

Dear Ms Brown,

Regarding planning application: PL/2026/04987

11 High Street, Ramsbury

As the owner and occupier of the adjoining property, [REDACTED] I am very familiar with No. 11 and its relationship to the surrounding properties. I appreciate that the owners wish to improve and extend their home and I do not object in principle to sympathetic alterations that enhance the property.

However, I do have a number of concerns regarding the current proposals which I hope will be carefully considered as part of the determination of this application. I set these out below with reference to the relevant national and local planning policy.

1. Impact on residential amenity from the kitchen extension

The proposed kitchen extension replaces a relatively modest conservatory and incorporates extensive glazing, including large floor-to-ceiling windows and rooflights. Given the close proximity of the neighbouring properties, I am concerned that the increased glazing and associated internal lighting could result in a noticeable increase in light spill, particularly during the evening and winter months when boundary vegetation provides less screening.

As my property lies only a short distance from the proposed extension and many of my principal bedroom windows face towards this elevation, I am concerned that the development could adversely affect the enjoyment of my home and garden through increased levels of artificial illumination.

This is a material planning consideration. The National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) requires development to be well designed and to respond positively to its context, and decisions should not be taken that fail to protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers (Chapter 14, 'Achieving well-designed places', Policy DP3). At local level, Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) Core Policy 57 'Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping' similarly requires new development to be sympathetic to, and not harmful to, the amenity of neighbouring properties. I would ask that the Council impose a condition restricting lighting towards my property, so the proposal accords with these policies.

2. Loss of privacy arising from the proposed dormer window

The proposed dormer window is located on the elevation facing my property and would be positioned approximately 30 feet from the windows serving bedrooms at Millstream. Whilst the plans indicate frosted glazing, I remain concerned about the potential for overlooking and loss of privacy given the direct relationship between the proposed opening and the windows of my house.

Frosted glass is a form of obscured glazing, but it is not fixed or permanent in planning terms unless a condition requires it to remain so: it can be replaced with clear glass by the occupiers at any time without needing further permission. The close separation distance between the properties means that any such future alteration could significantly increase overlooking.

This concern is reinforced by the settled historical pattern of fenestration along this part of the High Street. My own property's principal windows, in common with others in this row, have historically been sited and detailed so as to avoid direct overlooking of neighbouring dwellings,

with privacy maintained through careful window placement rather than through glazing treatment alone. I consider this long-standing arrangement to be part of the established character of the street, and I would ask that any condition go beyond glazing obscuration alone and also secure the siting, scale and detailing of the dormer so that it respects, rather than departs from, this ongoing precedent.

Protection of privacy and outlook for neighbouring occupiers is a core element of the well-designed places test in Policy DP3 of the NPPF (August 2026), which requires proposals to respond positively to their context, and of Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 57. Without a condition of this kind, I do not consider the frosted glazing shown on the submitted plans to be a reliable long-term safeguard, and I consider the proposal as submitted to be contrary to these policies.

3. Design and appearance within the street scene and conservation area

I recognise that the conservation area designation, in seeking to protect the historic High Street frontage, naturally directs pressure for extensions and alterations towards the rear of properties, and I do not object to that principle in itself – it is a sensible and common approach to accommodating change in a historic village. However, I would ask the Council to bear in mind that this same dynamic means rear elevations can end up carrying a disproportionate share of any impact on the area's character, precisely because they are not subject to the same visual restraint as the frontage. Directing alterations to the rear should not be treated as placing them outside the scope of conservation area policy: the design, scale and materials of rear extensions and dormers still need to be held to a standard that supports, rather than undermines, the objective that frontage protection is itself intended to serve. In this case, given the prominence of the rear elevation from neighbouring gardens and the wider setting of nearby listed buildings, I do not consider that objective to have been met.

I am also concerned about the size, design and external appearance of the proposed dormer. The plans show a large contemporary opening which appears out of character with the existing building and the traditional architectural character of this part of the High Street.

The proposed use of timber cladding on both the dormer and first-floor extension appears inconsistent with the prevailing materials found on neighbouring properties, which are predominantly brick or brick-and-flint construction. Likewise, the scale and proportions of the dormer window, together with the proposed dark-framed glazing, do not appear to reflect the established character of the existing fenestration of the property or surrounding buildings, which (as set out in point 2 above) has historically been arranged to avoid direct overlooking between neighbouring dwellings.

As the site lies within a historic village setting and is associated with listed buildings nearby, I would ask that careful consideration be given to whether the proposed materials and design preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

This raises issues under both design and heritage policy. Policy DP3 of the NPPF requires development to respond to its context and reflect local character; Chapter 20 of the NPPF ('Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'), and in particular Policy HE2 and Policy HE9, requires proposals affecting a conservation area to preserve or enhance its character and appearance – a test which applies to the whole of the designated area, not only to the protected street frontage. Historic England's own guidance supports this: Advice Note 1, 'Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management' (2nd edition, 2019), makes clear that a building's contribution to a conservation area's character is not judged by its street elevation alone, but

also by its integrity as a historic structure and its three-dimensional impact, including its roofscape, and expressly notes that rear elevations and views from yards and alleys can be an important part of that contribution. At local level, Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policies 57 and 58 ('Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping' and 'Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment') apply directly, as does the Council's statutory duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. On the information submitted, I do not consider the proposed materials and design to be policy-compliant.

4. Impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings

My property, Millstream, is a Grade II listed building and several neighbouring properties are similarly designated. Given the close proximity between the buildings, I am concerned that the scale, materials and visual prominence of the proposed dormer and associated extensions could have a detrimental impact on the setting and significance of these heritage assets and the conservation area.

I respectfully request that the planning authority engage with the applicant to amend the submitted plans to reflect their neighbours concerns.

Under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council must have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting. This statutory duty is reflected in the NPPF (August 2026): Policy HE5 requires the significance of a heritage asset, including any contribution made by its setting, to be properly assessed; Policy HE4 requires any harm to be clearly and convincingly justified; and Policy HE6 confirms that any harm to a designated heritage asset is a matter of considerable importance and weight, to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 58 applies to the same effect. As the application as submitted does not, in my view, adequately assess the impact on the amenity and setting of Millstream and neighbouring listed buildings, I do not consider these tests to have been satisfied in their current format. Should satisfactory amendments be brought forward I would have no objection to the refreshed application.

I hope that the Council will carefully consider the concerns outlined above, and the policies to which they relate, when determining this retrospective application.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Handford

