

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands ward

App Ref: PL/25/1685 Full planning permission

Address: 8 BLENHEIM ROAD, READING, RG1 5NQ

Proposal: Part retrospective conversion of existing C3 House to 2 apartments, 1 x one bedroom apartment and 1 x 2 bedroom apartment and part small rear first floor extension.

Applicant: Mr Ghaddimi

Received date: 24/11/2025

Target Decision date: 09/09/2026 (agreed extension of time)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

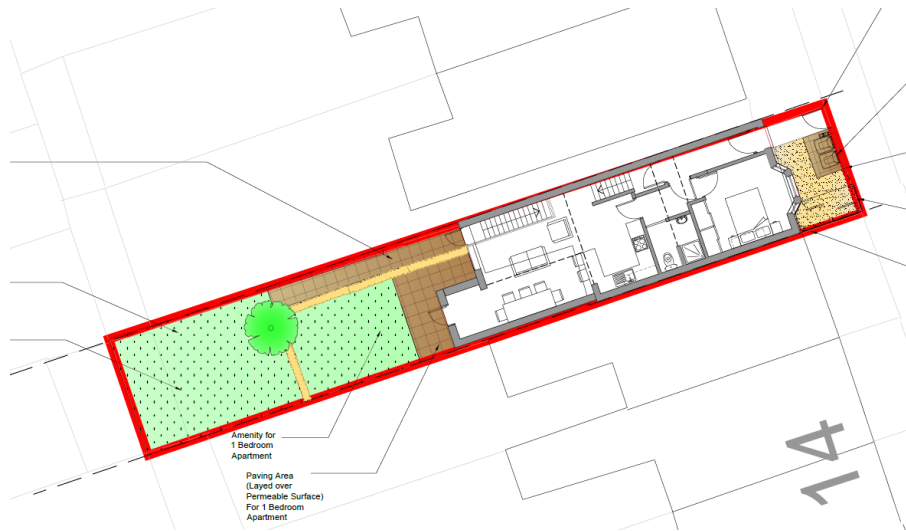
1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is an end of terrace two-storey property with loft accommodation. It is located on the west side of Blenheim Road. The property includes single storey and dormer extensions implemented relatively recently. The property has already been converted to 2x flats without planning permission, and this is subject to an Enforcement Notice. The surrounding area is characterised by long and narrow terraced homes, many of which are student house-shares. The site is within an Air Quality Management Area and within an Article 4 Direction area, preventing the change of use from Class C3 to Class C4 under permitted development. The site is not in a conservation area.



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the retrospective conversion of the property to 2x flats (Class C3), and a proposed first floor rear extension over the existing single storey rear extension to accommodate additional internal space for the first floor flat, creating an access to the rear garden. The rear garden is proposed to be divided to allow each flat to have private outdoor space.



2.1. Information submitted:

Planning Statement
A-1000 Location Plan
A-1100 Existing and Proposed Elevations
A-1120 Existing and Proposed Side Elevations
A-1010 Existing and Proposed Floor Plans
A-1020 Existing and Proposed Roof Plans
A-1200 Landscape Plan
Received by the LPA on 24 November 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- **PL/20/2166/CLP** Certificate of Lawfulness for Proposed single storey rear extension. Permitted.
- **PL/21/2060/HPA** Rear extension measuring 6.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.9m, and 2.9m in height to eaves level. Notification of the construction of an extension under class A Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. Prior Approval Not Required.
- **PL/21/1776/HPA** Rear extension measuring 6.0m in depth, with a maximum height of 2.9m, and 2.9m in height to eaves level. Notification of the construction of an extension under class A Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. Prior Approval Refused.
- **PL/21/1772/CLP** Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed rear dormer. Permitted.
- **PL/23/0309/FUL** - Conversion of existing C3 House to 2 apartments, 1 x one bedroom ground floor apartment and 1 x 2 bedroom first and second floor apartment after extension to the ground floor and loft conversion (including rear dormer) – Retrospective. Application withdrawn.
- **PL/25/0898** – Pre-application advice for Option 1 Proposed adding a rear staircase from roof garden to rear amenity. Option 2 Proposed adding a single bedroom to apartment 1 and adding a roof garden to apartment 2. Advice provided to applicant.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Transport Development Control:
 - Local parking standards are set out in the RBC, Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which takes into account the accessibility of the

site. In line with the adopted parking standards, the 2 units would require 1.5 parking spaces therefore increasing demand for on street parking.

- Blenheim Road and the surrounding road network are located within an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Zone. Under the Borough's current parking standards, this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area. If this application is approved, there should be an assumption that any future occupants of the units will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits which should be covered by condition and informative. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on-street parking in the area.
- It is stated that the only suitable location for storing recycling and refuse bins is in the front garden, enabling on-street servicing to occur from Blenheim Road as per the existing situation. However, it is recommended that the Council's Waste department is consulted to ensure that the existing bin storage is suitable for the number of units proposed given that the area is small.
- In accordance with the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision of 0.5 cycle storage spaces per unit should be provided within a communal lockable store equipped with "Sheffield" style stands. It is indicated that cycle storage will be located at the front of the site but I am concerned that the area is too small to accommodate secure cycle and bin storage. Therefore, full details of the layout and specification should be submitted prior to determination. *Officer note – a larger bike store at the front of the site would be detrimental to the appearance of the site and has therefore not been requested.*

- RBC Planning Enforcement:

A planning enforcement notice was issued on 06/06/2025 requiring the owner to cease and revert to a single dwellinghouse. The notice was not appealed and took effect on 07/07/2025. It gives the owner 6 months to comply.

A site notice was displayed on site. No letters of representation were received.

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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Planning Policy Framework August 2026 (NPPF)

S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

S4: Principles of development within settlements

HO7: Meeting the need for homes

HO8: Providing affordable homes

L2: Making effective use of land

L3: Achieving appropriate densities

DP3: Key principles for well-designed spaces

TR3: Street design, access and parking

P3: Living conditions and pollution

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 (as amended)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) (RBLP)

Policy CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3 – Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy CC5 – Waste Minimisation and Storage

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

Policy H1 – Provision of housing

Policy H2 – Density and mix

Policy H3 – Affordable housing

Policy H8 – Residential Conversions

Policy H10 – Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Other documents

Affordable Housing SPD 2021

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

Residential Conversions SPD 2023

Reading Borough Local Plan Partial Update Submission Draft (2025) (LPPU)

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 draft of the Local Plan Partial Update was submitted on 9th May 2025 and examined earlier this year. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is in the process of taking place. Stage 1 hearings were held virtually on 11th and 12th November 2025. Stage 2 hearings took place in February 2026.

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 advice given below and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

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.

6. APPRAISAL

6.1. Land use matters

Policy HO7 (Meeting the need for homes) of the NPPF requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of providing homes which contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of

the community. Policy H1 (Provision of housing) of the LPPU identifies the needs for homes based on the latest evidence.

Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) of the RBLP addresses proposals for the conversion of existing houses into self-contained flats. In particular, the policy states that conversion of properties to self-contained flats will only be acceptable where:

- *The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;*
- *The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;*
- *There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*
- *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*
- *Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and*
- *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.*

Additionally, in the case of conversions of houses to self-contained flats:

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross;*
- *At least 25% of the units formed and, where there are 4 or fewer units at least one unit of accommodation, should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms.*

The above Policy is supported by the Residential Conversions SPD 2023.

There is a documented need for family-sized properties across the Borough, so the Local Plan restricts conversions of houses to flats that are not of an appropriate size. As per policy H8, proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats will only be acceptable where ... the property measures more than 120m². The Residential Conversions SPD Checklist 7 states that a property must have been this size for at least ten years before the application is determined, to avoid a situation where homes are extended purely for the purposes of enabling a conversion to flats or HMOS.

The house as originally built, and before recent extensions were constructed through the permitted development process, originally measured less than 120m² – approximately 97m². This is significantly below the 120m² requirement. The single storey rear extension and rear dormer window/loft conversion constructed did not form part of the original dwelling when it was built and are, therefore, discounted in the context of Policy H8.

Although the size of the property fails to meet the requirements of Policy H8, this has been balanced against the provision of a 2-bedroom unit to the first floor flat, which means that there has not been the loss of family-sized accommodation in this case as the original dwelling also had two bedrooms. Each flat meets the minimum space standards. As there is no net loss and a similar type of accommodation has been provided, the conversion is considered acceptable on this occasion, subject to all other material considerations.

6.2. Design and character

Policy DP3 (Key principles for well-designed places) of the NPPF sets out the requirements for good design, including liveability and built form. The expectations are in line with the existing and emerging Policy CC7 (Design and the public realm) of the RBLP, which seeks to ensure that new development

enhances and preserves the local character. The wording of this policy is greatly expanded within the emerging LPPU. Residential Conversions SPD Appendix 4 Checklist 1 states “*Any external alterations must be carried out sympathetically, respecting the physical character of the area.*”

A first-floor rear extension over an existing single storey rear extension is proposed to accommodate an additional staircase for the first floor flat to create an access to the rear garden. The extension is considered modest in size and not considered out of character for the terrace of properties which have various rear extensions. The internal layout has been improved from the existing in relation to the internal stacking of rooms and the staircase appropriately accommodated to prevent loss of internal space for the ground floor flat. The proposed design is considered an acceptable resolution to the issues previously raised during the pre-application stage.

6.3. Residential amenity

Policy P3 (Living conditions and pollution) of the NPPF requires proposals to provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and neighbouring residents, in line with local policies. Policy CC8 (Safeguarding amenity) of the RBLP requires all development to have no detrimental impact on neighbouring residents and future occupiers. Policy H10 (Private and communal outdoor space) requires all residential units to have access to reasonably sized outdoor amenity space. Residential Conversions SPD Appendix 4 Checklist items 5-11 apply.

As outlined above, the previously raised concern regarding the inappropriate stacking of rooms has been resolved by the proposed floor plans. The other main issue raised at the pre-application stage was the lack of access to outdoor amenity space for the first floor flat, as it is the only family-sized unit within the building. This has been sufficiently resolved with the proposed layout changes and rear extension. The subdivision of the rear garden into two private gardens is considered appropriate to maintain defensible space for the ground floor flat. The proposed subdivision is reversible and, therefore, considered acceptable.

There are no identified risks to neighbouring residents.

6.4. Transport and parking

Policy TR4 (Street design, access and parking) of the NPPF proposals to give first priority to sustainable modes of transport (walking, wheeling and cycle movements) and so far as possible facilitating easy access to high quality public transport.

Policy TR5 (Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging) of the RBLP requires all development to provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the location and accessibility of the site to the sustainable transport facilities in the Borough. Policy CC5 (Waste minimisation and storage) of the RBLP requires development to demonstrate adequate, well-designed spaces for waste storage. Residential Conversions SPD Appendix 4 Checklist items 14-18 apply.

The application site has no off-road parking, and none is proposed. The occupants will not be eligible for parking permits at the site due to the high demand in the area, however, the site is located close to nearby bus stops connecting the area to Reading centre, and as such this arrangement is considered acceptable.

Cycle parking is proposed at the front of the site, however, it is unclear if it would fit within the frontage considering the number of bins required. A dedicated shed at the frontage is likely to add to the visual clutter in the street scene, and therefore it is not recommended to secure further details via a condition.

6.5. Affordable housing

Policy HO8 (Providing affordable homes) of the NPPF requires proposals to meet or exceed development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing.

Policy H3 (Affordable housing) of the RBLP states *“Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading: (...) on sites of 1 – 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.”*

The applicant has agreed to enter into a S106 legal agreement to secure a policy-compliant affordable housing contribution.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed in line with national and locally adopted policies and is considered in accordance with those policies.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION

Recommended conditions:

1. Time Limit – 1 year
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials to match
4. Parking permits (notification to LPA)
5. Parking permits (notification to occupants)