

Matthew & Lauren Pyne-Madden
Lutyens Cottage
Hitchwood Lane
Preston

FAO Appeal Office

25/02316/FPH / 25/02318/LBC - Lutyens Cottage - Appeal

APPEAL STATEMENT OF CASE

In respect of the refusal of planning permission and listed building consent for: *Glazed link extension between ancillary annexe and main dwelling and insertion of window to courtyard wall.*

LPA References: 25/02316/FPH & 25/02318/LBC **Site:** Lutyens Cottage, Hitchwood Lane, Preston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 7RY **Appellants:** Mr & Mrs Pyne-Madden

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Lutyens cottage, Hitchwood Lane, Preston, is a grade 2 listed pair of workers cottages that have been united to make one dwelling. Designed by the famous architect *Edwin Lutyens*.

1.2 This Statement of Case is submitted in support of an appeal against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council to refuse planning permission and listed building consent.

1.3 The refusal is based on the assertion that the glazed link is an "incongruous addition" that impairs the relationship between the buildings.

1.4 The Appellants contend the decision is flawed due to a demonstrable factual error regarding scale, a fundamental misunderstanding of planning policy regarding "viability," and the dismissal of specialist expert advice from the national planning and experts on Edwin Lutyens, the Lutyens Trust. **The Lutyens Trust is a charity dedicated to preserving and promoting the spirit and substance of Lutyens heritage. Their intervention and influence has helped protect many Lutyens buildings from harm.**

2.0 Grounds of Appeal

Ground 1: Material Factual Error Regarding Scale

2.1 The Officer's Report relies on a significant error of fact. Paragraph 4.3.16 states that the glazed link would *"have a depth to near match that of the outbuilding"*.

2.2 **This is factually incorrect.** As evidenced by the submitted Site Layout (Drawing 02-363-04), the depth of the proposed link is approximately **50% of the outbuilding's depth**.

2.3 This error has led the Council to fundamentally overstate the massing and dominance of the proposal. Far from matching the outbuilding, the link is a subservient, lightweight intervention that sits quietly between the main structures.

Ground 2: Subjective Preference vs. Specialist Expert Advice

2.4 The refusal is driven by the Conservation Officer's personal preference for a *"flat roof form"* rather than an objective assessment of harm. The Conservation Officer openly admits in his report that he is taking the rare step of opposing the views of The Lutyens Trust, stating he *"cannot recall holding an opposing view"* to them previously.

2.5 Expert Vetting: The Lutyens Trust, the recognised specialist body for the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens, was consulted at concept stage before an architect was appointed, and throughout all design stages. We have a full audit trail of all correspondence and design feedback, should you wish to review the details.

Their conclusion was unequivocal:

"We are satisfied that... the scheme would not compromise the special historic character and interest of the buildings."

2.6 Character Legibility: Furthermore, the Lutyens Trust explicitly confirms that the proposal *"retains the legibility of the original form"*. The Council has failed to justify why a single officer's subjective preference should outweigh the specific, vetted endorsement of the national experts on this heritage asset.

Ground 3: Flawed Objection to Utility and Viability

2.7 The Conservation Officer's objection appears to be rooted in a philosophical opposition to the space being useful. In his consultation response, the Officer states:

"Benefit of the Link – It is noted that the link is designed as a fully useable room, rather than being a corridor. It is also the very fact that this western courtyard is proposed to be a fully useable room which is the reason for my objection."

2.8 This is a fundamentally flawed planning position. To suggest that a development is objectionable specifically *because* it is useful contradicts the core principles of sustainable development.

2.9 Under **NPPF Paragraph 215**, securing an "optimum viable use" is a key justification for allowing "less than substantial harm". Integrating the annexe into the daily life of the home via a functional space—rather than a mere corridor—ensures the long-term maintenance and relevance of the outbuilding. By objecting to the creation of a "usable room," the Council is effectively advocating for a less viable, less functional solution, which actively works against the long-term preservation of the asset.

Ground 4: Design Merits and "Dead Space"

2.10 The Officer's preferred alternative (a narrow, flat-roofed link) would leave a small, sliver-like residual courtyard between the new link and the historic wall. This space would be physically inaccessible and functionally useless—creating "dead space" solely to satisfy a preference for a flat roof.

2.11 In contrast, the proposed gable form is contextually appropriate. It uses structural glazing to remain "lightweight" and transparent, ensuring the original external walls remain legible and the buildings appear visually detached, even while connected.

2.12 Reversibility and Modern Design

The CO acknowledges that the infill scheme is "ultimately reversible" and a "clearly legible intervention".

Legibility: A lightweight, fully glazed structure achieves a visual and physical distinction between 'old' and 'new'.

Pitched vs. Flat Roof: The proposed pitched roof reflects the established Lutyens vernacular of the site far more sympathetically than a modern flat-roofed glass box, which the CO suggested as an alternative.

2.13. Social Benefits (NPPF Public Benefit)

The CO claims there are no public benefits. We contend the following represent significant social and public benefits under the NPPF:

Multi-generational Living: The link facilitates the care of elderly family members within the home, reducing future burdens on local social care.

Family Cohesion: The current configuration creates a functional barrier; we cannot monitor or hear our children from the annexe, preventing its use in the evenings.

Correction of Functional Deficit: A Grade II listed building must adapt to the reasonable requirements of its occupants to remain a viable, maintained home. Our conservatory link proposal brings a modern and open plan space to our beloved grade 2 listed Lutyens property. We plan to use the conservatory as a dining space for all family members, and a functional central meeting room between the main house and the annexe, which can be shared with elderly family members in future years.

Ground 5: Mitigation (The Courtyard Window)

2.12 The refusal notice cites the insertion of a window into the courtyard wall as a reason for objection.

2.13 During the application, the Appellants explicitly agreed to remove this window to satisfy the Council. The Council noted this concession but refused the application regardless.

2.14 The Appellants confirm they are willing to **omit the window** from the scheme. We respectfully invite the Inspector to issue a **Split Decision** (allowing the link but dismissing the window) or to handle this via condition.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The proposal is a reversible, high-quality intervention supported by The Lutyens Trust. The Council's objection is founded on a factual error regarding the extension's size, a subjective preference that ignores expert advice, and a flawed planning logic that penalises the scheme for being "usable."

3.2 Accordingly, the Appellants respectfully request that the appeal be allowed.

Best Regards

Matt & Lauren Pyne-Madden

CC Edmund Wright