

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0771 Householder planning permission

Address: 12B NORTHCOURT AVENUE, READING, RG2 7HA

Proposal: Conversion of existing garage into habitable space including refurbishment works to existing garage roof and ground floor extension across the rear of the property.

Applicant: Mrs Ninika Nanda

Received date: 11/06/2026

Target Decision date: 11/08/2026

Agreed Extension of Time until 23/10/2026

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of a one and a half storey Edwardian property with cottage style dormers rising out of the north and south facing roof slopes. The property is believed to date back to the Arts and Crafts era. The property is set back from the road behind trees and vegetation and is located on the north-westerly side of Northcourt Avenue. The property is constructed using traditional materials such as brick, with a tiled pitched roof and ornate ridge detail. Whilst the property has been subject to minor refurbishments' including replacement windows and patio doors, the majority of the property flank walls, roofs and the roof above the existing garage is largely original and untouched.

The property was formerly the stable block and ancillary building to Northcourt House. Northcourt House is the former farmhouse, owned by Huntley and Palmers (Biscuits) family. Northcourt House later became student accommodation for Reading University and the adjacent properties 12 A and 12B were sold and later became family homes.

The property is not listed, nor located within a conservation area.



Aerial image of site circled in red

Site visit date relating to previous application: 30 April 2026



Looking towards front elevation set behind gates within courtyard.



Looking towards existing garage and south-easterly facing elevation



Looking towards north-easterly facing rear elevation



Rear elevation and rear garden

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application seeks planning permission to convert the existing garage into a habitable space including refurbishment works to existing garage roof and ground floor extension across the rear of the property. The works will consist of a 4m single storey projection to the rear of the property. The 4m rear extension will extend across the entire rear elevation of the main house and the original garage, a length of approximately 16.3m. The rear single storey extension will include three sets of Bi-Fold doors which will match the existing windows in appearance. The single storey rear extension will have an eaves height of 2.334m and an overall height of 3.426m. The single storey rear extension will have a pitched roof with a wrap around corner roof and adjoin on to the existing garage roof. Materials will match the host property. The permission also includes refurbishments to the wider property including works to the existing garage and garage roof, refurbishment of the structure due to age related wear, replacement roof and tiles to match the existing roof and host property.

Plans and documents considered:

Bat Emergence Survey Report ref: 2691993 SJ9_BES (SJ Ecology & Environment) dated May 2026
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal ref: SPH/NP/PEA-25/16.12 (Urban Tree Experts) dated December 2025
Homeowners Supporting Statement
Arboricultural Report Revision A ref: MW.2604.NAR.AIA (Mark Welby Consulting Arborists) dated April 2026 **superseded**
Planning Statement
Received by the LPA on 11th June 2026

Drawing no: P1679-01 - Location and Block Plan, dated Jun 26 **superseded**
Drawing no: P1679-02A - Existing Plans and Elevations, dated Jun 26
Drawing no: P1679-03A - Proposed Plans and Elevations, dated Jun 26 **superseded**
Drawing no: P1679-04 - Proposed 3D Sketches, dated Jun 26 **superseded**
Received by the LPA on 16th June 2026

Drawing no: P1679-03 Rev A - Proposed Plans and Elevations, dated Jun 26 **superseded**
Drawing no: P1679-01 - Location and Block Plan, dated Jun 26 **superseded**
Received by the LPA on 6th July 2026

Drawing no: P1679-03 (rev 030726) - Proposed Plans and Elevations, dated Jun 26 **superseded**
Received by the LPA on 25th July 2026

Drawing no: P1679-03 Rev A (rev 030826) - Proposed Plans and Elevations, dated Jun 26 **superseded**
Received by the LPA on 3rd August 2026

Materials Specification (schedule)
Received by the LPA on 3rd August 2026

Drawing no: P1679-01 (rev 110826) - Location and Block Plan, dated Jul 26
Drawing no: P1679-03 Rev B (rev 110826) - Proposed Plans and Elevations, dated Jul 26
Received by the LPA on 11th August 2026

Arboricultural Report Revision B ref: MW.2604.NAR.AIA (Mark Welby Consulting Arborists) dated April 2026
Received by the LPA on 11th August 2026

Proposed Replacement Tree Planting Plan & Specification **superseded**
Received by the LPA on 7th October 2026

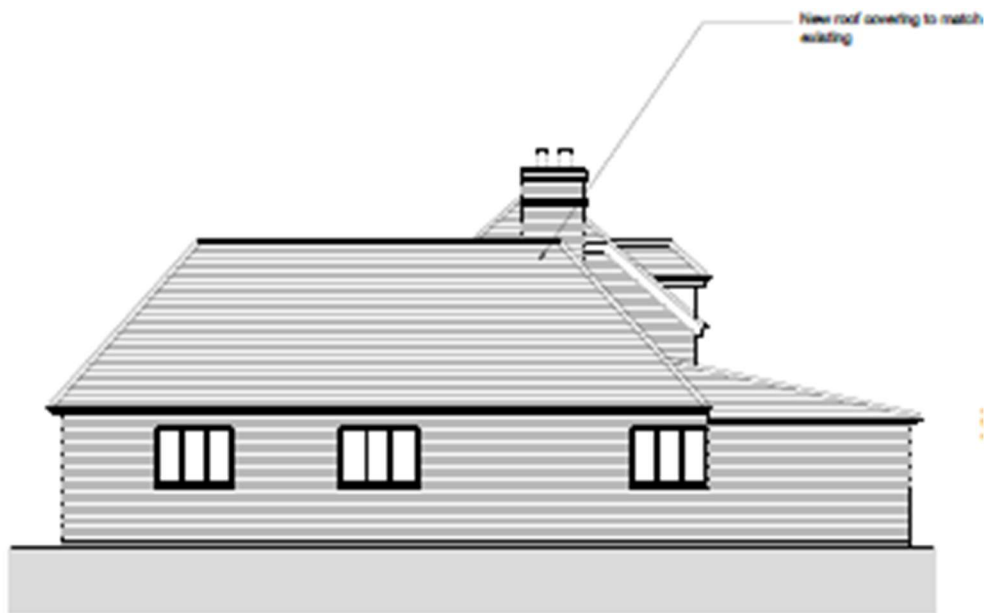
Proposed Replacement Tree Planting Plan & Specification (Hard & Soft Landscaping Plan)
Received by the LPA on 8th October 2026



Block Plan



PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION



PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100

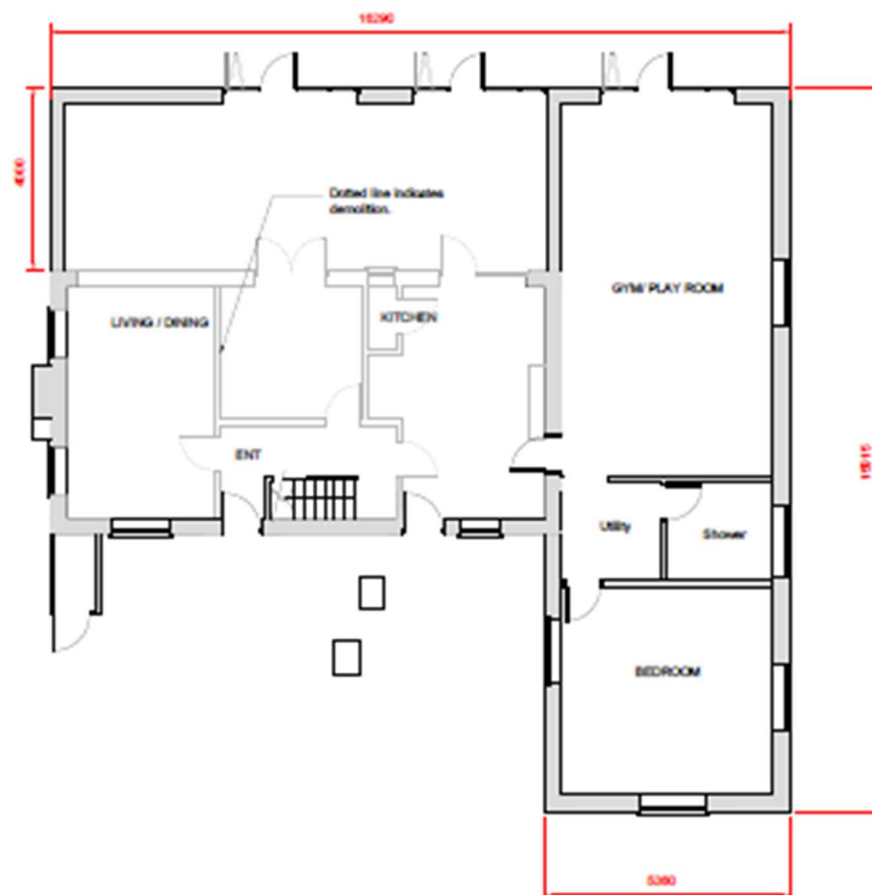


PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100

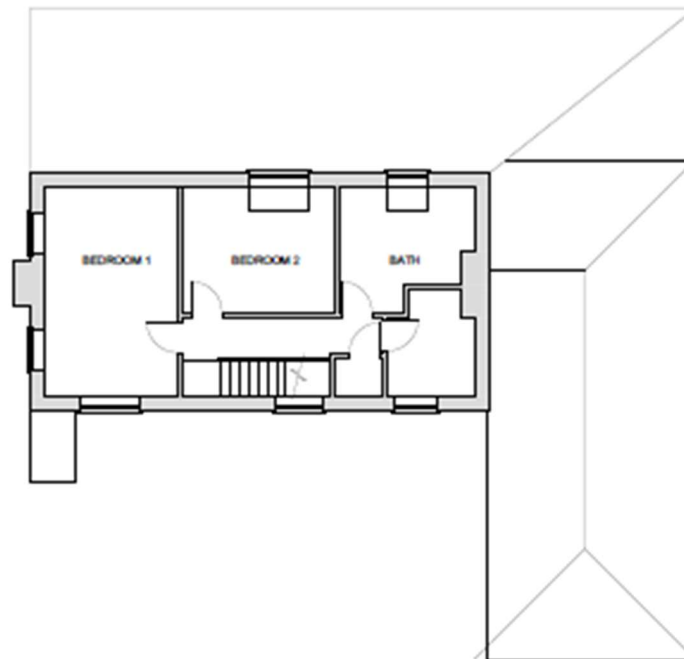


New doors / windows to match existing

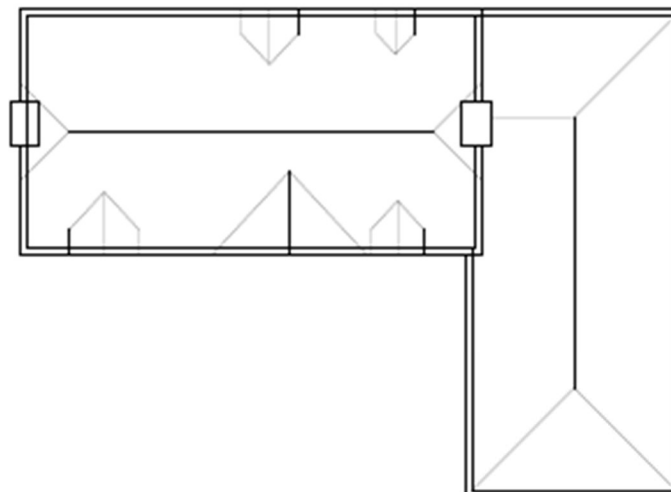
PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE 1 : 100



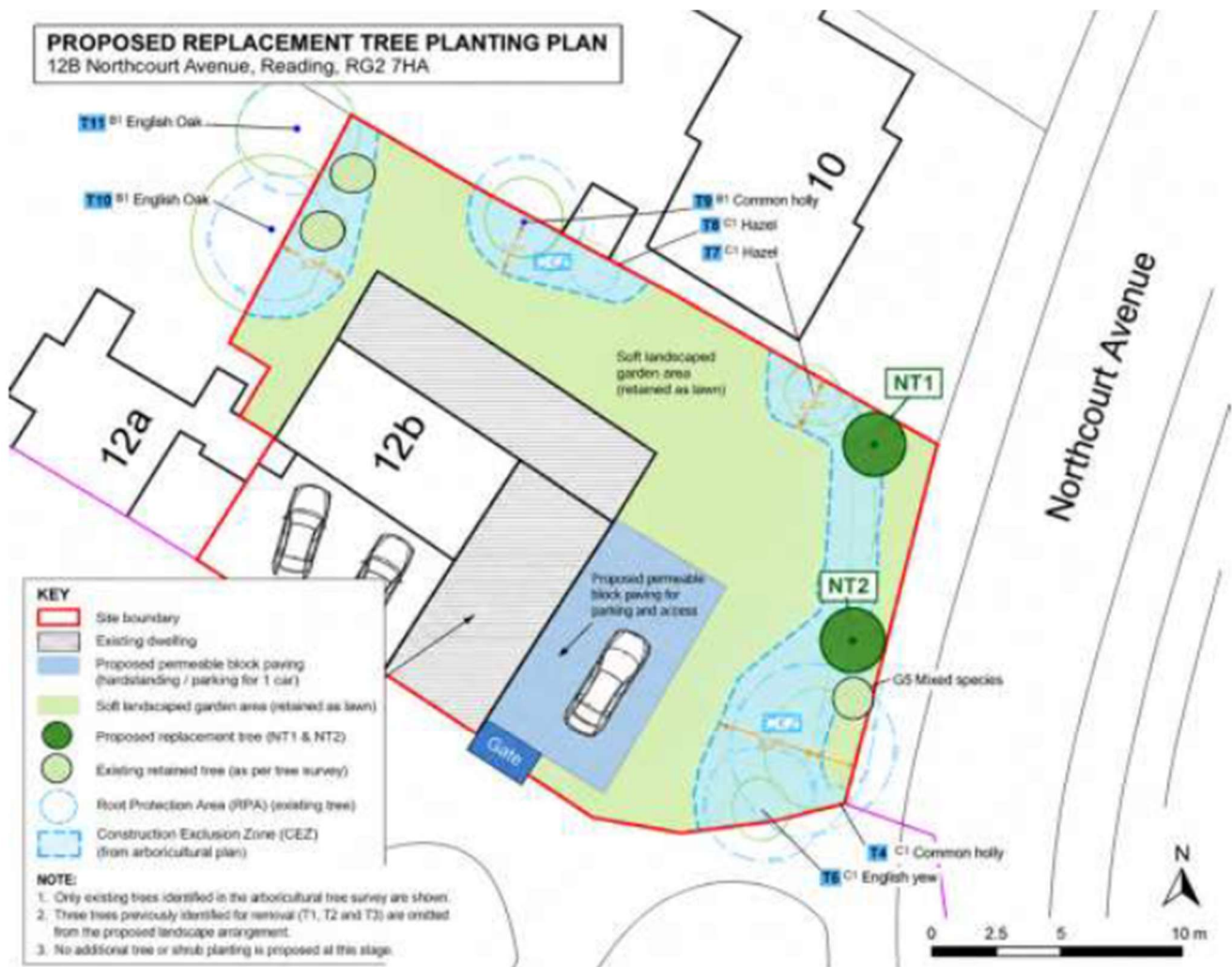
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1 : 100



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1 : 100



PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
SCALE 1 : 100



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/26/0407 – Proposed 2 storey side extensions – Withdrawn May 2026

PL/26/0067 - 2 storey rear and side extension and roof alterations to make it a proper 2 storey from chalet bungalow type – Pre Application Advice – March 2026

PL/25/1541 - Pre application advice for a 2-storey rear and side extensions and a porch conversion – Pre Application Advice given – December 2025

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

- Ecology officer

The bat survey report (SJ ecology and Environment, May 2026) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. There are therefore no objections to this application on bat related ecology grounds.

- Heritage Officer – Comments on original 2 storey proposal.

The building appears to be Edwardian, which was constructed together with No.12 (Northcourt House) and No. 12b. Served by the same driveway/access, the subject building must have been an ancillary to No. 12 and, as such, they have the same architectural characteristics.

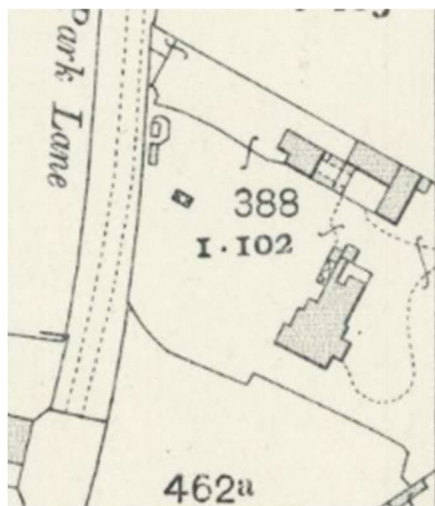
The building is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset (I did quick research and could not find anything about the architect or builder). But from the historic map regression, I noted that the building retains its footprint and external features.

The proposal would replace the existing garage with a two-storey extension. Although I proposed the ridge height lower than the main building and the roof form could be accepted, due to the size and additional massing, the proposal would not be subservient or subordinate to the host building. T

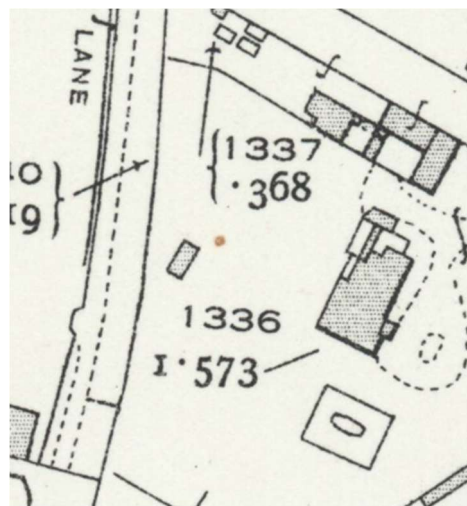
he building is well set back from the main road, mainly screened by natural elements; as such, losing one chimney could be ok. However, I think the proposal radically changes the relationship of the main building with the road as well as the new element: the proposed porch on the newly created long elevation facing Northcort Avenue would result in dominance of the two-storey extension rather than the host building.

Because of the proposed internal layout, the host building would lose its dominance as it would have service units, not the main rooms. (I think another application for creating of a driveway from Northcort will be submitted.) I think the length (depth) of the extension should not exceed that of the main building. It should not constitute new elements with noticeable massing (porch).

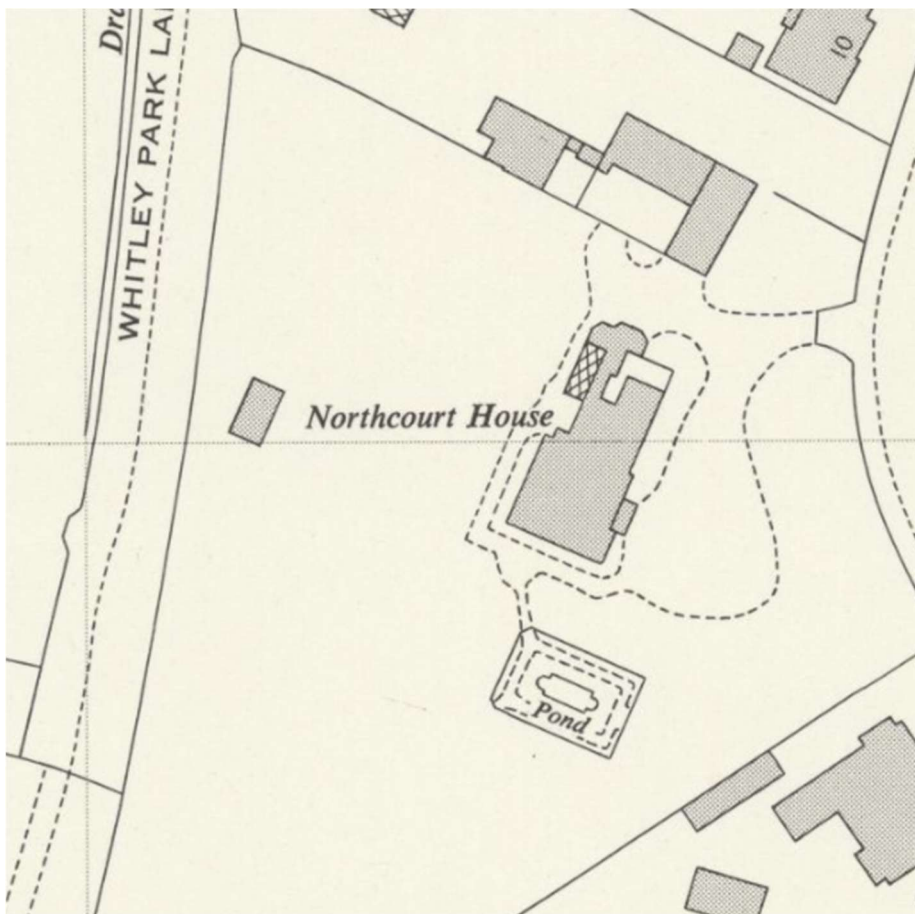
Due to its two-storey nature, the proposal, due to its footprint, scale, massing, design and appearance, would dominate the application site, would not be subordinate or subservient addition. I think use of matching materials is ok, but it still requires revisions. If this would be a NDHA I would add the change in the historic relationship of the subject building with Northcourt Avenue and No. 12 as well.



1910



1930s



1950s



Current/existing

The main entrance of the host building should be kept (should serve as the main entrance), the footprint and massing should be reduced. Otherwise, the extension would be perceived as the main building.

Planning officer note: On reviewing the amended and final proposed plans, the conservation officer confirmed the proposed development was acceptable in terms of conservation and harm to the original building fabric.

- Transport Officer

The proposed extension will result in the loss of the garage; however, a replacement integral single garage is proposed, in addition to 2 further on-site parking spaces as illustrated below:

No changes are proposed to the existing access. There are no Transport objections to this application.

- RBC Natural Environment (Tree) officer memo received 27/08/2026

With reference to:

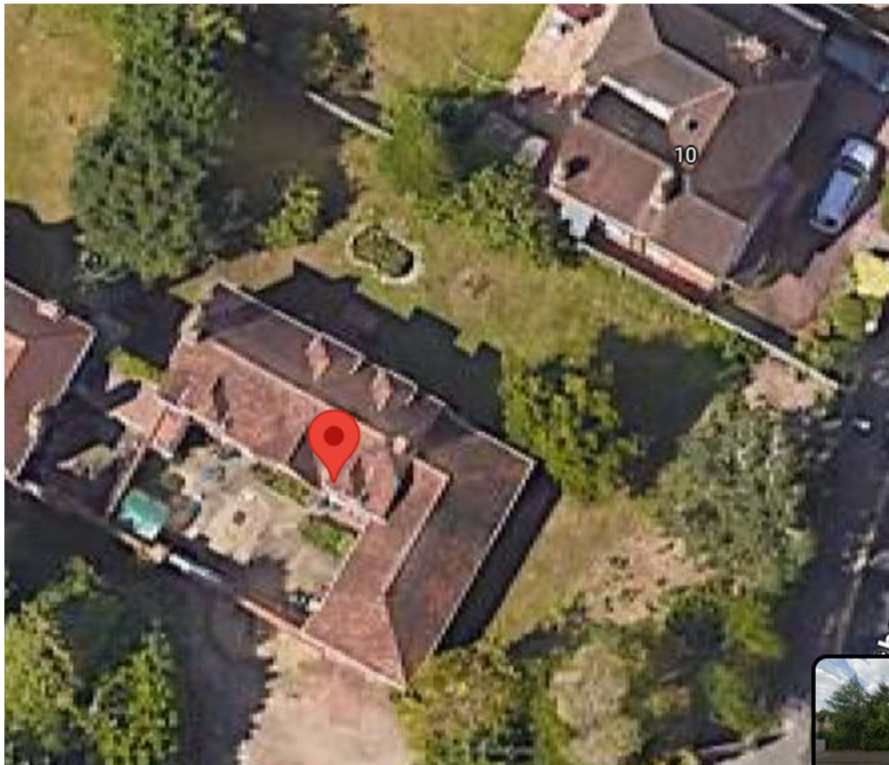
Location & Block Plan P1679-01, received 11/8/26 [no revision ref as would be expected]

Proposed Plans & Elevations P1679-03 B, received 11/8/26

Arboricultural Report MW.2604.NAR.AIA Rev A issued 28 April 2026

The Arb report does not reflect the proposals on the latest plans, and it can be determined when comparing the Block Plan with the TPP that the rear extension is likely right on the edge of the canopy of T10 Oak:





This change justifies a request for an updated AIA and TPP to assess the impact on T10 – it is likely to need facilitative pruning for clearance to allow for the build (the tree canopy is low according to the survey) and the tree protection fencing may need to be set back (under the canopy) for construction access, hence with ground protection also then specified.

- RBC Natural Environment (Tree) officer memo received 17/09/2026

Further to my comments of 27/8/26 I note that a revised **Arboricultural Report Reference:**

MW.2604.NAR.AIA Date: 21 April 2026 Revision: B issued 15 September 2026 has been submitted to address my comments.

I can confirm that the report satisfactorily addresses my queries. **Condition L7A** is required to secure development in accordance with the attached (which should also be listed as an approved doc).

I note from the report that 3 trees are identified for removal. Given these are all on the Northcourt Avenue boundary, which provides a soft landscape visual buffer between the road and house (including the proposed extension) and in line with Local Plan policy EN14 and objectives of our Tree Strategy to ensure a net gain in tree number on a development site, replacement tree planting is sought. This can be secured via condition L1 but if the applicant wished to provide details of a minimum of 3 trees now (species, stock size, tree pit details, location, maintenance for 5 years) then a pre-commencement condition could be avoided.

- RBC Natural Environment (Tree) officer memo received 05/10/2026

I acknowledge that one tree is to be removed to facilitate development. As such, to meet with EN14 and Tree Strategy requirements, a minimum of 2 new trees is required to ensure a net gain. This can be secured via standard condition L1, or the applicant may wish to submit details now (tree species, size, location, tree pit details and maintenance) to avoid a pre-commencement condition.

- RBC Natural Environment (Tree) officer memo received 09/10/2026

OK – this clarifies the points I raised.

Condition L4A is required secured hard & soft landscaping in accordance with the attached PROPOSED REPLACEMENT TREE PLANTING PLAN & SPECIFICATION

Revised in response to Tree Officer comments, dated October 2026, received 8/10/26

External

- The planning notice was attached to the streetlamp column outside the front of the property on the main road, in full view of the neighbouring properties. The planning notice was displayed on 25th June 2026 and left in place for the 21-day statutory consultation period.

1 representation was received from the Northcourt Avenue Residents Association (NARA):

As background to the comments below, NARA wishes to emphasise the historical importance and heritage value of the site. Nos. 12, 12A and 12B were the earliest buildings constructed in Northcourt Avenue in 1906 for the Sutton family who ran the Sutton Seeds Company. Nos 12A & 12B were originally built as staff accommodation & stables. Although some modifications were subsequently made to 12B, its original “Arts & Crafts” features were retained which match with Nos 12 and 12A and are sympathetic with the neighbouring “Arts & Crafts” houses such as Nos 14, 16 & 18. No 12B should therefore be regarded as a heritage asset.

We believe that the Proposed Plans should adequately reflect the Reading Borough Council “Design Guide To House Extensions”, section 6.4.2 Materials & Detailing which states: “To complement the existing dwelling and street scene, matching materials and detailing is encouraged where appropriate, unless quality design is achieved through the use of other materials. For example, when extending an older property, it may be appropriate to source older or reclaimed materials; this particularly applies to roof tiles and brickwork.”

We believe that the proposed plans should show example “spot images” of how “to match existing” specifically in relation to Roof Tiles & Bricks and that every effort should be made to source matching items, including use of reclaimed materials if necessary. The photographs in the PRA Report for previous application PL/26/0407 could be a useful basis for such information. Bearing in mind that this is an area of historical importance, there is a significant lack of architectural detailing in the drawing elevations which makes it difficult to assess how the plans would affect the street scene and sympathise with surrounding buildings and the Arts & Crafts vernacular.

We also wish to comment on the length of the garage which appears to have a proposed internal length of less than 5 metres. Although there is no official standard for length, modern practice suggests that 6 metres is more appropriate to cover current vehicles and allow access space.

- Following discussions between the officer, the agent and homeowner amended plans were submitted, the application was readvertised and the planning notice was displayed on the same streetlamp column again, on 11th August 2026 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

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)

EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)

EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)

TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking)

SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions 2021

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.

Officers have worked with the agent and applicant to minimise harm to the original Edwardian property.

The application site has been subject to previous application for improvements which have been withdrawn; previous proposed development was considered harmful to and be detrimental to the fabric of the original and largely untouched Edwardian property.

This application removes the new floor and roof element above the existing garage and concentrates on constructing a new single storey rear projection. This application seeks refurbishment works to the existing garage to turn it into a habitable room and re-roof garage but refrains from creating a two-storey extension above.

The proposed development, as per the revised plans, is all single storey and is concentrated to the rear of the property. The rear extension will be constructed adjoin the existing property, the roof form will match the existing property, as will the brickwork, roof tiles, doors, windows and fenestrations will all match the host property. The Materials Specification (schedule), received by the LPA on 3rd August 2026 will be secured via condition to protect the character and appearance of the host property.

By virtue of the low eaves, the low height of the lean-to roof, the removal of proposed cottage style dormers in the garage roof and the retention of the chimney stacks, the revised development is considered acceptable in terms of character and appearance.

Officers consider the proposal is compliant with policies CC7 & H9 of the Reading Borough Council 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 proposed development by virtue of its single storey will not adversely overlook neighbouring properties.

The detached neighbouring property located to the left (12A Northcourt Avenue) is some 6m to the west and set back from the host property, screened by trees and a 6-foot close boarded timber fence - no harm to the left-hand neighbour is expected.

The other nearest neighbouring property located to the north (no.10 Northcourt Avenue) is positioned some 10m away. A window is present in the side flank wall which looks out onto the shared close board timber fence. It is believed this window acts as a secondary window to either the kitchen or dining room of the neighbouring property. The proposed development will only be at ground level – no new additional windows are to be created at first floor height, so no additional opportunity is afforded for overlooking the neighbouring properties. Amenity is already hindered by the existing ground floor windows and back door in the rear elevation of the host property. Officers do not consider any more harm will be created as a result of the development.

The development is not considered overbearing to neighbours or the wider streetscene, nor is the development considered harmful to visual amenity. The property will retain a suitable area of private garden to the side and rear.

Officers consider the proposal is compliant with policies CC8 & H9 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan 2019.

Heritage matters

Policy EN1 states that historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced.

The heritage officer was originally consulted on the first application (PL/26/0407) as the property was identified as being an original and unmolested example of an Edwardian property and furthermore its proximity to Northcourt House.

Whilst the previous application was considered harmful in terms of heritage matters i.e. detrimental to the fabric of the Edwardian host property, the revised scheme is considered acceptable. The agent and applicant have spent a lot of effort on making the proposal work with the existing property.

It is not considered the proposed development (in its revised form) will be harmful to the host property or to the original and existing features of the property. By losing the first-floor extension over the existing garage, the main house remains the dominant aspect of the property and the existing garage roof with internal reconfiguration beneath will remain the secondary roof of the overall property.

The proposal is considered compliant with policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Ecology (bat) matters

Policy EN12 states that the Green Network will be protected. All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located.

The Ecology officer was consulted as the original proposal included work to the original and existing roof above the garage and the removal of the chimney stacks.

The applicant undertook and submitted a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment which concluded that the property may host roosting bats and 2 Bat Emergence Surveys were required.

The agent submitted the Bat Emergence Survey Report ref: 2691993 SJ9_BES (SJ Ecology & Environment) dated May 2026.

The ecology officer reviewed the bat survey report (SJ ecology and Environment, May 2026) and concluded the assessment had been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal.

The proposal is considered acceptable on bat related ecology grounds and is therefore compliant with policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Transport matters

Policy TR5 states 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 transport officer was consulted due to the loss of the internal garage. Whilst the private courtyard at the front of the property has enough space for up to 2 vehicles, the applicant and agent confirmed an additional parking space would be created adjacent to the original garage, to offset the loss of the

internal garage. This additional parking space is shown on the Block Plan. The additional parking will be secured via approved plans.

In terms of transport matters, the proposed development is considered compliant with policy TR5 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.

The natural environment officer was consulted as it was noted at the time of the site visit that some trees in the rear and side garden had been felled. Possible harm to trees was likely and the development included the creation of a dedicated parking space and surface adjacent to the existing garage.

The agent was asked to undertake and submit a tree survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) to understand how the proposed development would affect existing trees – the proposed rear extension is right on the edge of the canopy of T10 Oak.

The AIA was required to assess impacts on T10 Oak as it is likely to need pruning. The submitted AIA confirmed this.

The AIA also confirmed the location of the Tree Protection Fencing and ground protection.

To make sure the trees are protected throughout the proposed development the Arboricultural Method Statement will be secured via a condition. The condition shall read:

Protective measures, including fencing, ground protection, supervision and working procedures shall be carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Report Revision B ref: MW.2604.NAR.AIA (Mark Welby Consulting Arborists) dated April 2026. Any deviation from the works prescribed or methods agreed in the report will require prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to ensure that reasonable measures are taken to safeguard trees in the interests of local amenity and the enhancement of the development itself in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

The replacement tree planting will also be secured via a condition; the condition shall read:

The hard and soft landscaping of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved landscaping plans and documents PROPOSED REPLACEMENT TREE PLANTING PLAN & SPECIFICATION Revised in response to Tree Officer comments, dated October 2026, received 8/10/26.

The soft landscaping shall take place no later than during the first planting season following the date when the development hereby permitted is ready for occupation or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

REASON: In order to ensure the satisfactory implementation of the landscaping hereby approved in accordance with Policy CC7, EN12 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

The natural environment officer confirms there are no objections in terms of tree matters.

The proposed development has been assessed by officers and is considered acceptable with policy EN14 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

TL1
AP1
M3
L4A
L6
L7A
DC1