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Development Management
North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF

JR/JY/letla01
26th May 2026

Dear Sir / Madam,

Householder Planning Application — Proposed Extensions and Alterations to 15 Ninesprings Way, Hitchin, SG4 0NW

Please find enclosed a householder planning application submitted on behalf of our clients for the above property. The submission comprises the standard application forms, drawings 3992/01A to 05A, and the requisite fee.

The proposals involve a part single, part two-storey extension and associated alterations to an existing detached house in a suburban residential setting. The design has been developed to respect the scale and character of the host dwelling and the wider streetscene, and we are satisfied that the scheme accords with the relevant policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031 (adopted 2022), in particular Policies D1 (Sustainable Design) and D3 (Protecting Living Conditions), together with the supporting design guidance in the Council's adopted Design SPD.

Relationship to the boundary with No. 13

We are aware that the Council's established design approach generally seeks first-floor elements of side extensions to be set in by approximately 1 metre from the common boundary. The purpose of that guidance — as we understand it, and as routinely reflected in officer reports across the District — is to preserve a visual gap between dwellings at first-floor level and so prevent a continuous, terraced appearance developing along the streetscene.

In this instance the proposed first-floor element above the existing garage sits tight against the boundary with No. 13. We have considered this carefully and consider that the guidance is not engaged on the facts of this particular site, for the reasons set out below. We invite the Council to determine the application on that basis.

Why the terracing concern does not arise here

1. **The building line steps significantly along Ninesprings Way.** No. 15 is positioned notably forward of No. 13, and the wider rhythm of the street is one of staggered, individually-sited detached houses rather than a uniform building line. The proposed first-floor addition sits well in front of the front face of No. 13, so the two dwellings will continue to read as plainly

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separate properties when viewed from the public realm. There is no risk of the eye reading a continuous built frontage.

2. The character of the streetscene is one of variety, not uniformity. Ninesprings Way comprises detached properties of differing forms, materials, roof profiles and orientations. This is not a street where a strict first-floor gap is needed to maintain rhythm; the existing pattern already absorbs a high degree of variation between neighbouring properties.

3. The design actively differentiates the new element from the host and from No. 13. The first-floor addition is finished in vertically slatted cladding, set against the rendered finish of the main house, with a clearly subservient roof form that falls away to the boundary.

4. No harm arises to the amenity of No. 13. The proposed first-floor flank wall facing No. 13 contains no habitable-room windows. Given the staggered relationship between the two properties and the orientation of No. 13's principal windows, the proposals raise no overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing concerns.

Policy context

We acknowledge that the 1-metre set-in approach is a long-established starting point for the Council in considering side and first-floor extensions, and we have not adopted it lightly in departing from it on this site. It is, however, design guidance rather than a numerical standard fixed by Local Plan policy, and the established planning approach is to apply it where the harm it is designed to prevent — the terracing effect — would otherwise arise. Where, as here, the existing pattern of development and the specific design response together demonstrate that the harm does not arise, a strict application of the guidance is not necessary to deliver the policy objective.

The proposals are accordingly considered to comply with the design and amenity objectives of Local Plan Policies D1 and D3 and the supporting Design SPD, and to represent a proportionate, well-considered response to a host dwelling and a streetscene with their own established characteristics.

Conclusion

We trust that the enclosed application is in order. We would, of course, welcome the opportunity to discuss any matters arising — including the boundary relationship — with the case officer in advance of any draft decision. Please do not hesitate to contact the writer should any clarification or additional information be helpful.

Yours faithfully,



 **Jonathan Read**
Architect and Director
Pentangle Design Ltd