





Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Meadow Bridge School, High Street, Cricklade

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Alder King Planning Consultants have been instructed by Spaghetti Bridge Limited to submit applications seeking planning permission and listed building consent for the replacement of an existing metal gate with a new wooden gate at Meadow Bridge School, Cricklade.

1.2 This Design, Access and Heritage Statement describes the site and the proposed development, as well as the planning policy provisions against which the applications should be determined. It also assesses the design, access and heritage impacts of the proposed works against the relevant policies.

1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the application drawings.

2.0 Application Site

2.1 The application site consists of Meadow Bridge School, which is located on High Street, Cricklade. The school is a two-storey limestone building used initially as a primary school and which now serves as a school for children with learning difficulties. The site also encompasses a recreational area to the rear of the building as well as car parking for the school. This area is accessed by a gravel drive to the side via a metal gate, which is the subject of these applications.

2.2 The surrounding area is predominantly residential and one of the neighbouring residences shares the gravel drive.

2.3 The site is located within the Cricklade Conservation Area and the school building is Grade II listed.

2.4 The location of the site is shown on Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Meadow Bridge School



3.0 Application Proposals

3.1 The applications seek planning permission and listed building consent for the replacement of the metal gate that provides access to the rear of the school.

3.2 The proposed wooden gate will replace the existing metal gate. The gate separates the recreational and parking area from the gravel driveway that is used to access the rear section of the school. The driveway is also shared with an adjacent residence, that has a right of access over the land.

3.3 The metal gate is currently connected to timber posts. These same posts will be used when the wooden gate is installed. The inside of the wooden fence will have a metal mesh that will cover the wood. This is a safety measure to ensure that the children are not able to climb over the gate.

3.4 The replacement wooden gate has been designed to match an existing gate on the neighbouring residential property.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 The Development Plan, as relevant to the current proposal, consists of:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)
- Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan 2026 (2018)
- North Wiltshire Local Plan (2009)

4.3 Material considerations include:

- Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Development Plan

Wiltshire Core Strategy

4.4 Policies of note in the adopted Core Strategy relevant to assessing the proposal include:

- Core Policy 58 – proposals for alterations to any heritage assets need to protect and enhance the significance of the asset.

Cricklade Neighbourhood Plan

4.5 Policies of note in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan relevant to assessing the proposal include:

- Policy LAF8 – proposals for changes to any of the Community Facilities should maintain and improve the existing community use.

North Wiltshire Local Plan

4.6 Saved policies of note from the North Wiltshire Local Plan that are relevant to assessing the proposal are as follows:

- Policy HE1 – development that takes place in a conservation area should enhance and preserve its character and setting.
- Policy HE4 – any changes to listed buildings or their curtilage should preserve or enhance the setting of the listed buildings.

Material Considerations

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

4.7 Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act requires the local authority to have special regarding the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.

4.8 Section 72 (1) of the Act requires that special attention is to be given to the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation areas.

National Planning Policy Framework

4.9 The NPPF sets out government's planning policies at a national level and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF was most recently updated in 2021.

4.10 Paragraph 47 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible.

4.11 Section 16 covers conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 195 highlights that local planning authorities should take into account development affecting the setting of a heritage assets, avoiding or minimising any conflict between the heritage assets conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

4.12 Paragraph 206 sets out how local planning authorities should assess development within conservation areas. Development that will preserve or enhance the significant elements of a conservation area and its setting should be treated favourably.

5.0 Design and Access

5.1 This section of the statement covers the design and access considerations of the proposal, covering details pertaining to the layout, amount and scale, design, landscaping, and access.

Layout

5.2 The layout of the site will not be altered through the replacement gate being installed as the wooden gate will be in the same position as the metal gate.

Amount and Scale

5.3 The proposed replacement gate will essentially only result in a change of materials. The wooden gate will be attached to the existing timber posts that currently support the metal gate. The replacement gate will be slightly taller, although it will not exceed the height of the existing timber posts.

Design

5.4 The design of the replacement gate is of a similar nature as the existing gate for the adjacent residential property to the south east of the school building. The wooden gate to be installed will be of the same materials and colour as the neighbouring gate, to ensure a sympathetic appearance to the area.

5.5 Metal mesh will be affixed to the gate on the inside to ensure that children using that area are not able to climb over.

Landscaping

5.6 There is no landscaping that would be affected by this proposal. All existing trees and hedges on the school site will remain in place and no new planting is proposed or required.

Access

5.7 The access to the site will remain unchanged.

6.0 Heritage Considerations

The Old School Grade II Listed Building

6.1 The 19th century Grade II listed building features a rock faced limestone exterior with a slate roof and is considered a prominent feature of the High Street streetscene. The site is a long established school and the Council has previously approved several alterations to the site.

6.2 It is necessary for a replacement gate to be installed to ensure that the space to the rear of the building can be more appropriately enclosed.

6.3 The proposal replaces an unsympathetic metal gate with a wooden gate that matches an existing adjacent residential gate. The wooden gate will be constructed of appropriate materials and suitable colours. The metal mesh that is to be installed on the inside is for the safety of the children and will largely be concealed from view.

6.4 The proposed replacement gate will not impact any of the internal or external features of the listed building itself, as it does not require any work to the fabric of the building. Furthermore, the replacement gate will enhance the setting of the listed building by introducing a more appropriately designed structure.

Cricklade Conservation Area

6.5 The Cricklade Conservation Area does not have a conservation area appraisal, but a Conservation Area Statement was completed in 1999. The Statement notes that the site is situated along one of the key historic routes and is located near several landmark features for the area.

6.6 The frontage of Meadow Bridge School is a key feature along High Street, and the orientation as well as the position of the gate is set back far enough from the roadway that there are only glimpsed views of it.

6.7 In any case, the replacement gate that is being proposed is of a design, materials, and general appearance that are more suitable for this conservation area location than the existing gate. Therefore, the character and appearance of the Cricklade Conservation Area will be enhanced.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 This Design, Access and Heritage Statement supports applications seeking planning permission and listed building consent for a replacement gate at Meadow Bridge School. The school is an important education facility for children who experience learning difficulties and is a key part of the Cricklade community.

7.2 The existing gate provides access to the rear area of the school from the gravel drive. The replacement gate will be located in the same position and will be fixed to the existing gate posts. No work is being proposed to the listed building itself.

7.3 When assessing the proposal, it is clear that the replacement gate will not result in any adverse impacts on heritage assets given its design and siting. Indeed, it will provide an improvement when compared with the existing position.

7.4 The application proposal will assist with the day-to-day operations of the school, by allowing for safe access to rear of the building and the safety of the children. Overall, the proposal is in full accordance with relevant planning policy and thus planning permission and listed building consent should be granted.