



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 January 2026

by Jennifer Wallace BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 JANUARY 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/W/25/3373954

Ickleford Primary School, Arlesey Road, Ickleford, Hertfordshire SG5 3TG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Richard Murrell against the decision of North Herts Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02580/FP.
 - The development proposed is installation of new bike shelter with hard standing in front of the playground gate, and installation of pillar lights to the side of entrance footpath.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for installation of new bike shelter with hard standing in front of the playground gate, and installation of pillar lights to the side of entrance footpath at Ickleford Primary School, Arlesey Road, Ickleford, Hertfordshire SG5 3TG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/02580/FP, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 1-1250 Site Plan; IPS Site Plan and Scale Bar; Bike Shelter Floor Plan; Bike Shelter Side Elevations; Bike Shelter Specification Sheet; Proposed Front Elevation; Proposed Rear Elevation; IPS Bike Shed Proposed and Proposed Entrance Light Visual.
 - 3) Before the bike shed hereby approved is brought into use, a scheme of landscaping for the area immediately adjacent to the bike shed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include a timetable for the implementation of the scheme, details of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, identify those to be retained and set out measures for their protection throughout the course of the development. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Applications for Costs

2. An application for costs has been made by Mr Richard Murrell against North Herts Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would i) preserve the setting of the nearby listed building and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Ickleford Conservation Area.

Reasons

Special Interest and Significance

4. The appeal site lies within the grounds of Old S Range of Ickleford JMI School¹ (the School), a Grade II listed building. As required by section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
5. It dates from 1848 and was originally constructed as a Church of England school house with attached teaching block. It is constructed from uncoursed flint facing with red brick dressings with a steep pitched red tile roof banded in fishtail tiles. It has a gabled frontage including a gabled porch, triple chimney stacks and a slender circular bell-turret. Its significance is derived from its architectural interest as a vernacular school building. It also has historic interest in how it demonstrates the expansion of education, its relationship with the Church of England and the social importance of education.
6. Pertinent to the appeal, the building's special interest and significance also stem, in part, from its setting. Its immediate setting, comprising the expansive open space to the front and surrounding playground, has functional and physical links with the listed building. This open setting, with its features common to primary schools, allow the function of the building to be appreciated. The spacious setting also emphasises the importance of the School to the social fabric of the village.
7. The appeal site also lies within the Ickleford Conservation Area (CA) where s72(1) of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Its character and appearance and thus special interest and significance are mainly derived from its historic interest in evidencing the development of Ickleford and its architectural interest arising from the clusters of historic, vernacular buildings. There is a verdant quality to the CA arising from the open green and wider planting. The School makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA due to its architectural quality and social importance to the settlement. It also enhances the verdant qualities of the CA with its expansive open frontage and the planting within it which is only slightly diminished by the car parking to the front of the school.

Proposal and Effects

8. The proposal includes a bike shed with a hardstanding to the ground. This would be a modest structure, with a galvanised steel frame and polycarbonate roof. It would be enclosed on three sides by hit and miss softwood cladding. It would be sited to the front of the School towards the western boundary. There was some tree and hedge planting adjacent to where it is proposed to site the bike shed.

¹ List Entry Number: 1347059 Date first listed: 24 October 1988

9. At my site visit, I observed a number of steel loops for the securing of bikes and scooters adjacent to a green shipping container. There were also a notable number of scooters and bikes strewn in the area, despite my site visit being on a cold and overcast day. These were in the approximate location of the proposed cycle shed. The playground to the side of the School was visible over a low gate, with the paraphernalia expected of a primary school today.
10. The proposed bike shed would be sited in a discrete location, towards the boundary of the site. Due to its position and scale, it would not be prominent in views of the School, nor would it hamper the ability to appreciate the architectural qualities of the listed building. The overall expanse of the open frontage would be retained and the proposal would be integrated into the setting of the building by its position in proximity to the planting. Additional planting could be secured by condition to assist in this further.
11. The proposed bike shed would be a clearly modern addition. However, the setting of the School has evolved over time to reflect the expectations of modern schooling. This proposal would represent another stage in this and would not harm the ability to appreciate the special interest and so significance of the school. Given its modest proportions and position, it would not be a prominent feature. It would therefore have a neutral effect on, and so would preserve, the character or appearance of the CA.
12. The proposal also includes the siting of five low level lighting bollards along one side of the entrance path. I note the Council has not expressed any concern with respect to this. Given their modest height and unobtrusive appearance, they would have a neutral effect on the setting and so special interest of the School. They would also preserve the character and appearance of the CA.
13. The proposal would have a neutral effect on the setting and so would preserve the special interest and significance of the School. It would also preserve the character or appearance of the CA. The proposal would therefore comply with the requirements of the Act and be in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework with respect to designated heritage assets. It would also comply with North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Policy HE1 which requires proposals to enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that preserves its significance.

Other Matters

14. The front boundary of the school is comprised of a gateway and wall² which is a Grade II listed building in its own right. Its significance as it relates to this appeal lies in its historic interest in emphasising the social importance of the School and its architectural interest in being well related to the materials of the School. Pertinent to this appeal, its setting encompasses the open space to the front of the School which adds to the appreciation of the front boundary by defining the area it encloses. The bike shed would be set at some distance away from the boundary treatment. The lights would be modest installations. Neither of these would affect the ability to appreciate the special interest and so significance of the front boundary.

² List Entry Number: 1295724 Date first listed: 24 October 1988

15. It has been suggested that the bike shed could be sited elsewhere within the site. However, the purpose of the appeal is to consider the proposal before me and not other possibilities.

Conditions

16. The Council has suggested conditions should I be minded to allow the appeal. I have had regard to these in light of the tests set out in paragraph 57 of the National Planning Policy Framework. I have imposed standard conditions relating to the commencement of development and approved plans to define the terms of the permission.
17. It is necessary for details of materials to be agreed given the sensitivity of the site due to the designated heritage assets and because the submitted visuals do not precisely specify the materials to be used. The appellant has suggested that further planting could be secured and this would be necessary to integrate the development into the setting of the School and the CA.
18. The Council has suggested a condition regarding bike storage, however this is not necessary as this is integral to the proposal. Neither a site wide sustainability strategy or the provision of bird and bat boxes would be relevant to the development to be permitted.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

Jennifer Wallace

INSPECTOR