

Bio-Diversity Statement

Site Address: 11 Stockbury Close, Reading, RG6 5YL
Proposed Development: Conversion of Existing Garage and Minor Infill Rear Extension

This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the proposed **conversion of the existing garage** into habitable room, along with a **very small, single-storey infill rear extension**. Full architectural plans have been prepared to demonstrate the modest and contextually appropriate nature of the development.

1. Architectural and Design Context

The proposed works involve:

- A **reconfiguration of the ground floor layout**, repurposing the underutilised garage into a home office/study and associated storage.
- A **modest rear infill extension** that aligns with the existing built form and roofline, designed to enhance functional space without making noticeable amendments to the overall mass or scale of the dwelling.

The materials proposed — including **painted brickwork, matching fenestration, and a consistent eaves line** — ensure that the architectural integrity and character of the host dwelling are preserved. Importantly, **no changes are proposed to the principal front or rear elevations (as infill extension follows the same roof profile of existing garage)**, maintaining the visual amenity of the street scene and garden environment.

The design has been conceived to **minimise environmental impact**, deliver **sustainable re-use of built space**, and conform to local design guidance including the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (adopted November 2019).

2. Biodiversity and Ecological Considerations

The proposal has been developed in line with the **Reading Borough Council's Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Adopted 2021)**, and supports the aims of the **Reading Biodiversity Action Plan**.

Key commitments include:

- **No disruption, removal, or alteration to existing vegetation**, trees, or planting on the site.
- The entire development is **confined to existing garage and in between hardstanding** ensuring **zero incursion** into green infrastructure or garden habitats.

As such, the development aligns with **Section 3 (Key Biodiversity Principles) of the SPD**, particularly Paragraph 3.4, which states:

“Development proposals should avoid harm to biodiversity and provide measurable net gains wherever possible. The retention of existing habitats and features of ecological interest should be prioritised.”

While the proposal is of such limited scale that measurable biodiversity enhancements are not mandated, the applicant is open to incorporating **integrated ecological features** such as **bee-friendly planting** — as appropriate, to further support biodiversity aims in line with **SPD Section 4: Enhancing Biodiversity in Smaller Developments**.

3. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Compliance

This application is also consistent with the **National Planning Policy Framework (2023)**, particularly:

- **Paragraph 180(a):**

“...if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.”

- **Paragraph 180(d):**

“...opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

Given the proposal avoids any ecological harm and maintains all existing natural features, it is fully compliant with these provisions. Furthermore, the principle of **minimising environmental impact through reuse and adaptation of existing structures** supports the broader NPPF objectives of sustainable development.

4. Summary

In conclusion, the proposed garage conversion and minor rear extension represent a **low-impact architectural enhancement** that is **entirely sympathetic to its context**, while preserving — and potentially enhancing — site biodiversity.

- There is **no loss of vegetation**, no intrusion into garden or ecological space, and no effect on existing green infrastructure.
- The proposal adheres fully to the **Reading Borough Council’s Biodiversity SPD (2021)** and relevant biodiversity policies within the **Local Plan and NPPF (2023)**.
- It reflects a **sustainable, proportionate response to modern living needs**, with negligible ecological footprint.

We respectfully request that the application be supported and are willing to consider small-scale ecological enhancement features, if deemed necessary or desirable by the Council’s Planning or Ecology Officers.