

14 July 2026

Mr M Thompson
Development and Conservation
North Herts Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF

Dear Mr Thompson,

Objection to Application 26/01388/FPH – Householder application for ‘Extensions and alterations including raised roof height of existing detached garage to create one-bed ancillary annexe’ at Oakdene, Stevenage Road, Little Wymondley, SG4 7HY

We are writing to object to the above planning application for the extension of the existing garage to create a one-bed annexe at Oakdene, Little Wymondley. We are residents of the neighbouring property, The Cherry Tree, which shares a driveway with the application site. We are therefore directly and intimately affected by proposals and believe the development would cause detrimental harm if approved.

We are concerned that the conversion of the garage at Oakdene to an ancillary annexe could ultimately create three residences on a site that was designed for two, and that the increased living density would have adverse effects, including upon several aspects of our living conditions. Specifically :-

1) Parking and Vehicle Access

The ‘Applicant statement’ in the submitted Planning Statement advises that the proposed annexe is intended to be occupied full time by two working adults. With essentially another household being created, this will inevitably cause an increase in vehicle movements and parking on site through all times of the day. We are concerned that this could result in limited access for delivery and emergency vehicles and put considerable pressure on parking.

The dashed area on Figure 1 below shows the shared portion of the driveway, which is not available for parking, however the submitted site plan has not marked this out. The Google Image also shows there are large flower beds directly in front of the main house which currently restrict parking, contrary to what the proposed site plan suggests is possible. The Planning Statement states the existing driveway has parking for approximately five vehicles with comfort. In reality, space is only available for four vehicles without any cars being blocked in and the shared portion of driveway staying clear. This proposed development will be served by the minimum number of parking spaces policy requires to support both the main house and the annexe which generates concerns about visitors and deliveries impacting on safe and unfettered access to our property. Further, the amended parking arrangement to the south of the annexe means that there will no longer be a passing/pull-in

point just before the highway which could increase conflict with between vehicles entering and exiting the site.



Figure 1. Submitted Proposed Site Plan (left) and Google Aerial Image (right).

It is therefore considered that the parking arrangements are not optimal and could lead to conflict between vehicles manoeuvring within the site. If officers are minded to support the application, a condition should be imposed requiring the hard standing area to be retained for parking, clear of the shared drive, at all times and not used for any other purposes.

2) Impact on Amenity

Local Plan Policy D3 seeks to protect living conditions and only grant planning permission where the development would not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions. The introduction of a new residence on this site will increase activity levels in terms of noise, traffic and general disturbance to the detriment of our living conditions. There is an open boundary between our home and the application site due to the shared access from the highway, meaning we regularly pass the current residents of Oakdene and we can easily see each other's front gardens. The increased height and domestication of the building would be a prominent and potentially overbearing feature on the site. We also are concerned that due to the shared driveway, we would constantly be driving past the windows of the annexe, which would not create the most comfortable living conditions for them or us.

3) Utilities, Services and Flood Risk

We are concerned that the increase in people living on site and the creation of an extra dwelling will put pressure on the existing utilities. There will be waste created from the annexe, and the Application Form does not address where this would go. If the proposed annexe would have separate waste storage, we are concerned about where these additional

bins would be placed. The applicant must be required to provide details of this to avoid a disarray of empty bins on the roadside and pavement.

Further, the area of development is within Flood Zone 2 and close to an area of Flood Zone 3. The Applicant has submitted a 'Householder and other minor extensions in Flood Zone 2 and 3' form. However, this form explicitly states that *"It should NOT be applied if an additional dwelling is being created, e.g. a self contained annex"*. Given both a more vulnerable use is being introduced into a current garage, and the building is effectively being demolished and re-built as a larger building (see heading 6 below), the Applicant must submit a full Flood Risk Assessment to ensure that the development does not increase flood risk elsewhere. In this case, flood risk could be increased to our home, to the highway or to the adjacent listed building. Additionally, the future occupiers of the annexe itself could well not be adequately protected in the occurrence of a flood event. This matter must be fully assessed and evidenced to ensure harm does not arise.

4) Impact on Listed Buildings

The application site is situated in close proximity to several Grade II Listed Buildings, including the Plume of Feathers pub directly next door to Oakdene, The Old Rectory two doors down and The Buck's Head opposite the application site across the road. The submitted Planning Statement has made no heritage assessment on the impact the proposed development, particularly in terms of the height and the addition of windows, could have on the setting of the Listed Building directly next to the site. An assessment of the impact on statutory listed heritage assets is required to ensure the development is policy compliant and legally sound.

5) Future Occupation and Cumulative Impact

While the application describes the accommodation as an ancillary annex, we are concerned that approval could facilitate a more intensive occupation across the site. In particular, we are concerned that the main dwelling could, in future, be occupied by increased number of residents who will need to use the shared access and limited parking areas.

The application states that the annexe is intended to provide accommodation for the applicant's son and his husband, ancillary to the main house. We leave this to the LPA to decide if they feel this satisfies the requirement under Local Plan Policy HS6 for *"a genuine need for the accommodation"*.

The submitted Planning Statement states *"The annexe will remain ancillary to the main dwelling and will not form a separate, independent unit of accommodation."* However, the Statement also explains that the aim is for their son and his husband to *"remain within the family home while having their own independent living space"*. This suggests that the annexe will act as an entirely self-contained home and the interaction with the main house would be limited. The arrangement of the annexe being positioned more than 9 metres in front of the main house, with its own private amenity space and separate parking area as well as full kitchen and two toilets/bathrooms, is not a typically accepted arrangement for an ancillary annexe. The proposed provisions and arrangement would mean that the annexe can function as an entirely separate dwelling with no interaction with the main house. We are

concerned that in the future, it would be difficult to enforce the annexe remaining as ancillary, even if a condition was imposed.

Policy HS6 outlines four criteria in total that must be met in order for planning permission for relatives' accommodation to be permitted. Criteria b) requires that "*the annex is subordinate to the main dwelling and designed in such a way that it can be easily (re-)incorporated into the main house if use as an annex ceases*";. The Planning Statement suggests that the use of the annexe as accommodation for their son is temporary, as living in the annexe will enable their son and his husband to "*save towards a future deposit for their own home*", but they have not demonstrated what the intended use for the annexe is after this use ceases. With the existing garage positioned away from the main house, the proposed annexe will not be able to be re-incorporated into the main house once the use ceases. The Planning Statement states the annexe can be reconverted to a garage should the use cease, however they have not said with certainty this is what they intend to do nor is this realistic given the investment and construction works required to create the dwelling. Therefore, it is unclear if this criterion can be complied with.

Criteria c) require that the development does not exceed the size of extensions that would otherwise normally be acceptable. It is considered that this should be assessed within the context of the existing garage building and its location. It is unlikely that the LPA would support the proposed massing and height extensions to this outbuilding if it was proposed for garaging.

Criteria d) further requires that the occupation of the accommodation is restricted by condition. If the LPA are minded to approve the application, we request that the following condition, which has been imposed on other, similar sites in North Herts for residential annexes, is applied:

*The residential annexe hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwellinghouse known as **** and shall be used for no commercial purposes.*

Such a condition is necessary to ensure the residential annexe is only used for its intended purposes and equally prevents the main house being occupied by those not associated with those living in the annexe for the same reasons.

However, it remains our position that the proposal, as submitted, has not satisfied Policy HS6 of the Local Plan and therefore should not be supported.

6) Procedural point

The submitted description of development suggests that the existing garage is to be extended and the roof height raised. This description is misleading. The submitted drawings show that two out of four walls of the existing garage are to be demolished and the existing roof pitch will be removed and altered. Therefore, the proposal is tantamount to a demolition and replacement, and the description and assessment should reflect as such. This matter is clear from the proposed plans which show the existing garage building outlines as are extracted below.

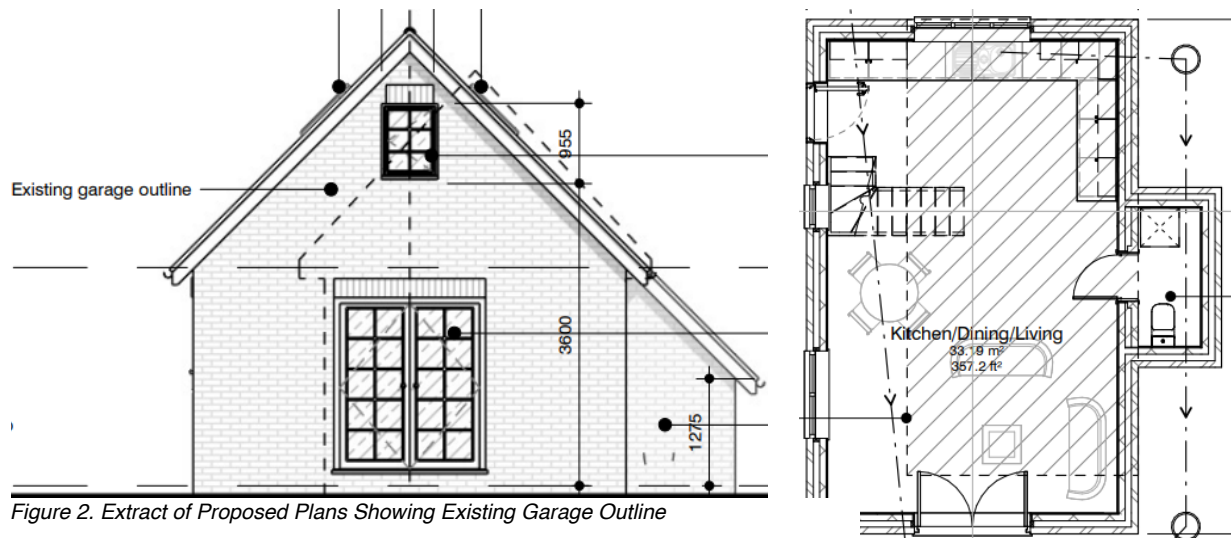


Figure 2. Extract of Proposed Plans Showing Existing Garage Outline

For the reasons set out above, we respectfully request that the Council refuse planning permission for the proposed development under application 26/01388/FPH.

Should the Council be minded to approve the application, we would request conditions be attached to ensure that the annexe remains ancillary to the main dwelling, and appropriate parking arrangements and amenity safeguards secured.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick and Jane Woollard
 The Cherry Tree
 Stevenage Road
 Little Wymondley
 Hitchin, Hertfordshire
 SG4 7HY