

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0872 Householder planning permission

Address: 9 BARNSDALE ROAD, READING, RG2 7JH

Proposal: Garage conversion to domestic use with relevant alterations; replacement of one rear window with one double door; repositioning of the front door further forward (amended).

Applicant: Mr Mubashar Jaffar

Received date: 01/07/2026

Target Decision date: 26/08/2026

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located at the junction of Windermere Road and Barnsdale Road, approximately one property away from the junction of Barnsdale Road and Ennerdale Road.

The property benefits from a hard-surfaced front garden enclosed by a timber fence with concrete posts and gravel boards, together with a spacious rear garden. An attached side garage is located on the southern side of the dwelling.

No. 9 Barnsdale Road forms one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings with No. 7 Barnsdale Road, sharing a largely identical architectural appearance. The dwelling is also positioned at a slight angle in relation to No. 11 Barnsdale Road.

The site is not a listed building and is not located within a designated conservation area. Furthermore, the property is not subject to an Article 4 Direction. As such, the property's permitted development rights remain intact.



Front and Rear view of 9 Barnsdale Road, taken by the case officer on 20/07/2026

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the existing attached garage to a home office/gym.

The proposed development would largely retain the existing footprint of the garage, although the external walls would be thickened to facilitate its conversion to habitable accommodation. The proposal would also involve alterations to the existing roof, replacing the current flat roof with a combination of a mono-pitched roof to the front and a flat roof section to the rear. The mono-pitched roof element would measure approximately 2.7m in eaves height and 3.8m in maximum height. The rear flat roof section would have an overall height of approximately 3m.

In terms of external alterations, the existing garage door would be removed and replaced with brickwork and a large window opening. In addition, one ground-floor rear window serving the main dwelling would be replaced with double doors. The proposal would also involve bringing the existing front door forward through the construction of a small infill extension.

According to the submitted application form and plans, all proposed external materials, including the wall finishes, roofing materials, windows and doors, would match those of the existing dwelling.



Existing and proposed floor plans and elevations

Plans considered

- Drawing No. PL001 – Existing and proposed floor plans and elevations, dated June 2026, received 25th August 2026.
- Drawing No. PL002 – Site plan, dated June 2026, received 1st July 2026.
- Drawing No. PL003 – Location Plan, dated June 2026, received 1st July 2026.

Planning history

None.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- RBC Transport Development Control – No objections.

The proposed development would result in the loss of the existing garage, which is intended to be converted to ancillary accommodation. This would lead to the loss of one off-street parking space.

No parking layout has been submitted demonstrating how two in-curtilage parking spaces would be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. However, from a review of available aerial imagery, the front forecourt appears to be hard surfaced and of sufficient size to accommodate two vehicles within the site.

On this basis, it is considered that adequate off-street parking can be retained, and therefore there are no highway or transportation objections to the proposal.

- A site notice was displayed in front of the application site. The 21-day consultation period was from 20/07/2026 to 10/08/2026. No letters of representation have been received.



Site notice

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.

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' (Policy S3). The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026

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

TR5: 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’.

5. APPRAISAL

Land use – conversion of garage for domestic use

Policy H9 specifies that ancillary accommodation will be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately. The proposal involves the conversion of a garage, with the floor plans indicating the resultant room will be used as an office/gym, with a toilet and shower room also shown to be proposed internally, accessed off the office/gym room. As per paragraph 4.4.76 of the supporting text to Policy H9, there are characteristics where ancillary accommodation could be considered a separate dwelling. This is specified below, together with officer comments in italics, assessing these proposals accordingly:

- Is self-sufficient in terms of facilities e.g. kitchens and bathrooms; *The proposal indicates a bathroom, but not a kitchen – however, this could be provided with simple internal alterations.*
- Has its own front door without internal links to the main house; and/or *The front elevation includes a window, with the office/gym accessed internally from the front of the building. To the rear there is a separate back door, but external access to this is not possible via the application site, as the garage is set against the boundary.*
- Has its own external facilities, e.g. access, drive, garden; or has scope for these external facilities to be easily created. *There is considered to be scope for these external facilities to be separated from the main dwelling.*

Given the above, it is considered necessary, relevant and reasonable in this instance to include a planning condition to ensure that the accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling. With this condition secured, the proposals are considered to comply with Policy H9.

Character and Appearance

Policy CC7 requires that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and any important existing building line.

The proposal includes bringing the front door forward through the infilling of the existing recessed entrance. Whilst this is not considered to be the most favourable design element, as the recessed entrance is a characteristic feature shared with the paired dwelling at No. 7 Barnsdale Road and is also evident on a number of properties along the street, it is acknowledged that efforts have been made to reflect the property's existing character. In this regard, the proposed front door incorporates an arched head, which echoes the appearance of the original entrance arrangement, and similar entrance treatments can be found elsewhere within the street.



Front view of 4 Barnsdale Road and 9 Windermere Road, captured from Google Street View

Taking these factors into account, the proposed infill extension and repositioned front door are not considered to result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling, nor would they detract from the visual quality of the wider street scene.

The proposed garage conversion would involve alterations to the existing roof form, including an increase in roof height and changes to the front elevation. However, the scale of the development is modest, and the proposed mono-pitched roof reflects the roof form of the main dwelling. As such, the revised garage structure would appear as a sympathetic addition to the host property.

Furthermore, a number of neighbouring properties have undertaken similar garage conversion or alteration works. Consequently, the proposal would not appear incongruous within the surrounding area or result in harm to the character and appearance of the street scene.



Front view of 13 Barnsdale Road and 22 Stanhope Road, captured from Google Street View

Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in design terms and would not harm the character and appearance of both the host dwelling and the surrounding area. The development is therefore considered to comply 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 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 TR5 requests 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 infill extension to the front elevation and the replacement of a rear window with one double door would not give rise to any harmful impacts on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, having regard to the limited nature and scale of the works.

In relation to the garage conversion, the property most likely to be affected is No. 11 Barnsdale Road, which is positioned at a slight angle to the application site.

The proposal does not include any new side-facing windows and, therefore, would not give rise to overlooking or loss of privacy.

The proposed gym/home office would retain the footprint of the existing garage and would not project beyond the principal front or rear building lines of either the host dwelling or neighbouring properties. It is noted that the garage at No. 11 includes a rear-facing opening and, due to its shorter depth, already experiences some restriction in daylight resulting from its own outbuilding and the existing garage at No. 9. Whilst the proposed increase in height would lead to a further degree of light loss to the neighbouring garage, this room is not understood to serve as habitable accommodation. Consequently, the additional impact is not considered sufficient to warrant refusal of the application.

Although the existing flat roof would be replaced with a combination of a mono-pitched roof to the front and a flat roof section to the rear, the increase in height would be relatively modest, with the flat roof section measuring approximately 0.4m higher than the existing roof. Furthermore, the structure would remain set away from the shared boundary and would be separated from the main dwelling at No. 11 by the neighbouring garage. As such, the development is not considered to result in any unacceptable overbearing impact on neighbouring occupiers.

With regard to parking provision, the existing hardstanding within the front curtilage is capable of accommodating two off-street parking spaces, in accordance with the Council's adopted Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in parking and highway terms.

Overall, the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and would provide adequate parking provision. The development is therefore considered to comply with Policies CC8, H9 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Other matters: front boundary fence

Whilst not forming part of the application, it is noted that the property benefits from a front boundary fence enclosing the front curtilage.

The site retains its permitted development rights. Under Class A, Part 2, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the erection of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure adjacent to a highway used by vehicular traffic is not permitted development where the height exceeds 1 metre above ground level.

Based on observations made during the officer site visit and available Google Street View imagery, the front boundary fence appears likely to exceed 1 metre in height. If this is the case, planning permission may have been required for its installation.

It is understood from historic Google Street View imagery that the fence may have been in place for a number of years. However, the lawfulness of the structure and any potential immunity from enforcement action have not been assessed as part of the current application, and no formal conclusions are drawn in this regard.

Given that the fence falls outside the scope of the current proposal, it has not affected the assessment or recommendation of this application. Nevertheless, the applicant may wish to regularise the situation through the submission of a separate planning application or an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness, should formal confirmation of its planning status be required.

An informative concerning the matter of this front boundary fence would be included in the decision notice.

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

APPROVED

Recommended Conditions:

Time limit
Approved plans
Materials
Accommodation remains ancillary

Informatives
Front boundary fence