanneal steel and mesh.

TRAFFIC OF LOADS

Loads are to be protected during transport.

Loads and areas are to be protected from damage with vehicle wheels.

Heavy traffic is to be made to prevent damage during transport.

If contained trees are to be used then plants are to be secured upright until time of planting.

If rootballed or bare root trees are to be used then trees are to be backed in to prevent desiccation.

Season	Month	Depth/Rate	Frequency
spring	Apr-May	10 per metre	weekly
early summer	June	10 per metre	twice weekly
peak summer	Jul-Aug	75 per metre	twice weekly
autumn	Sept-Oct	10 per metre	weekly
winter	Nov-Mar	10 per metre	when dry

3. RELATED PLANNING HISTORY

PL/21/0417 - Proposed construction of single storey front extension, garage conversion with 2 front dormers and insertion of bi-fold doors to rear elevation – Approved (not implemented)

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal:

- Ecology Officer comments (in italic) received throughout the application process**

The application site comprises a detached dwelling house with garden. The site lies on a Green Link as per Local Plan Policy EN12 It is proposed to erect a two-storey rear extension and add a swimming pool to the rear garden.

The bat survey report (Wessex Ecology, July 2026) includes the results from three emergence surveys carried out in Summer 2026 and confirms that building is being used by as a summer day roost by a maximum of four brown long-eared bats, one common pipistrelle and one soprano pipistrelle bats and that it is a small day roost of low conservation status.

It is therefore very likely that the proposed works will disturb or harm roosting bats. As such, a licence for development works affecting bats will need to be obtained from Natural England - for derogation from the provisions of the Habitat Regulations - before works which could impact upon the roost can commence.

Sections 6.3 to 6.5 provide mitigation, and compensation plans to ensure that bats are not harmed and that replacement roosting sites are provided and if these are implemented the favourable conservation status of bats will be maintained.

A planning authority's duty under The Habitat Regulations

Planning Authorities have statutory duties under The Habitat Regulations. It needs to be satisfied that a licence for development works affecting bats is likely to be granted by Natural England.

[The courts have considered the application of a planning authority's duty under the Habitat Regulations e.g. Morge vs Hampshire County Council (2010). In the Morge case the supreme court has ruled that it cannot see why planning permission should not be granted unless the proposed development would be unlikely to be licensed as a derogation from those provisions.]

Consideration of The Habitat Regulations

In this case it is considered that as long as a mitigation plan such as that given in the bat survey report is provided the proposed works would pass the three tests of The Habitat Regulations, and as such receive from Natural England a licence, because:

- 1. The development is for an imperative reason of overriding public interest of an economic nature as the development will contribute to a social and economic need of the local community for better housing (this is assuming that it is in compliance with other planning policy) - therefore Regulation 55(2)(e) can be met*
- 2. There is no satisfactory alternative to the development as without carrying out the works the aforementioned need would not be met - therefore Regulation 55(9)(a) can be met*
- 3. Appropriate mitigation can be provided which will ensure that there will not be a detrimental impact to the favourable conservation status of the bat species concerned - therefore Regulation 55(9)(b) can be met*

Planning policy

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (NB this document has not been revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted. However, bearing in mind the delay and cost that may be involved, developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development. Where this is the case, the survey should be completed and any necessary measures to protect the species should be in



place, through conditions and/or planning obligations, before the permission is granted. In appropriate circumstances the permission may also impose a condition preventing the development from proceeding without the prior acquisition of a licence under the procedure set out in section C below. “

As such, subject to the condition below, there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

Condition: *No works hereby permitted shall commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the council. Thereafter the mitigation and compensation measures approved in the licence shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved details. Should conditions at the site for bats change and / or the applicant conclude that a licence for development works affecting bats is not required the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing by the council prior to commencement of works.*

Reason: Building 1 hosts a bat roost which will be affected by the proposals. This condition will ensure that bats, a material consideration, are not adversely impacted upon by the proposed development, and that the Council demonstrates that the council has fulfilled its duties under the 2017 Habitat Regulations Trees - Planning Natural Environment

- **Natural Environment (Tree) officer comments (in italic) received throughout the application process**

I note the TPP now shows the pool and surrounding hard surfacing footprint, so now demonstrates that ground works are outside RPAs.

I note that it is acknowledged that the appearance of T2 Cypress will be detrimentally impacted by the works to cut it back to the boundary. Works to this B category tree could be avoided if the changing room building was slightly adjusted.

I note the tree fencing specification, which is not the default recommended by BS5837 but is fit for purpose in this case – deviation from the default, where appropriate, being covered by the BS.

I note that the route of services (which will be required) are not yet known and the author has given advice on installation. However, in this respect NJUG 4 is referred to in para 28, 55 & references. This was replaced in January this year; the correct reference now being ‘Street Works UK: Publications Volume 4 Guidelines for the planning, installation, and maintenance of Utility apparatus in proximity to Trees’ Issue 3: 2026. However, section 7.7 of BS5837 is also mentioned so I’m satisfied that the point is covered.

Some new hedging is indicated on the Proposed Pool Plan to ‘improve screening’ hence details of this will need to be secured.

External:

- A planning notice was attached to the telegraph pole adjacent to the application site, but on the opposite side of River Road due to limited street furniture. An additional planning notice was attached to the streetlamp column in Upper Warren Avenue near a property named ‘Belstone’. Notices were carefully positioned to cover possible properties concerned with the development. The notices were installed on 13th May and left in place for the 21-day statutory consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

5. 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 because of the development.

6. 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 2026
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

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 remain 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’.

7. 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 development at first floor level to the rear of the property to create the master bedroom has been drawn to fit in with the existing elevations of the host property. The proposed pitched roof will join the existing roof form and be no higher than the existing ridge line. The first-floor rear element is not considered to harm the appearance of the host property from the existing streetscene.

In terms of character and appearance to side facing neighbouring gardens and properties, the proposed development will be constructed from materials to match the host property and therefore the form and appearance is considered acceptable

The minor alterations to fenestrations, the new pitched roof dormer to rear and the front porch amendments are considered subservient to the wider property and considered acceptable.

The proposed swimming pool is considered acceptable in terms of character and appearance by virtue of its low-level appearance – the swimming pool will not exceed 3m in height.

The proposed changing room will stand in the same position and be of similar appearance to the existing summer house/garden store which is being demolished to make room. The changing room will have a Pent roof sloping down towards the neighbouring boundary. By virtue of the chosen design with low eaves and low ridge the changing room is considered acceptable in terms of character and appearance.

The proposed development of the changes to the host property and the creation of outdoor swimming pool and landscaping is considered acceptable and compliant with policies CC7 and H9 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 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.

The new first floor rear extension which replaces the existing roof terrace includes no new openings along the southern most boundary affording no opportunity for overlooking into neighbouring properties or beyond. The first-floor element does include 3 No. skylights, but these are set at height in the south facing roof slope, therefore mitigating potential harm of persons overlooking neighbouring properties.

The proposed inset-balcony at first-floor level is considered acceptable by virtue of it being set back within the external elevations. The inset balcony reduces opportunity to overlook neighbouring properties. However, it is worth noting that the original and existing roof terrace with wrought iron balustrade allows for more opportunity to overlook neighbouring properties.

The proposed first floor element and inset balcony are not considered harmful to neighbouring or residential amenity in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy or overshadowing.

New rear dormer is considered subservient along with the new side facing window at ground floor level. No harm as result of the dormer, no harm as result of the new south facing window due to it being at

ground level. The property affords a large gap between itself and the nearest neighbouring property with 1.8m boundary treatment.

No windows of the changing rooms are facing the adjacent neighbouring boundary.

The swimming pool by virtue of its low-level design is not considered harmful. It's worth noting that a swimming pool often falls under permitted development rights, meaning they don't require planning permission, although specific conditions must be adhered to such as not exceeding 50% of the garden coverage and not being in front of the principal elevation. Under this householder planning permission, the local planning authority can control harm to amenity by virtue of additional planting to create screening to neighbours. The agent has submitted an additional landscaping plan (Drawing no: 02-12 Proposed Landscape intent plan) which includes hedge and shrub planting along the northern most boundary with 'Langtree'. The landscaping plan includes hedging, trees and vegetation to be retained. The landscaping will be controlled via a condition which includes a maintenance schedule for a set number of years to allow the planting to fully establish.

The proposed developments are not considered harmful to residential or visual amenity and therefore the proposed development is compliant with policies CC8 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Tree matters

Policy EN14 states that Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.

Due to the proposed works being in proximity to mature trees mainly along the northern most boundary shared with the neighbouring property 'Langtree', the agent was asked to undertake and submit an Arboricultural Report. This report by (Advanced Tree Services) included a BS 5837:2012 Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Constraints Plan, Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan Revised and dated May 2026.

The submitted tree documents have been reviewed by the natural environment officer, the following points are worth noting in more detail:

- the Tree Protection Plan shows the pool and surrounding hard surfacing footprint, so now demonstrates that ground works are outside Root Protection Areas.
- The changing room building will be within the RPA of this tree) and that screw piles will be utilised – sufficient detail is provided on these, alongside the Proposed Pool plan confirming their use.
- The tree protection fencing specification is not the default recommended by BS5837, but officers confirm it is fit for purpose in this case.
- Officers are satisfied that works to renew underground services in January of this year have been carried out in line with the 'Street Works UK: Publications Volume 4 Guidelines for the planning, installation, and maintenance of Utility apparatus in proximity to Trees' Issue 3: 2026.
- The proposal includes new hedging which will provide screening to neighbours. Details of this will be secured via a condition.
- The storage of materials should be kept far away from the mature trees as possible including the mature hedgerow to the front of the property by way of a construction exclusion zone and protected with Heras fencing or similar.

In terms of tree matters, the proposed development is considered acceptable and therefore compliant with policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, subject to two conditions.

Ecology matters

Due to the property including works to the existing roof and roof-space, mature trees in proximity and the nearby Mapledurham Playing Fields – an area of dedicated green space which could host roosting bats, the applicant was required to submit a Preliminary Bat Roosting Assessment (PRA).

The ecology officer reviewed the PRA Preliminary Roost Assessment (Wessex Ecology Ltd) dated 6 May 2026 and 19 May 2026 and concluded that several Bat Emergence Surveys were required to establish the presence of roosting bats in the roof space of the property.

The ecology officer reviewed the submitted Bat Emergence Survey (Wessex Ecology) dated 24 July 2026 and concluded in this case it is considered that as long as a mitigation plan such as that given in the bat survey report is provided the proposed works would pass the three tests of The Habitat Regulations, and as such receive a Bat License from Natural England to carry out the proposed works to the property.

As such, subject to the condition below, there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

Condition:

No works hereby permitted shall commence until a licence for development works affecting bats has been obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (Natural England) and a copy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the council. Thereafter the mitigation and compensation measures approved in the licence shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved details. Should conditions at the site for bats change and / or the applicant conclude that a licence for development works affecting bats is not required the applicant is to submit a report to the council detailing the reasons for this assessment and this report is to be approved in writing by the council prior to commencement of works.

REASON: Building 1 hosts a bat roost which will be affected by the proposals. This condition will ensure that bats, a material consideration, are not adversely impacted upon by the proposed development, and that the Council demonstrates that the council has fulfilled its duties under the 2017 Habitat Regulations.

By virtue of the Preliminary Roosting Assessment and Bat Emergence Surveys undertaken at the property by Wessex Ecology, reviewed by the ecology officer and the requirement of a Bat Survey secured by a condition, the proposed development is considered compliant with policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Biodiversity

The proposed development includes a planting schedule and a Landscaping Plan. The proposal will include a mixture of shrub planting: the planted strips will include guelder rose and common dogwood planted in mixed groups.

The proposal will include Hedge planting: planted strips with a mix of native and domestic hedging. The proposed development will retain trees, vegetation and areas of lawn.

The proposed development is considered compliant with policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

8. 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.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

Subject to the following conditions:

TL1 (Time Limit Standard)
AP1 (Approved Plans)
M1 (Materials to Match)
L4A (Landscape Implementation As Specified)
L6 (Tree Protection Measures As Specified)
L7A (Arboricultural Method Statement As Specified)
L11 (Bat License (To Be Approved))
PD6 (Ancillary Domestic Use)

Subject to the following informatives:

IF1 Positive and Proactive Working – approval
IF5 Terms
IF6 Building Control
IF7 Complaints about construction
IF8 Encroachment
I12 Bats & works to roofs
I16 Advice to adhere to approved Arboricultural Methods Statement
I26 Advice that PD rights do not override tree legislation
I27 Advice about installation of underground services
I29 Advice to use tree protection

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Reason: Building 1 hosts a bat roost which will be affected by the proposals. This condition will ensure that bats, a material consideration, are not adversely impacted upon by the proposed development, and that the Council demonstrates that the council has fulfilled its duties under the 2017 Habitat Regulations Trees - Planning Natural Environment