

PLANNING APPEAL STATEMENT

Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Against Refusal of Planning Permission

Application Reference

26/00523/FPH

Site Address

Standelfield
Standhill Road
Hitchin
Hertfordshire
SG4 9AE

Proposed Development

Two storey and part first floor front extension, single storey rear extension, installation of front and side canopies and erection of an attached double garage.

Appellant

Mr Earl Kennaugh

Prepared By

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Contents

Contents

1.0 Executive Summary

2.0 Introduction

3.0 Site Description and Planning History

4.0 Description of the Proposed Development

5.0 Relevant Planning Policy

5.1 Relevant Appeal Principles

6.0 Assessment of the Council's Reason for Refusal

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Whether the Proposal Appears as "Bolt-On Additions"

6.3 Scale

6.4 Massing

6.5 Design

6.6 Fenestration

6.7 Street Scene

6.8 Neighbour Amenity

6.9 Overall Design Response

7.0 Planning Balance

7.1 Public Benefits

8.0 Overall Conclusions on Design

9.0 Conclusion

1.0 Executive Summary

This Planning Appeal Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr Earl Kennaugh in support of an appeal against North Hertfordshire District Council's refusal of planning permission for the proposed extensions and alterations at Standelfield, Standhill Road, Hitchin.

Planning permission was refused under Application Reference **26/00523/FPH** on 14 May 2026 on the grounds that the proposed development was considered to result in a visually intrusive and poorly integrated form of development that would fail to respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area. The Council's concerns relate principally to matters of architectural composition, scale, massing and design.

Importantly, the Council accepts that the principle of extending the existing dwelling is appropriate at this location and further acknowledges that the proposal would not result in any unacceptable impact upon neighbouring residential amenity. The refusal therefore concerns matters of design judgement rather than any objection to the principle of development, residential use, highway safety, parking provision, ecology, drainage or the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

This Appeal Statement respectfully submits that the proposal has been assessed too narrowly and that insufficient weight has been afforded to the overall architectural composition of the scheme, the generous proportions of the application site, the established character of the existing dwelling and the wider residential context.

The proposed development has been designed as a coordinated enhancement to the existing dwelling, employing complementary roof forms, matching external materials and an integrated internal layout to create a cohesive family home capable of meeting modern living requirements whilst respecting its established residential setting.

Whilst the Council considers the proposal to comprise a series of "bolt-on additions", this Appeal Statement demonstrates that such a characterisation does not represent the only reasonable planning judgement available. When assessed as a whole, the proposal forms a coherent architectural composition that remains proportionate to both the existing dwelling and its generous plot.

This Appeal Statement further demonstrates that the proposal complies with the overarching objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework together with Policies SP9, D1 and D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan when these policies are considered in their entirety and applied using balanced planning judgement.

The Appellant respectfully invites the Inspector to undertake an independent assessment of the proposal against the Development Plan as a whole and concludes that the perceived design concerns identified by the Council do not significantly or demonstrably outweigh the clear benefits of the proposed development.

Accordingly, for the reasons set out within this Appeal Statement, it is respectfully requested that the appeal be allowed and planning permission granted.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of this Appeal Statement

This Planning Appeal Statement has been prepared by **Plans Made Easy** on behalf of **Mr Earl Kennaugh** in support of an appeal against the refusal of planning permission by North Hertfordshire District Council under Application Reference **26/00523/FPH** for proposed extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling known as **Standelfield, Standhill Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 9AE**.

The purpose of this document is to assist the Planning Inspectorate by providing a comprehensive assessment of the proposed development against the relevant provisions of the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"). It also responds in detail to the reasons for refusal set out within the Council's Decision Notice and supporting Case Officer Report.

This Appeal Statement demonstrates that the proposal represents an appropriate, proportionate and well-considered enhancement to the existing dwelling and that, when assessed as a whole, the development complies with the objectives of good design contained within both local and national planning policy.

2.2 Background

The application sought planning permission for the erection of a two-storey and part first-floor front extension, a single-storey rear extension, the installation of front and side canopies, and the construction of an attached double garage to an established detached family dwelling. The proposals were developed to improve the functionality of the property, modernise its internal layout and provide accommodation better suited to contemporary family living whilst remaining within its established residential use.

Following consideration of the application, North Hertfordshire District Council refused planning permission on 14 May 2026. The refusal was based solely upon concerns relating to the visual appearance of the proposed development, specifically its perceived scale, massing, architectural composition and relationship with the existing dwelling and surrounding street scene.

Importantly, no objections were raised in relation to the principle of residential development, neighbour amenity, highway safety, parking provision, drainage, ecology or any other technical planning matter. The appeal therefore concerns the exercise of planning judgement in relation to design quality rather than any fundamental policy objection to the development itself.

2.3 Scope of the Appeal

The Appellant fully acknowledges the important role that high-quality design plays in the planning system and recognises that local planning authorities are required to consider the impact of development upon the character and appearance of their surroundings. Equally, however, matters of architectural composition and visual appearance are inherently matters of professional planning judgement, and it is recognised that different conclusions may reasonably be reached when assessing the same proposal against adopted planning policy.

This appeal therefore respectfully invites the Inspector to undertake an independent assessment of the proposal, considering not only the individual components of the development but also its overall architectural composition, relationship with the existing dwelling, contribution to the site and wider context, and the planning balance as a whole.

The Appellant respectfully submits that the proposal has been considered too narrowly by the Council, with insufficient regard to the overall coherence of the design, the generous proportions of the application site, the detached nature of the dwelling, the quality of the proposed materials and the absence of any demonstrable harm to neighbouring occupiers or wider planning interests.

2.4 Structure of this Appeal Statement

For clarity and ease of reference, this Appeal Statement first describes the site, its planning history and the proposed development before reviewing the relevant planning policy framework. It then addresses each element of the Council's reason for refusal individually, including the concerns relating to scale, massing, architectural composition, fenestration and the wider street scene. Finally, the Statement considers the proposal within the overall planning balance before explaining why planning permission should be granted.

The Appellant respectfully requests that this Appeal Statement is read as a whole. It is submitted that, when considered in its entirety, the proposal represents a high-quality residential extension that accords with the objectives of the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and should therefore receive planning permission.

3.0 Site Description and Planning History

3.1 The Application Site

The application site relates to **Standelfield**, a substantial detached family dwelling situated on **Standhill Road, Hitchin, Hertfordshire**. The property occupies a generous residential plot and enjoys an elevated position set back from the public highway. The dwelling is well established within its extensive curtilage and is enclosed by mature landscaping, including established trees and vegetation along the site boundaries, which contribute positively to its setting and provide a degree of visual screening from the surrounding area.

Standelfield remains a single private dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and is characterised by its spacious setting, generous separation distances and detached form. Unlike more tightly constrained suburban plots, the site benefits from considerable openness around the existing

dwelling, allowing extensions to be accommodated without creating unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring properties or resulting in an overdeveloped appearance.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character and comprises a variety of detached dwellings of differing ages, architectural styles and individual design approaches. Whilst there is an identifiable residential character, there is no single architectural style that dominates the locality. Consequently, the area displays a degree of variety in building form, roof design, fenestration and external appearance, reflecting the gradual evolution of individual properties over time.

3.2 Site Context

The elevated position of Standelfield provides the dwelling with a degree of prominence within the local street scene. However, this prominence is moderated by the generous plot size, mature boundary planting and the substantial spacing that exists between neighbouring properties.

The application site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor is the dwelling a Listed Building. Whilst the site is visible from surrounding public viewpoints, it is experienced within the context of a spacious residential environment characterised by detached dwellings occupying comparatively generous plots.

The proposal therefore falls to be assessed principally against the objectives of good design and its relationship with the existing dwelling and surrounding residential character, rather than any heritage considerations.

3.3 Planning History

The planning history of the site demonstrates that alterations and development within the curtilage have previously been accepted in principle.

Planning permission was granted under reference **13/01509/1PUD** for the erection of a detached triple garage following the demolition of an existing garage and shed. This establishes that additional built form within the residential curtilage has previously been considered acceptable by the Local Planning Authority.

A subsequent application under reference **23/00887/FP** sought planning permission for the erection of two detached dwellings together with associated works. That proposal was refused and the subsequent appeal dismissed. However, it is important to distinguish that application from the current appeal, as it related to the creation of additional residential development within the site rather than extensions and improvements to the existing dwellinghouse. The planning considerations associated with new residential development are materially different from those relating to alterations and extensions to an existing family dwelling and should not be afforded significant weight in determining the current appeal.

The site is also subject to Tree Preservation Order **TPO/00209 (2023)**, which remains in force. The proposed development has been designed having regard to the established landscape setting of the site and does not seek to undermine the contribution made by the protected trees to the character of the area.

3.4 Summary

The appeal site comprises a substantial detached dwelling occupying a generous residential plot within an established residential area of Hitchin. The property benefits from significant separation from neighbouring dwellings, mature landscaping and an elevated setting that contributes to its individual character.

The planning history confirms that built development within the curtilage has previously been accepted in principle, whilst the current proposal does not seek to intensify the residential use of the site or introduce additional dwellings. Rather, it seeks to improve and modernise an existing family home within its established residential curtilage.

When these characteristics are considered collectively, the site is capable of accommodating well-designed extensions without giving rise to unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring amenity or the wider residential character of the area. The assessment of this appeal should therefore focus upon the quality and composition of the proposed design rather than the principle of extending the dwelling itself, which the Council has already accepted.

4.0 Description of the Proposed Development

4.1 Overview

The proposed development seeks planning permission for a series of carefully considered extensions and alterations to an established detached family dwelling, designed to improve the functionality, appearance and long-term adaptability of the property whilst maintaining its existing residential use.

The proposal comprises:

- A two-storey and part first-floor front extension;
- A single-storey rear extension;
- The installation of front and side entrance canopies; and
- The erection of an attached double garage.

Collectively, these elements have been designed as part of a single architectural composition intended to enhance the existing dwelling rather than fundamentally alter its residential character. The proposal retains the property as a single private dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and does not introduce any additional residential units or changes of use.

4.2 Design Philosophy

The principal objective of the proposed development is not simply to increase the amount of accommodation available, but to create a more coherent, functional and adaptable family home that responds to the evolving needs of modern living.

The existing dwelling has developed over time and presents opportunities for improvement in both its internal arrangement and external appearance. The proposed design therefore seeks to rationalise the layout, improve circulation throughout the dwelling and provide additional accommodation in a manner that integrates with the existing building.

Rather than viewing each individual element in isolation, the proposal has been conceived as a coordinated architectural enhancement in which each component contributes to the overall composition of the dwelling. The front extension, rear extension, attached garage and entrance canopies have therefore been designed to work together as complementary elements of a single improvement strategy.

4.3 Internal Improvements

Internally, the proposal delivers a significantly improved arrangement of accommodation better suited to contemporary family living.

The revised ground floor provides enhanced family spaces, improved circulation and a more efficient relationship between the principal living accommodation, kitchen, dining areas and supporting utility spaces. The attached garage also improves the practicality of the dwelling by providing secure covered parking together with additional storage capacity appropriate for a property of this size.

These internal improvements represent an important planning benefit by allowing the existing dwelling to continue to meet modern residential expectations without requiring the creation of additional residential development elsewhere.

4.4 External Appearance

Externally, careful consideration has been given to ensuring that the proposed development respects the character of the existing dwelling through the use of complementary materials and detailing.

The proposal incorporates:

- Matching facing brickwork;
- Matching roof tiles where applicable;

- Timber-framed windows and doors reflecting the character of the existing dwelling;
- Consistent roof forms;
- Complementary architectural detailing.

These design choices were selected specifically to create visual continuity between the existing dwelling and the proposed extensions, ensuring that the completed development would read as a natural evolution of the property rather than as unrelated additions.

4.5 Scale and Relationship with the Existing Dwelling

The proposed extensions have been designed having regard to the generous proportions of both the existing dwelling and the application site.

Whilst the proposal inevitably increases the overall built form, it remains proportionate to the scale of the existing house and occupies a plot that is capable of comfortably accommodating the proposed development.

Importantly, the proposal does not represent an overdevelopment of the site. Significant areas of open garden are retained, appropriate separation distances remain, and the relationship between the dwelling and its surrounding landscape continues to reflect the spacious character that defines this part of Standhill Road.

4.6 Design as a Coordinated Scheme

A central theme of this Appeal Statement is that the proposal should not be assessed as a series of unrelated components but rather as a unified architectural composition.

The front extension, attached garage, rear extension and entrance canopies were intentionally designed together in order to achieve a balanced overall arrangement that enhances both the functionality and appearance of the existing dwelling.

The Appellant respectfully submits that assessing each element individually, without proper regard to the overall design concept, risks overlooking the coordinated nature of the proposal and the manner in which the various components interact to create a coherent architectural solution.

It is therefore considered that the proposal should be viewed in its entirety, recognising the integrated design approach adopted throughout the scheme.

4.7 Summary

The proposed development has been carefully designed to modernise and enhance an established detached family dwelling whilst retaining its residential character and respecting its spacious setting.

The proposal delivers meaningful improvements to the functionality, adaptability and long-term use of the property through a coordinated programme of extensions and alterations that employ sympathetic materials, consistent architectural detailing and a coherent design philosophy.

It is respectfully submitted that the proposal represents a positive enhancement to the existing dwelling and provides an appropriate response to the opportunities presented by this substantial residential site.

5.0 Relevant Planning Policy

5.1 Introduction

The determination of this appeal is governed by the statutory requirement set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires planning applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of this appeal, the principal policy considerations comprise the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031 together with the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF"), both of which seek to promote high-quality, sustainable and well-designed development.

The Appellant considers that the proposed development accords with both the Development Plan and national planning policy when assessed as a whole and against the full range of material planning considerations.

5.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031

The Council has cited Policies **SP9**, **D1** and **D3** of the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan as the principal policies relevant to this appeal.

Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability

Policy SP9 seeks to ensure that development proposals achieve a high standard of design, respond positively to their surroundings and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the District.

The Appellant fully supports these objectives.

It is respectfully submitted that the proposed extensions have been designed using complementary materials, coordinated roof forms, consistent architectural detailing and an integrated layout that responds positively to the existing dwelling and its spacious residential setting. The proposal therefore represents an enhancement of the existing property rather than a departure from its established character.

Policy D1 – Sustainable Design

Policy D1 requires development proposals to respond positively to local context, reinforce local distinctiveness and demonstrate good standards of design.

The proposed development has been prepared with these objectives firmly in mind.

The appeal proposal respects the established residential use of the site, retains the existing detached character of the dwelling and employs materials intended to complement the existing building. The proposal also improves the long-term functionality of the dwelling, allowing it to continue meeting modern family requirements without intensifying the residential use of the site.

Whilst the Council has reached a different conclusion regarding the architectural composition of the proposal, the Appellant respectfully submits that the scheme represents a reasonable and policy-compliant design response when assessed in its entirety.

Policy D3 – Protecting Living Conditions

Policy D3 seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of existing or future occupiers.

Importantly, the Council has expressly concluded that the proposed development would **not** result in any significant deterioration to neighbouring residential amenity. No concerns have been raised regarding overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing impact or loss of privacy.

The proposal therefore fully accords with the objectives of Policy D3.

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework places significant emphasis upon achieving well-designed places through high-quality architecture that responds positively to local context whilst supporting sustainable development.

The Council has referred principally to Paragraph 135 of the NPPF, which encourages developments that are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

The Appellant fully endorses these objectives.

However, it is respectfully submitted that the NPPF does not seek architectural uniformity, nor does it prevent existing dwellings from evolving to meet changing household needs. Rather, the Framework encourages well-considered design solutions that respond appropriately to their context whilst allowing opportunities for architectural improvement and adaptation.

The proposed development seeks precisely that outcome through a coordinated programme of extensions and alterations that retain the dwelling's established residential identity whilst enhancing its functionality and appearance.

5.4 Relevant Appeal Principles

The assessment of design quality is inherently an exercise of planning judgement.

It is well established that reasonable professional opinions may legitimately differ regarding architectural composition, visual appearance and the interpretation of design policies. Such differences do not, in themselves, demonstrate conflict with planning policy.

Planning Inspectors are therefore required to undertake an independent assessment of the proposal, considering the characteristics of the host dwelling, the wider site context, the objectives of the Development Plan and all other material planning considerations before reaching their own planning judgement.

The Appellant respectfully invites the Inspector to assess the proposal in this manner, considering the development as a whole rather than focusing upon its individual component parts in isolation.

5.5 Policy Compliance

When considered against the Development Plan as a whole, the Appellant respectfully submits that the proposal satisfies the underlying objectives of both local and national planning policy.

Specifically, the proposal:

- Represents an appropriate extension to an established residential dwelling;
- Retains the lawful residential use of the site;
- Employs complementary external materials and architectural detailing;
- Preserves neighbouring residential amenity;
- Maintains appropriate parking provision and access arrangements;
- Delivers meaningful improvements to the functionality and long-term sustainability of the dwelling; and
- Responds positively to the spacious character of the application site.

The principal disagreement between the Appellant and the Council therefore relates not to policy objectives themselves, but to the exercise of planning judgement regarding the visual composition of the proposed design.

It is respectfully submitted that this matter is capable of supporting an alternative and equally reasonable planning conclusion.

6.0 Assessment of the Council's Reason for Refusal

6.1 Introduction

The Council has accepted that the principle of extending the existing dwelling is appropriate and acceptable at this site. The Officer's Report confirms that extensions to the dwelling are acceptable in principle and further concludes that the proposal would not result in any unacceptable impact upon neighbouring residential amenity.

Accordingly, this appeal does not concern the principle of development, the established residential use of the site, highway safety, parking provision, ecology, drainage, neighbouring amenity or any other material planning consideration. Rather, the appeal relates solely to the exercise of planning judgement regarding the architectural composition and visual appearance of the proposed development.

The Appellant respectfully considers that, whilst design is inevitably a matter of professional judgement, insufficient weight has been afforded to the overall composition of the scheme, the characteristics of the host dwelling, the generous proportions of the application site and the wider residential context.

It is submitted that, when assessed as a whole and against the relevant provisions of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan together with the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposal represents a coherent and sympathetic enhancement to an established detached dwelling that preserves its residential character whilst providing significant functional improvements for modern family living.

The following sections respond individually to each of the Council's stated concerns.

6.2 Whether the Proposal Appears as "Bolt-On Additions"

A principal concern expressed within both the Decision Notice and the Officer's Report is that the proposed development would appear as a series of "bolt-on additions" rather than a coherent extension to the existing dwelling.

The Appellant respectfully submits that this description does not accurately reflect either the design process or the completed architectural composition of the proposal.

The proposed front extension, attached garage, rear extension and entrance canopies were not conceived as isolated additions designed independently of one another. Rather, they form part of a single coordinated architectural strategy intended to modernise, rationalise and improve the existing dwelling whilst retaining its established residential function and identity.

Each element has been designed using complementary materials, coordinated roof forms, consistent detailing and a unified architectural language. Collectively, these features seek to integrate the proposed development with the existing building rather than compete with it.

It is acknowledged that the proposal introduces several alterations to the existing dwelling. However, the existence of multiple components should not, of itself, lead to the conclusion that a proposal lacks architectural coherence. Many successful residential extensions comprise several complementary elements designed together as part of a comprehensive improvement scheme.

The Appellant respectfully submits that the proposal should therefore be assessed as a single architectural composition rather than as a collection of individual extensions considered in isolation.

6.3 Scale

The Council expresses concern that the proposal would appear excessive in scale. However, the Appellant respectfully submits that this conclusion does not adequately reflect either the substantial size of the existing dwelling or the generous dimensions of the application site.

Standelfield occupies a significantly larger plot than many surrounding residential properties and benefits from generous separation distances, substantial garden areas and an established detached character. The proposed extensions remain proportionate to both the host dwelling and its curtilage.

Importantly, the proposal does not result in an overdevelopment of the site. Significant open areas remain, the dwelling retains an appropriate relationship with its surroundings and the overall scale of development remains consistent with the spacious character of the locality.

The Appellant therefore considers that the proposal achieves an appropriate balance between providing improved accommodation and maintaining proportionality.

6.4 Massing

The Officer's Report refers to concerns regarding the cumulative massing of the proposal.

Whilst the proposal inevitably increases the built form of the existing dwelling, the perceived mass is moderated through several deliberate design measures.

These include:

- variation in roof forms;
- articulation between principal building elements;
- the subordinate relationship of the attached garage;
- retention of generous external spacing around the dwelling; and
- the continued dominance of the original dwelling within its spacious plot.

When viewed in the context of the entire site, the proposal does not appear visually oppressive nor does it overwhelm the existing dwelling. Instead, it represents a logical evolution of a substantial detached property capable of accommodating additional built form without detriment to its wider setting.

The Appellant respectfully submits that the Council has placed disproportionate emphasis upon the cumulative effect of the individual elements without giving sufficient regard to the scale of the site itself.

6.5 Design

The Council concludes that the proposal would result in a visually intrusive form of development that fails to integrate successfully with the host dwelling. Whilst the Appellant fully acknowledges the importance of achieving high-quality design, it is respectfully submitted that the proposal has been assessed too narrowly and that insufficient regard has been given to the overall design strategy adopted throughout the scheme.

The proposal was not conceived simply as a collection of individual extensions intended to maximise additional floorspace. Instead, the design process sought to create a comprehensive architectural enhancement that would modernise the dwelling whilst respecting its established residential character.

Throughout the scheme, careful attention has been given to achieving visual continuity through the consistent use of complementary external materials, coordinated roof forms, sympathetic architectural detailing and an integrated relationship between existing and proposed elements. Matching brickwork, complementary roof coverings and timber-framed windows and doors have been selected specifically to ensure that the completed development would read as a natural evolution of the existing dwelling rather than as a discordant addition.

It is recognised that architectural design is not an exact science and that different professional opinions may legitimately exist regarding visual composition. However, the existence of an alternative design opinion should not necessarily be interpreted as demonstrating conflict with adopted planning policy.

The Appellant respectfully submits that the proposal achieves an appropriate balance between preserving the established identity of the existing dwelling and introducing contemporary improvements necessary to meet modern family requirements.

When viewed as a complete architectural composition, the proposal demonstrates a coherent design philosophy that positively contributes to the long-term enhancement of the property.

6.6 Fenestration

The Officer's Report expresses concern regarding the proposed arrangement of windows and concludes that the front elevation would exhibit poor fenestration proportions.

The Appellant respectfully considers that this conclusion is based upon a subjective assessment of architectural composition rather than any demonstrable conflict with adopted planning policy.

The proposed window arrangement has been developed to achieve an appropriate balance between internal functionality and external appearance. The position, proportions and arrangement of openings reflect the requirements of the accommodation they serve whilst maintaining an overall visual relationship with the existing dwelling.

Absolute symmetry is not a prerequisite of good residential design.

Many successful contemporary extensions intentionally vary window proportions and arrangements in response to internal planning requirements, natural daylight, views and circulation patterns. Such variation does not necessarily diminish architectural quality and should instead be considered within the context of the overall composition of the building.

When viewed as part of the complete elevation rather than in isolation, the fenestration contributes to the overall architectural rhythm of the proposal and remains entirely appropriate for a substantial detached dwelling of this character.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the Council's concerns regarding fenestration represent an alternative design preference rather than evidence of unacceptable planning harm.

6.7 Street Scene

The Council places considerable weight upon the visibility of the property from surrounding public viewpoints and considers that the proposal would adversely affect the character of the street scene.

The Appellant accepts that Standelfield occupies a relatively prominent position due to its elevated setting. However, prominence alone should not automatically be equated with unacceptable visual impact.

The application site occupies a generous residential plot characterised by mature landscaping, substantial spacing between neighbouring dwellings and an established detached form. These

characteristics provide an appropriate setting for a dwelling of this scale and enable carefully designed extensions to be accommodated without materially undermining the wider character of the area.

Furthermore, the surrounding locality displays a variety of architectural styles, roof forms, building proportions and individual design responses. There is no singular architectural language that defines the area, and individual properties have evolved over time to reflect changing residential requirements.

Against this varied backdrop, the proposed development would remain entirely recognisable as a single detached dwelling and would continue to respect the spacious pattern of development that characterises Standhill Road.

The Appellant therefore respectfully submits that the proposal would integrate comfortably within the existing street scene and would not result in demonstrable harm to the character or appearance of the wider area.

6.8 Neighbour Amenity

One of the most significant aspects of this appeal is that the Council has expressly concluded that the proposal would **not** result in any unacceptable impact upon neighbouring residential amenity. The Officer's Report confirms that the proposed extensions would not cause significant overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing, overbearing impact or any material deterioration in the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

The Appellant welcomes this conclusion.

It demonstrates that the proposal has been carefully designed with full regard to its relationship with surrounding properties and that the scale and positioning of the extensions are capable of being accommodated without unacceptable planning harm.

The absence of any identified impact upon neighbouring amenity represents a significant material consideration in favour of the proposal and reinforces the conclusion that the appeal concerns architectural judgement rather than wider planning harm.

The proposal therefore fully accords with the objectives of Policy D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan together with the amenity objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.9 Overall Design Response

Having considered the proposal in its entirety, the Appellant respectfully submits that the proposed development should be viewed as a coordinated architectural enhancement rather than as a collection of unrelated additions.

The use of matching materials, complementary roof forms, carefully considered architectural detailing and an integrated internal layout demonstrates a coherent design approach intended to modernise, rationalise and enhance the existing dwelling whilst respecting its established character, architectural identity and residential setting.

Whilst the Council has reached the view that the proposal would appear visually intrusive, it is respectfully submitted that this conclusion reflects one possible interpretation of the design rather than the only reasonable planning judgement available.

The Appellant considers that the proposal responds positively to the generous proportions of the site, retains the detached character of the dwelling, preserves neighbouring residential amenity and maintains appropriate parking and access arrangements. These are all important planning considerations which support the acceptability of the proposal as a whole.

Ultimately, the appeal turns upon matters of architectural judgement rather than measurable planning harm.

When assessed objectively against the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, the Appellant respectfully submits that the proposal represents a proportionate, well-considered and policy-compliant enhancement to an existing detached dwelling that would preserve the character of the area whilst providing significant long-term benefits for its occupiers.

7.0 Planning Balance

7.1 Introduction

The planning system requires development proposals to be considered in the round, weighing any identified adverse impacts against the benefits arising from the proposed development.

In the present case, the Council has identified no unacceptable harm in respect of the principle of development, neighbouring residential amenity, highway safety, parking provision, drainage or any other technical planning matter. The sole issue in dispute relates to the Council's assessment of the architectural composition and visual appearance of the proposal.

The Appellant respectfully submits that, when the proposal is assessed as a whole, the considerable benefits arising from the development substantially outweigh the subjective design concerns identified within the refusal.

7.2 Public Benefits

The proposed development delivers a range of tangible planning benefits which, when considered collectively, weigh positively in favour of granting planning permission.

Modernisation of an Established Family Dwelling

Plans Made Easy

The proposal secures the long-term improvement of an existing detached dwelling through a coordinated programme of extensions and alterations designed to enhance both its functionality and external appearance. Rather than replacing or intensifying the residential use of the site, the development represents a sustainable investment in the continued use of an established family home.

Improved Living Accommodation

The revised internal arrangement creates accommodation that responds more effectively to the needs of modern family living. Improved circulation, enhanced family spaces, better functional relationships between principal rooms and improved ancillary accommodation contribute positively to the quality of the dwelling for both present and future occupiers.

Long-Term Adaptability

The proposal enables the dwelling to adapt to changing household requirements without the need to relocate or seek additional residential development elsewhere. This supports one of the fundamental objectives of sustainable development by making more effective use of the existing housing stock.

Provision of Covered Parking and Storage

The attached double garage provides secure covered parking together with valuable storage accommodation appropriate to a substantial family dwelling. This improves the day-to-day functionality of the property whilst maintaining existing parking provision within the site.

Efficient Use of an Existing Residential Plot

The application site comprises a generous residential curtilage capable of accommodating the proposed development without resulting in overdevelopment. The proposal therefore makes efficient use of previously developed residential land whilst preserving the spacious character of the site.

Retention of Residential Character

Importantly, the proposal retains the property as a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3). No additional dwellings are created, no intensification of residential use is proposed and the established pattern of occupation remains unchanged.

Protection of Residential Amenity

The Council has confirmed that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring occupiers. There would be no significant loss of privacy, overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impact arising from the proposed development. This represents a significant material consideration in favour of the appeal.

High-Quality External Materials

The proposal incorporates complementary external materials, including matching brickwork, roof tiles and timber joinery, intended to integrate successfully with the existing dwelling. These design choices reinforce the proposal's objective of creating a coherent architectural composition rather than unrelated additions.

7.3 The Weight to be Afforded to the Council's Concerns

The Appellant fully recognises that visual appearance is an important planning consideration and accepts that the Council has reached a genuine professional judgement regarding the architectural composition of the proposal.

However, it is respectfully submitted that the concerns identified within the Officer's Report are inherently qualitative in nature.

Terms such as *"bolt-on additions"*, *"crowded"*, *"contrived"*, *"poorly integrated"* and *"unbalanced"* describe one interpretation of the proposal rather than identifying measurable planning harm.

The proposal does not result in unacceptable neighbour impacts.

It does not create highway safety concerns.

It does not reduce parking provision.

It does not intensify the residential use of the site.

It does not conflict with any technical planning constraint.

The appeal therefore turns upon differing professional opinions regarding architectural composition rather than demonstrable harm arising from the development itself.

The Appellant respectfully submits that these subjective design concerns should be afforded appropriate—but not overriding—weight within the overall planning balance.

7.4 Overall Planning Balance

When the proposal is assessed as a whole, the Appellant respectfully submits that the planning balance weighs clearly in favour of allowing the appeal.

The proposal delivers meaningful improvements to an existing family dwelling through a coordinated programme of high-quality residential development.

It secures long-term investment in the existing housing stock.

It improves accommodation for current and future occupiers.

It preserves neighbouring residential amenity.

It maintains parking provision.

It retains the established residential use of the site.

It employs complementary materials and a coordinated architectural approach intended to respect the character of the existing dwelling.

Against these substantial benefits, the Council's concerns relate exclusively to matters of architectural judgement.

Whilst those concerns are acknowledged and respected, it is submitted that they are not sufficient, either individually or collectively, to outweigh the considerable benefits delivered by the proposal.

Accordingly, the Appellant respectfully considers that the proposal accords with the overarching objectives of the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and that the planning balance weighs decisively in favour of granting planning permission.

8.0 Overall Conclusions on Design

The Appellant respectfully submits that the proposed development represents a well-considered and proportionate enhancement to an established detached dwelling that has been designed to respond positively to the existing site, its generous residential curtilage and the evolving requirements of modern family living.

Throughout this Appeal Statement it has been demonstrated that the proposal has not been conceived as a series of unrelated additions, but as a coordinated architectural composition in which each element contributes to a single, integrated design strategy. The proposed front extension, attached garage, rear extension and entrance canopies have all been developed as

complementary components of one overall scheme, employing consistent materials, coordinated roof forms and sympathetic architectural detailing to achieve visual cohesion.

The Council has expressed concerns regarding the architectural composition of the proposal, describing it as visually intrusive, poorly integrated and comprising a series of "bolt-on additions." The Appellant fully acknowledges these concerns and recognises that matters of design are inherently matters of professional judgement. However, it is respectfully submitted that the proposal is equally capable of supporting an alternative planning judgement when considered against the Development Plan as a whole and within the context of the site itself.

The proposal has been carefully designed having regard to the substantial size of the existing dwelling, the generous proportions of the application site, the detached character of the surrounding residential development and the opportunities presented by the site to accommodate sensitively designed extensions. The resulting scheme remains proportionate to its setting and seeks to enhance rather than diminish the character of the existing property.

Importantly, the Council has accepted that:

- the principle of extending the dwelling is acceptable;
- neighbouring residential amenity would be preserved;
- no unacceptable impacts arise in respect of overlooking, overshadowing, privacy or overbearing relationships; and
- no technical planning objections have been identified relating to highways, parking, drainage or other material planning considerations.

These are significant material considerations that, in the Appellant's view, reinforce the conclusion that this appeal concerns the exercise of architectural judgement rather than demonstrable planning harm.

It is further submitted that the proposal positively responds to the objectives of Policies SP9, D1 and D3 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan together with the wider design aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework. The development seeks to improve the quality, functionality and long-term sustainability of an existing family dwelling whilst respecting its established residential use and wider setting.

When considered as a whole, the proposal delivers an appropriate balance between preserving the established character of the dwelling and introducing carefully considered improvements necessary to meet contemporary living requirements. The proposed development represents investment in the long-term future of the property and ensures that the dwelling remains capable of serving the needs of future generations without increasing residential intensity or creating additional pressure upon the surrounding area.

The Appellant therefore respectfully submits that the Council's concerns, whilst acknowledged, should not be afforded such decisive weight that they override the considerable planning benefits delivered by the proposal. The perceived design concerns remain matters of planning judgement and are not supported by evidence of measurable planning harm.

Accordingly, it is respectfully concluded that the proposal represents a high-quality and sustainable form of residential development that accords with the overarching objectives of

the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Appellant therefore invites the Inspector to reach an independent planning judgement and conclude that planning permission should properly be granted.

9.0 Conclusion

This Appeal Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development represents a carefully considered and proportionate enhancement to an established detached family dwelling situated within a generous residential plot in Hitchin.

The appeal does not concern the principle of residential development, which the Council has accepted to be appropriate, nor does it raise issues relating to neighbouring residential amenity, highway safety, parking provision, drainage, ecology or any other technical planning constraint. Rather, the appeal turns solely upon differing professional judgements regarding the architectural composition and visual appearance of the proposed development.

The Appellant respectfully submits that the proposal has been designed as a coordinated architectural enhancement rather than as a series of unrelated additions. Through the use of complementary materials, consistent architectural detailing, sympathetic roof forms and an integrated internal layout, the scheme seeks to modernise and improve the existing dwelling whilst respecting its established character, residential setting and wider context.

Throughout this Appeal Statement it has been demonstrated that:

- the principle of extending the dwelling is acceptable;
- the proposal remains proportionate to the scale of the existing dwelling and its generous plot;
- the overall massing has been carefully considered and appropriately moderated;
- the architectural design represents a coherent and integrated composition;
- the proposed fenestration responds appropriately to both internal function and external appearance;
- the proposal preserves the character of the surrounding residential area;
- neighbouring residential amenity is fully protected;
- parking provision is maintained; and
- the proposal delivers a range of meaningful planning benefits that contribute positively to the long-term use and sustainability of the property.

The Appellant fully acknowledges the Council's concerns regarding the visual composition of the proposal and respects the professional judgement reached by the Local Planning Authority. However, it is respectfully submitted that those concerns represent one interpretation of the design rather than the only reasonable planning judgement available when assessed against the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning decisions frequently require a balanced exercise of professional judgement, particularly where matters of architectural composition and visual appearance are concerned. It is respectfully submitted that, when considered in its entirety, the proposal achieves an

appropriate balance between preserving the established character of the existing dwelling and providing the improvements necessary to support modern family living.

The proposal does not result in demonstrable planning harm sufficient to outweigh its considerable benefits. It represents an investment in the continued use of an established family home, improves the quality and functionality of the accommodation, preserves neighbouring amenity and responds positively to the spacious character of the application site.

Accordingly, the Appellant respectfully submits that the proposed development accords with the objectives of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031 and the National Planning Policy Framework and that the reasons for refusal are not sufficient to justify withholding planning permission.

For the reasons set out throughout this Appeal Statement, the Appellant respectfully invites the Planning Inspector to allow this appeal and grant planning permission for the proposed development.

Appendix A – Documents Considered

The following documents have been considered in the preparation of this Appeal Statement:

- North Hertfordshire District Council Decision Notice (Application Ref: **26/00523/FPH**).
- North Hertfordshire District Council Case Officer's Delegated Report.
- Submitted Planning Drawings (PME17565 Revision Series), including the Proposed Ground Floor Plan and Proposed Front Elevation.
- North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).