

OBJECTION TO AMENDED PLANS:

Planning Case Reference Number: 25/02968/FPH

Location: 13 Grimstone Road, Little Wymondley, Hitchin, SG4 7HH

Description: Single storey rear extension and detached office outbuilding following demolition of existing rear conservatory and detached garage. Rear garden patio area

Objection from: Miss Hayley Ward & Mr Julian Tribe, occupiers of 11 Grimstone Road, Little Wymondley, Hitchin SG4 7HH (immediate neighbours).

Dated: 29th January 2026

We are the occupiers of the **neighbouring property (No. 11 Grimstone Road) immediately adjacent** to the application site (No.13), and object to this planning application on the grounds that the individual and cumulative effects of the proposed **rear extension and detached home office/ outbuilding** would result in **unacceptable harm to the residential amenity of our home**, contrary to the policies of the **North Hertfordshire Local Plan** and the objectives of the **National Planning Policy Framework**.

Introduction:

Much of our original objection remains relevant. It is based on adopted planning policy and highlights conflicts with the North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan policies. This submission also responds to the amended roof design for the proposed detached office/outbuilding.

We are not opposed to the development in principle; however, we respectfully request that the Council considers the following before determining the application:

- a) Require the submission of **full and accurate drawings**, including all external dimensions and measurements, particularly the **ridge and eaves heights of the rear extension roof**, together with **clearly dimensioned separation distances** to our property. This information is essential to enable a proper assessment of the impact in terms of **overbearing effect, overshadowing, loss of daylight, sky visibility and residential amenity**, in accordance with Policy D3.
- b) Consider whether a **reduction in the width of the rear extension**, or a **stepped design away from the shared boundary**, would materially reduce overshadowing and overbearing impact. Even a modest reduction in width of **0.5 metres**, reducing the width from **7.0 metres to 6.5 metres**, would increase the separation distance from the boundary fence to approximately **2 metres**, reduce the tunnelling and enclosure effect, and better protect our living conditions, while still allowing the applicant to achieve an increase in living accommodation.
- c) Limit the rebuilt garage/home office to the **current form and dimensions**, with **no increase in roof height at any point**, to safeguard daylight, outlook and amenity to our primary habitable room and to avoid a material worsening of the existing situation.

- d) Should the Council be minded to approve the **change of use from a garage/storage space to a habitable room**, impose **robust conditions of use** on the detached home office to prevent unacceptable noise and disturbance, including restrictions on use, hours of operation, and the removal of permitted development rights for any future change of use or intensification.
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Procedural Concerns and Request for Committee Determination

We note the amended roof design and acknowledge that the height has been reduced compared to the earlier pitched roof proposal. However, we remain concerned that the application is being progressed towards determination without the submission of drawings that provide sufficient and accurate **measurements, dimensions and contextual information** to enable a proper assessment of the impact on neighbouring amenity.

Without this information, it is difficult to see how the Council can properly assess the proposal against Policy D3 (Protecting Living Conditions), particularly in relation to daylight, outlook, enclosure and noise impact. In our view, determination on the basis of incomplete or insufficiently dimensioned drawings risks being procedurally unsound.

Given the ongoing concerns regarding lack of fully dimensioned drawings, amenity impacts, and the absence of clear contextual information, we respectfully request that this application be referred to the **Planning Control Committee** for determination, rather than being approved under delegated powers.

Amenity Impact – Individual and Cumulative Effects

Our objection relates to both the **individual impacts** of each element of the proposal and the **cumulative effect** of the development. When taken together, the combined scale, massing, siting and very close proximity of the rear extension and detached outbuilding would significantly intensify impacts relating to **loss of daylight, overshadowing, overbearing impact, loss of outlook, noise and disturbance**.

As the adjacent neighbour, we would experience these impacts directly and permanently. The combined development would create an **overly dominant and enclosing built form** along the shared boundary, materially worsening the relationship between the two properties and causing harm to our living conditions beyond what could reasonably be expected in a residential setting.

Inaccurate Plans / Failure to Meet Validation Requirements

North Hertfordshire District Council's Local Validation Requirements require **plans to be accurate, scaled and adequately annotated, to allow a proper assessment of impacts**.

The drawings do not clearly illustrate that the two dwellings are **not parallel** but arranged on a **bend in the street** resulting in a **separation distance that reduces significantly towards the rear**.

From the drawings provided, the rear separation distance of the rear extension appears to reduce to approximately **1.5 metres from the boundary**, but as no dimensions are provided this cannot be verified.

The submitted **drawings lack essential dimensions**, including:

- separation distances between the proposed rear extension and the shared boundary,
- ridge and eaves heights of the rear extension roof and its relationship to our property on lower ground at the rear;
- the depth and effective length of the proposed flank wall; and
- clear dimensional relationships between the proposed outbuilding and neighbouring boundaries and dwelling.

In addition, although the block plan is broadly correct in outline, it gives a misleading impression of the available space between the properties. The alleyway is shown as wider and more uniform than it is, and the angled relationship between our property and the existing garage is not clearly illustrated, masking the way separation distances reduce toward the rear. This further undermines confidence in the accuracy of the submitted information.

Without accurate, fully dimensioned drawings showing wall heights, roof heights, footprints and true context, the proposal cannot be properly assessed against **Policies D1 and D3** or the amenity objectives of the **NPPF**.

Rear Extension – Poor Design Response to Context

The proposed rear extension does not demonstrate a sensitive or proportionate response to the constrained relationship between the two dwellings. The absence of any meaningful setback, stepping or reduction in scale adjacent to the boundary results in an unduly dominant form that exacerbates harm to neighbouring amenity.

Given the limited spacing, a more considered design approach—such as stepping away from the boundary or reducing width—could materially mitigate these impacts. As proposed, the development conflicts with **Policy D1**, which requires development to respond positively to its context and neighbouring buildings.

Detached Office / Outbuilding – Response to Amended Plans

The amended flat roof design at **2.5 metres** is lower than the previously proposed pitched roof, but remains **higher than the existing garage**, which varies between approximately **2.0 and 2.4 metres**. The proposal would increase the height along the full side elevation facing

our kitchen/dining room, including an increase of approximately **25%** opposite the half-glazed kitchen door, at a separation distance of approximately **1.44 metres**.

This would reduce visible sky, daylight and openness, increasing the sense of enclosure when considered individually and cumulatively with the rear extension. The loss of daylight and outlook would materially reduce the usability and enjoyment of one of the main living spaces within our home.

Although the amended height may fall within permitted development limits, this does not determine acceptability in the context of a full planning application. The proposal must still be assessed against **Policies D1 and D3**, and in our view, continues to cause unacceptable harm to residential amenity.

Importantly, the amended roof design does not address the fundamental concern regarding **noise and disturbance**. The building remains a **detached office / habitable room** in extremely close proximity to our kitchen/dining room and bedroom windows, and the narrow gap between the buildings will continue to **reflect and amplify sound**.

Daylight – BRE Guidance

At a separation distance of approximately **1.4–1.7 metres**, a structure of **2.5 metres** in height would be very close to, and likely to intercept, the **25° vertical sky line** when assessed from the centre of the kitchen/dining room window, particularly when considered alongside the existing rear extension.

In plan, the detached home office would also fall well within the **45° horizontal envelope**, indicating a high risk of daylight loss and enclosure. While BRE guidance is not a strict pass/fail test, these considerations indicate that the proposal is likely to result in a material reduction in visible sky and daylight, contrary to **Policy D3**.

Overbearing Impact and Cumulative Harm (Policies D1, D2 and D3)

The rebuilt outbuilding, by reason of its increased height and extreme proximity to multiple habitable room openings, would be dominant and visually intrusive. The existing garage is lower and slopes down as it gets closer to our kitchen door; the proposed increase and continuous height, represents a material worsening of the existing relationship.

When assessed cumulatively with the rear extension, the combined development would create a continuous and enclosing built presence along the boundary, leading to a pronounced tunnel effect, loss of outlook and significant reduction in daylight to the kitchen/dining room, rear garden room and adjoining lounge. The kitchen/dining room would lose almost all meaningful sky visibility from its primary openings.

Taken individually and cumulatively, the proposal would cause material harm to residential amenity, contrary to **Policies D1, D2 and D3**.

Noise, Disturbance and Inappropriate Habitable Use (Policy D3)

The proposed detached office, by reason of its size (approximately **8 m²**), insulation, heating and internal specification, would function as a habitable room capable of regular and prolonged occupation rather than as an incidental outbuilding.

Its close proximity—approximately **1.7 metres** from the kitchen/dining room window and **1.44 metres** from the half-glazed kitchen door—creates a narrow, noise-reflective corridor. Any voice-level activity, meetings, media use or extended occupation would be experienced at an intrusive level beyond what could reasonably be expected in a residential environment.

The lack of physical separation means that noise transmission would be **direct, continuous and difficult to mitigate**, resulting in a material loss of residential amenity. This harm would be experienced throughout the day and night, depending on patterns of use.

Given the proximity, it is questionable whether adequate acoustic mitigation could realistically be achieved without atypical construction measures. There is also a clear risk of intensification of use over time, which would be difficult to monitor or control without robust and enforceable conditions.

The amended roof design does not address the fundamental concern regarding **noise and disturbance**. The building remains a detached office / habitable room in extremely close proximity to our kitchen/dining room and bedroom windows, and the narrow gap between the buildings will continue to **reflect and amplify sound**.

The proposal therefore poses an unacceptable risk of noise and disturbance, contrary to **Policy D3**.

Requested Conditions (If Approved in the Alternative)

Should the Council be minded to approve the change of use, we respectfully request the following conditions to safeguard residential amenity:

1. No use as sleeping accommodation or as a separate residential unit.
 2. Use limited to **incidental, non-commercial desk-based work** by the occupiers of the dwelling.
 3. No customer-facing or externally attended use.
 4. No use as a games room, music room or similar activity.
 5. Restricted hours of use (e.g. **08:00–19:00**).
 6. Acoustic insulation measures to be approved and implemented.
 7. Removal of permitted development rights for alteration, extension or change of use.
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NHDC & HM Inspectorate Planning Precedents:

Relevant appeal decisions demonstrate consistency in refusing development that causes overbearing impact and harm to neighbouring amenity, including:

31 Thatcher's End, Hitchin (APP/X1925/D/25/3368979, 14 October 2025). The Inspector found that extensions and an outbuilding along the plot boundaries caused an **overbearing visual impact and harm** to neighbours' living conditions, contrary to Policies D2 and D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031.

165 Weston Way / 2 Willian Way in Baldock (APP/X1925/W/24/3347317, 5 December 2024). Appeal dismissed because the proposal would be very prominent, **dominant, and overbearing when viewed from the neighbour's property** and cause unacceptable harm to the neighbours' living conditions, conflicting with Policies D1, D2 Policy D3.

Approving this application in its present form, would be inconsistent with the approach taken in the above decisions.

Conclusion:

For the reasons set out above, we respectfully request that the Council gives further consideration to the proposal and either:

- refuses the application,
- secures appropriate mitigation through amendment and conditions, or
- defers determination pending the submission of accurate and sufficiently detailed drawings to enable a robust assessment of the proposal's impacts

We thank you for your kind consideration and will happily assist with further information or photographs should you require them.

Hayley Ward & Julian Tribe