

Householder Planning Application

Planning and Heritage Statement

3 Downshire Square Reading Berkshire RG1 6NJ

Application type	Householder planning permission
Local planning authority	Reading Borough Council
Site	3 Downshire Square Reading Berkshire RG1 6NJ
Document date	September 2026

Purpose

This combined statement supports the proposed householder works and provides a proportionate Heritage Statement. It should be read with the submitted application form, drawings and supporting information.

1 Introduction

This Planning and Heritage Statement supports a householder planning application at 3 Downshire Square, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 6NJ. The proposal combines modest alterations to the entrance and roof with works to the existing driveway and frontage. It also provides for domestic electric vehicle charging.

The statement explains the scope of the works, the site context, the planning considerations and the proportionate heritage assessment. It is intended to assist Reading Borough Council in assessing the proposal alongside the submitted plans. Where dimensions, locations, materials or layout are shown on the drawings, the drawings are the controlling information.

2 Site and planning context

2 1 Site context

The application relates to an existing dwelling at the address above. The applicant has advised that the property lies within a conservation area and is subject to an Article 4 direction. This statement has therefore been prepared on the basis that the character and appearance of the conservation area, and the detailed effect of the proposals on the frontage and roofscape, require particular attention.

The house is referred to in this statement as having a historic entrance door. No assertion is made here as to statutory listing or local listing. The reference is intended to describe the door's existing heritage character and the care proposed for it.

2 2 Implemented permission

The applicant confirms that planning permission PL/26/0251 has already been implemented. It is recorded as background to the site. This application should be determined on its own drawings and description and is not a request to revisit the principle, scope or conditions of that implemented permission.

2 3 Conservation area and Article 4 context

The conservation area designation and Article 4 context do not preclude change, but they require a careful and proportionate response. The application seeks to retain the established boundary wall and soft landscaping, keep roof mounted equipment visually recessive, and use a light touch at the entrance. The exact effect will properly be assessed by the Council against the submitted elevations, site plan and the relevant designation and Article 4 direction.

3 Proposed works

3 1 Driveway and access

The existing driveway is in poor condition and would be refurbished. The proposal includes a new vehicular crossover with dropped kerb, positioned and dimensioned as shown on the submitted drawings. The frontage layout provides for internal vehicle manoeuvring and the arrangement of parking within the site.

Two new gates are proposed: one vehicular gate and one separate pedestrian gate. The proposal is limited to those gates; it does not introduce additional gate openings beyond the localised openings needed for the access arrangement shown. The proposed driveway surface treatment is as identified on the drawings.

The drawings illustrate the intended crossover and internal arrangement. Any separate technical approval or agreement that may be needed for works within the adopted highway would be addressed through the appropriate process and is not assumed by this planning statement.

3 2 Boundary treatment and planting

The existing boundary wall would be retained and refurbished, except for the localised openings necessary for the proposed gates and access. Existing railings and fences would be renewed. Soft landscaping is to be retained in accordance with the submitted drawings. This approach directs intervention to the parts of the frontage that need repair or adjustment while retaining the established wall and planted elements.

3 3 Entrance porch

A small structural glass porch is proposed at the entrance. Its principal purpose is to provide a protected threshold for the existing historic door, reducing its direct exposure to rain and wind. The glazed construction is intended to keep the addition visually light and to avoid concealing the existing entrance more than is necessary for weather protection.

The porch would also form a sheltered buffer at the entrance. It is expected to reduce drafts and contribute to lower heat loss at this point of the house. No quantified energy saving or thermal performance claim is relied on in support of the application.

3 4 Photovoltaic panels and electric vehicle charging

Photovoltaic panels are proposed on the side and rear roof slopes. They would be installed in roof, flush with the surrounding tiles, rather than mounted above the roof plane. This is intended to keep their profile low while allowing the property to generate renewable electricity for domestic use.

A domestic electric vehicle charging point is proposed within the driveway area to support electric mobility. The charging point is ancillary to the dwelling and should be read as part of the overall frontage arrangement shown on the drawings.

4 Heritage statement

4 1 Heritage scope and significance

This section is the Heritage Statement supporting the application. The relevant heritage interest is the character and appearance of the conservation area, including the contribution of the dwelling's entrance, roofscape, boundary treatment and planted frontage. The assessment is proportionate to a householder proposal and does not seek to define the full significance of the conservation area or any individual asset beyond the information available for this application.

The most sensitive elements are likely to be those visible from public places: the entrance, boundary and gates, and any roof slopes that can be seen in local views. The side and rear location of the photovoltaic panels is a deliberate response to that context. Their in roof construction reduces their visual projection. The Council should determine the degree of visibility from the submitted drawings and any site inspection.

4 2 Heritage effects and mitigation

- The historic entrance door would be sheltered by a modest glazed porch rather than replaced or obscured by a solid addition.
- The existing boundary wall would remain in place and be refurbished, apart from the localised openings necessary for the access arrangement.
- Soft landscaping would be retained as shown, helping to preserve the established frontage character.
- The photovoltaic panels would sit flush with the roof tiles on side and rear slopes, reducing the apparent bulk associated with surface mounted equipment.

4.3 Heritage conclusion

The proposal introduces change to a conservation area and its effects should not be assumed to be neutral. On the information supplied, the works are limited in scale and are designed to retain and repair existing features where possible. The applicant considers that this gives the Council a basis to find that the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the conservation area. That judgement remains for the Council, having regard to the detailed design and its statutory duties.

5 Planning policy context

5.1 National policy and statutory duty

Section 72(1) of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area when relevant planning functions are exercised. The National Planning Policy Framework, Chapter 20, requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

5.2 Reading Borough Local Plan

The adopted Reading Borough Local Plan November 2019 identifies the relevant policies below. They are directly engaged by the proposed householder works and should be read in full.

Policy	Relevance to the proposal
CC2	Sustainable design and construction. Relevant to the in roof photovoltaic panels and the building fabric benefits of the sheltered entrance.
CC7	Design and the public realm. Relevant to the quality of the porch, the frontage and the detailed response to the established street context.
CC8	Safeguarding amenity. Relevant to the relationship of the alterations with neighbouring occupiers.
EN1 and EN3	Protection and enhancement of the historic environment and conservation areas. Relevant to the effect of the changes on the area's character and appearance.
H9	House extensions and ancillary accommodation. Relevant to the domestic porch as an addition to the dwelling.
TR3	Access traffic and highway related matters. Relevant to the vehicular crossover, driveway layout, gates and internal manoeuvring.

6 Planning assessment

6.1 Principle and design

The proposal comprises domestic alterations and improvements to an existing dwelling. It does not seek a new use, substantial enlargement or redevelopment. The porch is limited to the existing entrance; the driveway works focus on refurbishment and a managed access arrangement; and the roof mounted renewable technology is located on side and rear slopes with an in roof finish.

The new gates and localised openings change the frontage. Their acceptability will depend on their detailed form, dimensions, position and relationship with the retained wall and planting. Those matters are shown on

the submitted drawings and should be considered as part of the whole frontage, rather than as isolated works.

6 2 Heritage balance

The proposal has been developed to avoid unnecessary loss of existing fabric or frontage character. Retention and refurbishment of the boundary wall, retention of soft landscaping and protection of the entrance door are central to that approach. The structural glass porch gives weather protection while seeking a visually light presence. The photovoltaic panels avoid above roof mounting and are placed away from the principal frontage where the roof form permits.

There may still be a degree of change to the appearance of the property and conservation area. In the applicant's view, the scale, siting and design responses described above are capable of limiting that effect. The practical benefits include repairing a deteriorated driveway, improving the entrance's protection from weather, supporting domestic renewable electricity and enabling electric vehicle charging. These benefits are relevant to the overall planning balance, but are not put forward as a substitute for proper heritage assessment.

6 3 Access and amenity

The new vehicular crossover, vehicular gate and internal arrangement are intended to allow vehicles to enter, turn and leave within the site as shown on the drawings. A separate pedestrian gate provides a distinct pedestrian point of access. The proposal's access and manoeuvring effects should be assessed against the drawing dimensions and the Council's highway requirements.

No quantified traffic, energy, carbon or amenity assessment is submitted with this statement. The application relies on the scale and domestic nature of the works and on the information shown on the submitted plans.

7 Conclusion

This application seeks permission for modest householder works that repair and improve the existing frontage, protect the existing entrance door, introduce integrated roof based renewable electricity and support domestic electric vehicle charging. The proposal retains and refurbishes the boundary wall, retains soft landscaping as shown and limits alteration of the roof profile through the use of in roof photovoltaic panels on the side and rear slopes.

The applicant respectfully asks Reading Borough Council to grant householder planning permission, subject to its assessment of the submitted plans, the conservation area and Article 4 context, the development plan and all other material considerations.

8 References

1. Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, section 72, General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.
2. Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, August 2026, Chapter 20 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
3. Reading Borough Council, Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted November 2019, including Policies CC2, CC7, CC8, EN1, EN3, H9 and TR3.
4. Reading Borough Council, Conservation areas guidance and advice for householders, accessed September 2026.