

17 Field Road

Reading

RG1 6AP

Reading Borough Council Planning Department

Civic Offices

Bridge Street

Reading RG1 2LU

22 July 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Planning Application PL/25/0385 – Hadwyn House, Field Road, Reading RG1 6AP

I am writing as the resident of 17 Field Road, which directly faces Hadwyn House, to lodge a formal objection to the above planning application. The proposal seeks to add a mansard roof and additional office floor space to Hadwyn House – a development I believe is wholly inappropriate for our primarily residential, conservation-area setting.

My objections are on the grounds of loss of privacy, loss of daylight/sunlight, overdevelopment and inappropriate use, traffic and parking impact, harm to residential amenity, and conservation area concerns. Each of these issues is detailed below.

Loss of Privacy

The proposed third-storey extension with new dormer windows would directly overlook my home. My bedroom and living room windows face Hadwyn House at close range, and the addition of another floor of offices would create a direct line of sight into these habitable rooms. This represents a severe loss of privacy for me and my family.

The separation distance across Field Road is far below the typical minimum (~21 metres) that many councils consider acceptable between facing habitable-room windows. As such, the occupants of the new offices would be able to look straight into our home, eliminating any reasonable expectation of privacy.

Loss of Daylight and Sunlight

The applicant's own Daylight and Sunlight Report confirms measurable reductions in daylight to multiple front-facing habitable windows at my home. The affected windows include those serving ground and first-floor rooms, which currently receive natural light from the west in the afternoon and evening.

For example:

- **Window 80** (Ground Floor) drops from 29.5% to 28.0% VSC — a 1.5% reduction (retained ratio 0.95)
- **Window 81** (Ground Floor) drops from 32.5% to 31.0% — a 1.5% loss (0.95)
- **Window 90** (First Floor) drops from 35.0% to 33.4% — a 1.6% loss (0.95)
- **Window 91** (First Floor) drops from 33.7% to 32.2% — a 1.5% loss (0.96)

These windows are clearly identified as serving domestic, habitable rooms, yet the cumulative daylight loss is dismissed by the applicant as "low impact." While the reductions may meet BRE numerical guidelines, they are not trivial. The impact is meaningful — particularly when combined with the increased sense of enclosure and overbearing massing that a third storey would introduce directly opposite our home.

The report does not assess the layout or use of the rooms behind these windows, nor does it consider the timing of sunlight — in our case, afternoon and early evening, when natural light is most appreciated. A purely mathematical threshold does not negate the very real loss of amenity this scheme would cause.

Overdevelopment and Inappropriate Use

This proposal amounts to an overdevelopment of the site and an intensification of commercial use that is clearly out of place on Field Road. Hadwyn House is situated on a small plot in a street that is residential in character; adding an entire extra storey of offices is an aggressive expansion that the site and surroundings cannot comfortably absorb.

The existing office building at Hadwyn House is already an anomaly on this street. To further enlarge this structure with additional bulk and commercial activity would only exacerbate that intrusion. The expanded office space would significantly increase the building's presence and activity, dominating the intimate scale of the street and undermining the domestic two-storey character that defines Field Road.

Traffic and Parking Impact

Field Road is a narrow, already congested street where residents at times already struggle with parking. The developer's Transport Statement claims that on-site parking is sufficient for the increased office use, but this assertion does not reflect reality.

Additional employees and visitors to an expanded Hadwyn House will inevitably put more pressure on the limited road capacity in the area. Additional office-related trips e.g. pick ups and drop-offs will only worsen noise and pollution and could pose safety risks.

Amenity Impact

Beyond the specific issues of privacy, light, and traffic, the proposal threatens to further degrade the general residential amenity of those living nearby.

At present, staff from the existing offices often congregate on the pavement outside Hadwyn House during breaks – particularly to smoke, further detracting from the residential nature of the street. If the office capacity is increased, these gatherings of employees will likely become larger and more frequent.

Conservation Area Concerns

Field Road is part of the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area, a designated heritage area recognised for its historic character and predominantly 19th-century residential architecture.

In determining this application, the Council has a 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 and appearance of the area.

The design of the mansard roof and dormer windows is not in keeping with the surrounding rooftops, which are largely traditional pitched roofs on two-storey Edwardian terraces.

Introducing a bulky third-storey mansard on Hadwyn House would make it even more conspicuous and discordant in the street scene.

Conclusion and Request

For all the reasons detailed above – the significant loss of privacy and light to my home, the overdevelopment and incompatibility with a residential conservation street, the likely traffic and parking problems, the harm to neighbour amenity, and the clear conflict with the conservation area's objectives – I urge Reading Borough Council to refuse planning application PL/25/0385.

The proposal would cause substantial harm to both individual residents and the wider area, with no overriding public benefits to outweigh that harm.

Thank you for considering my objections. I trust that the Council will give due weight to the concerns of residents in protecting our homes and community.

Yours faithfully,

Callum Hall

17 Field Road, Reading RG1 6AP