

PLANNING STATEMENT

30 Battle Street, Reading RG1 7NU

Conversion of the Property to Provide Two Self-Contained Residential Dwellings, Together with a Semi-Basement Extension and Associated Alterations

Prepared by: The Keen Partnership
September 2026

1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared by The Keen Partnership in support of a full planning application at 30 Battle Street, Reading RG1 7NU.

The lawful planning use of the property is as a single dwellinghouse. It has subsequently been converted without planning permission and is currently arranged and occupied as three self-contained flats. The unauthorised conversion has recently come to the attention of Reading Borough Council's Planning Team and the applicant is therefore seeking to regularise the planning position through the submission of this application.

Importantly, the application does not seek to retain the existing three-flat arrangement. Instead, it proposes to reduce the number of self-contained units from three to two and establish a more appropriate long-term residential configuration comprising one smaller dwelling principally at semi-basement level and one substantially larger two-bedroom family dwelling occupying the upper floors.

This configuration is similar to the pattern of residential accommodation found within the surrounding area, where a number of traditional terraced properties have basement or lower-ground-floor accommodation in separate occupation with the upper floors forming a separate dwelling.

The proposal therefore provides an opportunity to resolve the existing unauthorised situation positively, reduce the intensity of the current subdivision and secure a lawful arrangement which retains family-sized accommodation within the property.

2.0 Site and Character of the Surrounding Area

30 Battle Street is a traditional terraced property situated within an established residential area to the west of Reading town centre. Battle Street is characterised by traditional terraced properties positioned relatively close to the highway, with narrow plots and gardens extending to the rear.

Whilst the underlying architectural character remains that of traditional terraced housing, the pattern of residential occupation in the surrounding area is mixed. A number of properties have been subdivided to provide self-contained residential accommodation, including configurations where basement or lower-ground-floor accommodation forms one dwelling and the upper floors form a separate dwelling.

The configuration proposed at No. 30 is therefore similar to the established arrangement of other converted properties within the surrounding area. The proposal for a smaller dwelling at semi-basement level with a larger family dwelling occupying the upper floors would not introduce an unfamiliar form of residential occupation into Battle Street.

This local context is relevant when considering the effect of the development upon the character of the area. The proposal would continue the established residential use of the building and would provide a form of subdivision which is compatible with the existing pattern of residential accommodation in the locality.

The site is also situated in an accessible urban location with good access to Reading town centre, public transport, shops, employment and other day-to-day services. It therefore represents an appropriate and sustainable location for residential accommodation.



Figure 1 - Location Plan (PL-01)

3.0 Planning History and Existing Position

The lawful planning use of 30 Battle Street is as a single dwellinghouse.

The property has subsequently been converted without planning permission and is currently arranged and occupied as three self-contained flats. The unauthorised subdivision has now been identified by Reading Borough Council's Planning Team and the applicant wishes to address the matter positively by seeking planning permission for an alternative and more appropriate arrangement.

The present application therefore does not seek retrospective permission to retain three flats. Instead, it proposes that the property be rationalised to provide two self-contained dwellings, thereby reducing the intensity of the existing subdivision.

The proposed arrangement would comprise a smaller dwelling principally at semi-basement level together with a substantially larger two-bedroom dwelling occupying the upper floors. This retains a meaningful element of family-sized accommodation within the building whilst also reflecting the established pattern of basement and upper-floor residential accommodation found elsewhere within the surrounding area.

The application has consequently been submitted to regularise the planning position and establish an appropriate lawful use of the property going forward.

4.0 Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the property to provide two self-contained residential dwellings together with a semi-basement extension and associated alterations.

Flat 1 would principally occupy the semi-basement and would provide approximately 43.3 sq m of accommodation, including a bedroom of approximately 11.4 sq m and an open-plan kitchen/living area of approximately 21.0 sq m.

Flat 2 would occupy the upper parts of the property and would provide approximately 86.5 sq m of accommodation. It would comprise two bedrooms together with living accommodation, kitchen, bathroom facilities and a study. The proposal deliberately retains this larger unit as family-sized accommodation rather than seeking to maximise the number of smaller flats within the building.

The proposed arrangement is materially less intensive than the current unauthorised three-flat configuration and is similar in form to residential conversions evident within the surrounding area.

Separate external amenity areas would be provided for the two dwellings. Access to the rear garden from the upper dwelling would be reinstated through a rear doorway, with occupants crossing the flat roof of the proposed semi-basement extension to reach their allocated garden. A privacy screen would be incorporated to provide appropriate separation between the two households.

The separate loft conversion and rear dormer are being progressed concurrently under permitted development and do not form part of this full planning application.

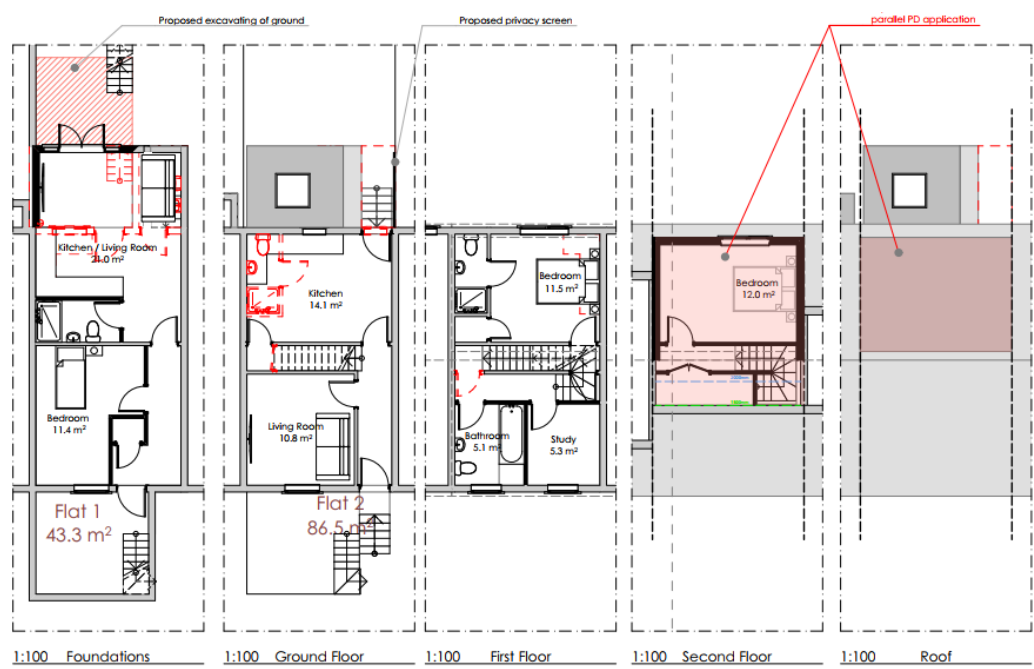


Figure 2 – Proposed Floor Plans showing Flat 1 and Flat 2

5.0 Planning Policy

The application should be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The principal development plan document is the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted November 2019. The following policies are considered particularly relevant to the proposal:

Policy CC1 – Sustainable Development

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

Policy H1 – Provision of Housing

Policy H3 – Affordable Housing

Policy H8 – Residential Conversions

Policy TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR5 – Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Particular regard has also been given to Reading Borough Council's Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document, adopted March 2023, together with relevant national planning policy.

Policy H8 is of particular relevance to this application. It seeks to ensure that residential conversions respect the character of their surroundings, do not result in unacceptable harm through intensification or loss of privacy and amenity, retain an appropriate mix of housing and provide satisfactory accommodation together with appropriate servicing, refuse and cycle arrangements.

The Residential Conversions SPD provides further guidance on the application of Policy H8 and the assessment of proposals to convert existing houses into self-contained flats.

The proposal is considered against these requirements below.

6.0 Principle of Development

The lawful use of the property is as a single dwellinghouse. However, the material circumstances of the application include the fact that the building has already been converted and is currently occupied as three self-contained flats without planning permission. The applicant is not seeking to perpetuate that arrangement. The proposal represents a positive response to the planning issue which has been identified by reducing the existing subdivision from three flats to two dwellings and creating a considerably more balanced residential arrangement.

Of particular importance is the retention of a substantial two-bedroom family-sized dwelling occupying the upper floors. The proposal therefore avoids seeking to maximise the number of small residential units and instead retains accommodation capable of meeting the needs of a family household.

The proposed configuration is also similar to that found within the surrounding area, where traditional terraced properties have been subdivided with basement or lower-ground accommodation forming a separate unit and the upper floors retained together as another dwelling. The development would therefore respond to an established local pattern of residential occupation.

There is also a realistic alternative use of a property of this nature as a house in multiple occupation. Subject to the applicable planning controls and licensing requirements, occupation as an HMO could potentially accommodate a number of unrelated individuals sharing facilities. Reading Borough Council confirms that small HMOs comprise between three and six unrelated occupants and that C3-to-C4 changes can benefit from permitted development rights where those rights have not been removed by an Article 4 Direction. Larger HMOs require planning permission.

Against that context, the proposed arrangement of two self-contained dwellings provides a controlled and appropriate residential solution. It retains a family-sized home, provides clearly defined accommodation and amenity space for each household and avoids the potentially more intensive pattern of occupation that could arise from HMO use.

The proposal should therefore be viewed as an opportunity to secure a satisfactory long-term planning outcome rather than simply as an application to increase the number of dwellings from the lawful baseline.

7.0 Standard of Accommodation and Amenity Space

The proposed development has been designed to provide two functional self-contained homes and represents a significant rationalisation of the existing three-flat arrangement.

Flat 1 would comprise the smaller single-person dwelling principally at semi-basement level, whilst Flat 2 would provide a substantially larger two-bedroom home occupying the upper floors. The latter would retain family-sized accommodation within the property and provide a clear alternative to further subdivision of the upper floors.

Both dwellings would have access to external amenity space. The rear garden would be arranged to provide separate areas for the respective households, with access from the upper dwelling reinstated through the rear of the building and across the flat roof of the semi-basement extension. The proposed privacy screen would provide separation between the respective areas of occupation.

The overall arrangement therefore provides a more coherent form of residential accommodation than currently exists and establishes a clear relationship between the internal accommodation and associated external amenity areas.

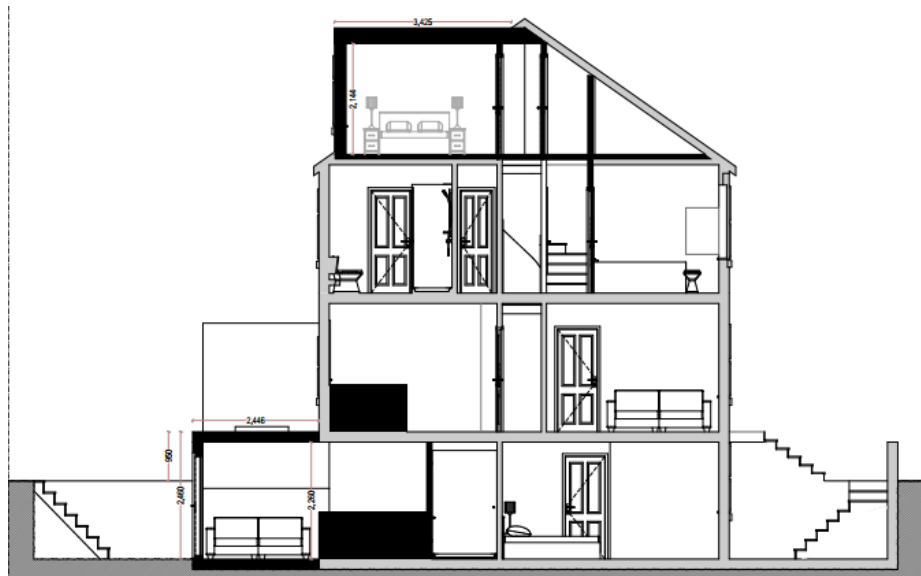


Figure 4 – Proposed Rear Garden Access Arrangement

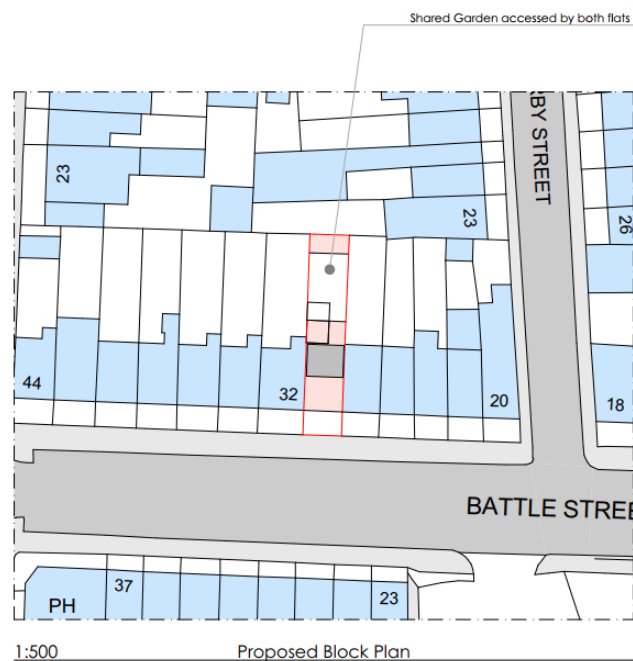


Figure 3 – Proposed Site Arrangement and External Amenity Space

The proposed arrangement, together with the provision of dedicated external amenity space, would provide a functional residential environment for future occupants and represents a significant improvement and rationalisation of the existing unauthorised three-flat arrangement.

8.0 Design, Character and Residential Amenity

The existing terraced building would be retained and the proposal would preserve its established relationship with the Battle Street street scene. The principal physical works are concentrated towards the rear and semi-basement and would not fundamentally alter the appearance of the property from the street.

The proposal is also consistent with the wider residential character of the locality. Whilst the original built form comprises traditional terraced houses, subdivision into flats, including configurations incorporating separate basement accommodation, forms part of the established character of the surrounding area.

The proposed use would remain wholly residential and the number of self-contained units would be reduced from the three currently occupying the property to two. The development therefore provides an opportunity to reduce the intensity of the existing occupation. The proposal is not considered to give rise to unacceptable effects upon neighbouring occupiers through noise, disturbance, overlooking or loss of privacy. The arrangement of the rear amenity areas and proposed privacy screening would similarly provide appropriate separation between the future occupants of the two dwellings.



Figure 5 – Proposed Elevations

9.0 Parking, Cycle Storage and Refuse

The property is situated in an accessible urban location with good access to public transport and local facilities. The proposed development would also result in fewer self-contained residential units than currently occupy the building.

Appropriate refuse, recycling and cycle storage arrangements will be provided for the proposed dwellings in accordance with the relevant Council requirements. Having regard to the nature of the development, the existing residential use and the sustainable location of the property, the proposal is not considered likely to result in unacceptable effects upon highway safety or the operation of the surrounding highway network.

10.0 Affordable Housing and Community Infrastructure Levy

Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan is relevant to the proposed development. The lawful planning position comprises one dwelling and the proposed development would result in two dwellings, representing a net increase of one residential unit.

The applicant acknowledges the applicable affordable housing requirements and independent valuation evidence will be provided to Reading Borough Council to enable the appropriate contribution to be considered and agreed.

Reading Borough Council is also a Community Infrastructure Levy charging authority. The appropriate CIL information will accompany the application and any liability arising from the proposed development will be determined by the Council in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations and the applicable Charging Schedule, taking account of the lawful existing floorspace and proposed development.

The applicant will comply with the relevant CIL procedural requirements associated with any planning permission granted.

11.0 Sustainability, Biodiversity and Environmental Matters

The proposal represents an efficient use of an existing residential building in an established and sustainable urban location. The majority of the existing structure would be retained and the development would provide an opportunity to regularise and improve the manner in which the property is occupied rather than requiring development on a separate site.

The application site extends to approximately 113.9 sq m and falls below the applicable site-size threshold for mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, subject to the statutory exemption criteria being satisfied.

The proposed use remains residential and the reduction from three existing flats to two proposed dwellings would not result in an intensification of the current pattern of occupation.

12.0 Planning Balance and Conclusion

The lawful planning use of 30 Battle Street is as a single dwellinghouse. The property was subsequently converted without planning permission and is presently arranged and occupied as three self-contained flats. This situation has now come to the attention of Reading Borough Council's Planning Team and the applicant is seeking to resolve the matter positively through the planning process.

The application does not seek permission to retain three flats. Instead, it proposes a less intensive and more appropriate arrangement comprising two self-contained homes: a smaller dwelling principally at semi-basement level and a substantially larger two-bedroom family dwelling occupying the upper floors.

The configuration is similar to the pattern of residential accommodation found within the surrounding area, including properties where basement or lower-ground-floor accommodation is separately occupied whilst the upper floors form another dwelling. The development would therefore respond to the established residential character of Battle Street.

The proposal also needs to be considered against the realistic alternatives for the future occupation of the property. Subject to the relevant planning controls and licensing

requirements, use as an HMO could potentially result in occupation by a greater number of unrelated individuals sharing facilities. The proposed two-dwelling arrangement provides a more settled and controlled alternative, retains a family-sized home and provides clearly defined accommodation and amenity space for each household.

The proposal would consequently regularise the existing unauthorised situation, reduce the number of self-contained units presently occupying the property, retain family accommodation and establish an appropriate lawful arrangement for its future use.

Affordable housing and CIL requirements will be addressed through the appropriate supporting information and statutory procedures.

Taking these matters together, the proposed development represents a reasonable and proportionate resolution to the existing planning situation and would secure a form of residential occupation compatible with the character and pattern of development in the surrounding area.

It is therefore respectfully requested that Reading Borough Council grants planning permission.