

9th November 2025

Mr G M & Mrs V L Cook
5 High Lane
Brown Edge
ST6 8RT

Dear Planning Officer, Councillors

Response to Letter of Objection from Mr R & Mrs Sadler of 3 High Lane, Brown Edge dated 13/10/2025 regarding: Planning application number SMD/2025/0415

Please find below our response to the objections raised in relation to our planning application for garage and garden improvements. While we do not anticipate this letter will materially affect the outcome of the decision—trusting fully in the integrity and objectivity of the planning process—we felt it necessary to address certain points and inaccuracies contained in the letter of objection.

1. Privacy

We believe that issues concerning privacy are, in fact, of greater relevance to us than to the objectors. We have no interest in their activities or property, whereas they have shown persistent concern with ours. To enhance privacy on our own land, we intend to install a privacy fence outside our patio doors, extending alongside the supporting pillar and the proposed small, decked patio area to the edge of the raised section behind our house. Only the decked steps—positioned away from the boundary—will extend beyond this point into the garden. It should be noted that the objectors have purchased part of a paddock situated to the rear of our properties. This land extends across the full width of both our gardens and, due to its upward slope, has resulted in a significant reduction of privacy for our garden and the rear aspect of our house.

2. Property Boundary

As stated, the hedge separating our properties consists of privet to the front and hawthorn to the rear. It ranges in height from approximately 2.9 to 3.7 metres, measured from the ground level at the rear of our garden. A mature sycamore tree, approximately 11 metres tall, also grows near the hedge line and extends, predominantly, into our garden. Together, the hedge and tree significantly reduce sunlight and daylight to our property for roughly six months of the year while in leaf.

For context, the rear of our property faces west/north-west, meaning the sun passes from the front to the rear along the boundary shared with our neighbour. During winter months, when the hawthorn hedge is not in leaf—as acknowledged by the objectors—the lack of foliage provides no privacy and allows a clear view into our garden, as demonstrated by the photographs supplied with their objection letter. The hedge continues into a line of laurels at the bottom of our garden, which currently reach a height of approximately 2.6 metres. We have also observed that the hedge, particularly around the tree, is being allowed to encroach further into our garden, thereby intruding on our usable space.

3. Proposed Decking Area

The rear of our property features a veranda supported by a pillar, with patio doors opening onto a small, covered area where we enjoy sitting throughout the year. Our proposal seeks to enhance

this existing space by adding decking and decked steps leading down to the lower section of the garden—across its width and away from the boundary.

Contrary to the objector's claim, the edge of the decking will be approximately 2 metres beyond the rear pillar of the property, not 4 metres, and 1.2 metres drop into the lower garden (not 2.1m). Only the steps will extend past the existing wall edge. As stated earlier, we also plan to install a privacy fence to make this space entirely private, as the current hedge does not provide sufficient screening.

Additionally, we have included a pathway along the hedge line to create an additional separation between the two gardens.

When we first moved into the property in 2007, we discussed the possibility of replacing the hedge with fencing—offering to share the costs equally—but this proposal was declined by our neighbours at the time.

4. Slabbed Area Around Garage

Our garden measures approximately 20 metres in width, and the proposed garage rebuild is situated on the opposite side of the garden from the objectors' property. The installation of a slabbed area around the garage is essential to the maintenance of the structure. This slabbing will not create, nor does it afford, any view whatsoever into the objectors' garden. Its purpose is purely practical and not for recreational use.

We trust this clarifies our position and addresses the concerns raised. We remain confident that our application aligns with planning policy and has been designed sensitively with due consideration to the surrounding environment.

Yours sincerely

Gareth & Vicky Cook

CC:

- Case Officer, Planning: planningcomments@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk, planning@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk.
- Cllr Christina Jebb: christina.jebb@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk.
- Cllr Joe Porter: joe.porter@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk.