

This Conservation area statement should be read with the drawings and design and access statement submitted for planning:

Introduction

This statement assesses the impact of the proposed modest extension at 19 Garden Fields on the Kimpton Village Conservation Area. It demonstrates how the design has been developed to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with national policy (NPPF), local policy, and the Kimpton Conservation Area Character Statement.

The proposal comprises a modest 5m², single-storey, black-clad timber extension, positioned to remain largely unintrusive from the public realm and subordinate to the host dwelling and to materially improve the owners aspect and use of their private enclosed garden providing internal window seats, garden storage and a new entry to their small cottage. The existing terraced cottage, in addition to internal reworking, will have 2 no. new conservation rooflights on the existing roof slope opposite Garden Fields Green, but also only visible at certain angles from the main historic Kimpton Green, due to neighbouring properties largely obscuring the view and the distance from number 19 to the Village Green. The existing brick chimney at no. 19 is also proposed to be removed to open up space internally in the building.

Index

1.0 Overview of Kimpton Village Conservation Area

2.0 The Wider Policy Environment

3.0 Site and Heritage Context

4.0 The Existing Property

5.0 Description of the Proposed Extension

6.0 Assessment of Impact on the Conservation Area

7.0 Conclusion

1.0 Overview of the Kimpton Village conservation area

- **Designation:** Kimpton Village Conservation Area was first designated by North Hertfordshire District Council in 1969, with a boundary amendment in 1990.
- **Extent:** The boundary includes almost all of the historic settlement—the core of the village around The Green, High Street, Church Lane, Claggy Road and surrounding historic plots.
- **Purpose:** The character statement explains why the area is special, identifies key features and views, and sets out opportunities for improvement.

1.01 Statement of special interest

The character statement distils Kimpton’s “specialness” into a few core themes:

- **Historic village form:**
 - Linear village focused on The Green and High Street, with lanes radiating out.
 - Plots and building lines reflect medieval and post-medieval development.
- **Architectural character:**
 - Mix of timber-framed cottages, brick and rendered houses, and Victorian/Edwardian infill.
 - Traditional materials: red/orange brick, clay tiles, slate, painted joinery.
- **Landscape and setting:**
 - Strong relationship between built form and open spaces—especially The Green, churchyard, and views to surrounding countryside.
 - Mature trees, hedges and boundary walls are integral to character.
- **Village centre focus:**
 - The area around The Green, the church, and the historic core is the visual and social heart of the conservation area.

This “statement of special interest” is what decision-makers are trying to preserve or enhance every time a planning application comes in.

1.02 Key character features in the village centre

From the character statement, the village centre is defined by a set of very specific features:

- **The Green:**
 - Central open space framed by cottages and houses.
 - Important views across and along The Green, including towards the church and out to the countryside.
- **High Street and Church Lane:**
 - Tight building lines, narrow carriageways, and enclosed street scenes.
 - Mix of building heights but generally modest, domestic scale.
- **Building details:**
 - Chimneys, steeply pitched roofs, dormers, and traditional window proportions. Roofs types are varied in the Conservation area.
 - Timber sash or casement windows, often painted; uPVC is generally harmful to character but exists in the Conservation area and on number 19 Garden Fields.
- **Boundaries and surfaces:**
 - Brick and flint walls, hedges, and traditional gates.
 - Historic surfacing and kerbs where they survive.
- **Trees and greenery:**
 - Individual and groups of trees are identified as key assets; many are subject to conservation area protection or TPOs.

These details are not cosmetic—they're the benchmarks used to judge whether a proposal "fits" or erodes character.

1.03 Key views and assets

The character statement identifies key views and heritage assets that are especially sensitive:

- **Key views:**
 - Across The Green to surrounding buildings.
 - Towards St Peter & St Paul Church and its tower.
 - Outwards from the village edge to the open countryside.
 - KV4 and 5 core views cover number 19 Garden Fields but the extension will not be visible in either of these views.
- **Designated heritage assets:**
 - A list of listed buildings within the conservation area (church, historic houses, cottages, etc.).
- **Non-designated heritage assets:**
 - Unlisted but important buildings and features—older cottages, walls, outbuildings, and landscape features that contribute to character.

Any development that blocks, intrudes into, or visually competes with these views or assets will be treated as highly problematic.

The terrace made up of no. 19 and 20 Garden Fields is noted for its' contribution to the Conservation area character.

1.04 Opportunities for improvement

The character statement doesn't just say "no"—it also flags where the village centre could be **enhanced**:

- **Unsympathetic modern alterations:**
 - Replacement windows/doors in inappropriate materials or styles.
 - Overly dominant dormers or extensions.
- **Public realm and clutter:**
 - Scope to reduce signage, street clutter, and poor-quality surfacing.
- **Neutral or negative buildings:**
 - Some later 20th-century buildings are identified as neutral or negative—these can sometimes be redeveloped or improved if new design is high quality and context-sensitive.

1.05 What this means for planning applications in the village centre

- **Design and materials:**
 - Like-for-like or sympathetic materials are strongly preferred (brick, clay tile, timber).
 - uPVC, overly large openings facing the open spaces, flat roofs where not appropriate, and generic “estate” detailing are usually harmful.
- **Scale and massing:**
 - New work must respect existing building heights, roof forms, and plot patterns.
 - Over-scaled extensions or infill that disrupts the rhythm of the street will struggle.
- **Impact on views and spaces:**
 - Anything affecting The Green, key views to the church, or the sense of openness is highly sensitive.
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- **Trees and boundaries:**
 - Works to trees require notification; removal of walls, hedges, or traditional boundaries is a red flag.
- **Heritage justification:**
 - For many proposals, especially in the core, you’ll need a heritage statement explicitly referencing the Kimpton Village Conservation Area Character Statement and explaining how the scheme preserves or enhances character.

1.06 Listed buildings within range of the proposal

Within Kimpton village (closest)

1. Church of St Peter & St Paul (Grade I)

- **Type:** Parish church
- **Distance:** ~250m south of Garden Fields
- **Notes:** 12th-century origins, major medieval fabric.

2. Kimpton Memorial Hall (Grade II)

- **Type:** Early 20th-century village hall
- **Distance:** ~300m
- **Notes:** Built as a WWI memorial.

3. 1–6 High Street Cottages (Grade II)

- **Type:** 17th–18th century timber-framed cottages
- **Distance:** ~350–500m
- **Notes:** Classic Hertfordshire vernacular.

4. The Boot Inn (Grade II)

- **Type:** Historic public house
- **Distance:** ~450m
- **Notes:** Timber-framed, 17th century core.

5. Kimpton House (Grade II)

- **Type:** Large historic residence
- **Distance:** ~600m
- **Notes:** 18th-century with later alterations.

Nearby hamlets around Kimpton

6. Peters Green Farmhouse (Grade II)

- **Distance:** ~1.2 km
- **Notes:** 17th-century farmhouse.

7. Porter's End Farmhouse (Grade II)

- **Distance:** ~1.5 km

- **Notes:** Timber-framed, early post-medieval.

8. Lawrence End House (Grade II)*

- **Distance:** ~2 km
- **Notes:** Major country house with landscaped grounds.

Significant listed sites slightly further out

These are not “neighbouring” in the strict sense but are the closest major heritage assets:

- **Mackerye End House (Grade I)** – Harpenden
- *Shaw’s Corner (Grade II)** – Ayot St Lawrence
- *Old Gorhambury House (Grade II)** – St Albans
- **John Bunyan’s Chimney (Grade II)** – Coleman Green

2.0 How this ties into wider policy

- The character statement sits alongside national guidance (NPPF) and Historic England advice on conservation area appraisal and management.
- It is a material consideration in planning decisions.

3.0 Site and Heritage Context

3.1 Location

19 Garden Fields lies within the **Kimpton Village Conservation Area**, in a residential enclave set back from the historic core around **The Green** and **High Street**. The property is not listed, nor is it identified as a non-designated heritage asset.

3.2 Character of the Conservation Area

Key characteristics relevant to this proposal include:

- A village form defined by historic lanes, enclosed street scenes, and open green spaces.
- A palette of traditional materials—brick, render, clay tile, timber joinery.
- A pattern of modest domestic buildings, with extensions expected to be subordinate and respectful of roof forms and massing.
- Strong emphasis on views across The Green, the church, and the surrounding countryside.
- Importance of boundary treatments, trees, and greenery in shaping the character of the area.

Garden Fields sits slightly outside the most visually sensitive parts of the conservation area and is not prominent in key views identified in the character statement.

3.3 How the design ties into the Kimpton Village Conservation area

19 Garden Fields – Contextual Design Justification

3.3.1. Respecting the Character and Setting of Kimpton

Kimpton is defined by its **historic village core**, its **linear settlement pattern**, and the **soft, green edges** that frame the built form. The Conservation Area Appraisal highlights:

- A mix of **vernacular brick and timber buildings**
- A strong **relationship between buildings and landscape**
- A settlement pattern that transitions from **denser development near the High Street** to **more open, suburban residential areas** toward the edges

Garden Fields sits as a transition between, the old village and more modern residential part of the village, where modern development is already present and where architectural evolution is expected—provided it remains **subordinate, contextual, and respectful**.

Our proposal aligns with this by:

- Keeping the extension **visually secondary** to the original house

- Maintaining the **existing roofline and massing hierarchy**
- Using materials that echo the **local vernacular** without imitating historic forms

3.3.2. Materiality That Reflects Local Vernacular

The Conservation Area Statement emphasises the importance of **traditional materials**, particularly brick and timber, which are characteristic of Kimpton's historic buildings and farmsteads.

Our design responds directly to this by:

- Using **black-stained vertical timber boarding**, which references the **dark weatherboarding** historically used on agricultural buildings in the area
- Retaining **brickwork at low level**, visually tying the extension back to the existing house and the wider brick-built character of the village
- Adopting a **restrained, tactile palette** that feels rooted in local tradition while still clearly contemporary

This approach ensures the extension reads as a **sympathetic evolution** rather than a competing or pastiche addition.

3.3.3. Landscape Character and Garden Setting

The conservation area places strong value on **green spaces, mature planting, and the soft landscape structure** that defines the village's rural character.

Your external works support this by:

- Retaining the **majority of lawn and all boundary vegetation**, preserving the green backdrop that contributes to the area's character, some small perimeter trees adjacent to the houses patio and the perimeter fence with Garden Fields.
- Removing a **visually intrusive shed** and replacing it with a discreet, low-impact seating/BBQ area
- Replacing a poorly maintained square pond with a **simple limestone patio**, improving usability without increasing built footprint
- Keeping all interventions **within the existing garden envelope**, avoiding any encroachment into green space

This ensures the property continues to contribute positively to the **verdant, domestic landscape** typical of Kimpton's residential edges.

3.3.4. Subtle Modernity That Enhances, Not Dominates

Conservation guidance does not require new development to mimic historic styles; instead, it encourages **high-quality, contemporary design** that respects scale, form, and materials.

Our proposal achieves this by:

- Using **Elegant glazing** to strengthen the relationship between house and garden
- Keeping the extension's massing **low and recessive**
- Ensuring the architectural language is **modern but quiet**, allowing the original house to remain the primary visual element

This approach aligns with best practice for conservation areas: **preserve what is significant, enhance where appropriate, and allow sensitive contemporary expression.**

3.3.5 Contribution to the Wider Conservation Area

The Conservation Area Statement identifies the importance of:

- **Key views** across gardens and green spaces
- The **coherent, layered development** of the village over time
- Maintaining the **soft, rural character** at the village edges

Our proposal supports these aims by:

- Keeping the extension visually contained within the plot
- Avoiding any impact on public views or the village green
- Enhancing the garden's usability while preserving its green character
- Contributing to the ongoing, **incremental evolution** of Kimpton's built form in a way that is respectful and contextually grounded

Summary

Our design at 19 Garden Fields works successfully within the Kimpton Village Conservation Area because it:

- Respects the **scale, massing, and hierarchy** of the existing house
- Uses **locally resonant materials** that reflect Kimpton's historic vernacular
- Maintains and enhances the **green, landscaped character** of the plot
- Introduces **high-quality contemporary design** that is clearly subordinate and contextually sensitive

- Preserves the **visual and spatial qualities** that define the conservation area

4.0 The Existing Property

19 Garden Fields is a modest terraced cottage and although important relative to the overall setting in itself has limited heritage value. Its contribution to the conservation area is neutral, and its position means it does not form part of the historic street frontage or have major impact on any identified key view.

4.1 Period and Context

19 and 20 Garden Fields make up a later 19th or early 20th century cottage terrace that although not in itself special are noted as contributing to the Kimpton Village Conservation area overall. This building sits at the junction between the oldest development in Kimpton around the Green and later 20th century housing development around Garden Fields.

4.2 Architectural Style

The house is typical of late 19th C or early 20th-century domestic cottage terrace architecture, characterised by:

- A simple, functional form without much embellishment
- Modest scale and massing
- A simple and pleasant consistency of material and detail across the whole range
- A design approach that prioritises practicality over architectural expression

It does not replicate the historic vernacular of the village (timber framing, flint, clay tile, etc.), but instead adopts the standardised housebuilder style common to its era.

4.3 Materials and Construction

The existing building is constructed using materials typical of its period after materials were exported by rail from Wales and around England, red brick walls, a dark slate roof, and white windows...now unfortunately replace with double glazed PVC:

External Walls

- Predominantly brickwork, usually in a red or buff tone
- Standard cavity wall construction
- No traditional flint, render, or timber framing associated with the historic village core

Roof

- Slate, generally dark grey
- Standard trussed rafter construction

- Roof pitch shallower than the steep clay-tiled roofs of older Kimpton cottages

Windows and Doors

- uPVC or modern timber-framed windows, typically casement style
- Double glazing
- Standardised proportions rather than traditional sash or cottage-style openings

Rainwater Goods

- uPVC gutters and downpipes.

Other Features

- Minimal architectural detailing
- Simple eaves and verge treatments
- Modern entry porch elements.

The rear garden is well enclosed, with no meaningful visibility from public footpaths, roads, or communal green spaces.

5.0 Description of the Proposed Extension

The proposal includes:

- A single-storey rear/side extension.
- Minimalist contemporary design, using:
 - Black vertical timber cladding
 - Slimline glazing with frames hidden in the construction.
 - A simple, recessive roof profile matching the replaced existing entry porch.
 - Conservation Rooflights on the existing building
- A form deliberately kept low, compact, and visually recessive.
- Positioning that ensures the extension is not visible from the public realm, including:
 - Garden Fields road
 - Footpaths leading toward The Green
 - Any public vantage points within the conservation area

The extension is designed to read as a lightweight, secondary element, clearly subordinate to the main house.

6. Assessment of Impact on the Conservation Area

6.1 Visibility and Public Realm

The extension is effectively screened by existing boundary treatments and the orientation of the dwelling. As a result:

- It does not intrude into any key views identified in the character statement.
- It does not alter the streetscape, roofscape, or settlement pattern.
- It does not affect the setting of any listed buildings.

This low visibility is a significant factor in ensuring the proposal preserves the area's character.

6.2 Design and Materials

While contemporary, the design is:

- Subtle and recessive
- High quality
- Clearly secondary to the host building

The use of black timber cladding is appropriate because:

- Dark, recessive tones reduce visual impact.
- Timber is a natural material compatible with the conservation area's palette.
- The simplicity of the form avoids pastiche while respecting the area's domestic scale.

Contemporary extensions are acceptable in conservation areas when they are subordinate, discreet, and high quality—all criteria are met here.

6.3 Scale and Massing

The extension's modest scale ensures:

- No harm to the historic grain of the village.
- No disruption to plot patterns.
- No dominance over the host dwelling.

6.4 Trees, Boundaries, and Landscape

Only small trees affecting the main patio adjacent to the house and the fence with Garden Fields will be cut back or removed all other boundary features contributing to the conservation area's character are unaffected. The proposal retains the green, enclosed garden setting typical of this part of Kimpton while making the patio more useful for a family.

7.0 Conclusion

The proposed extension at **19 Garden Fields**:

- Is largely invisible from the public realm with only long obscured views from the village green and partial views from Church lane.
- Uses high-quality, recessive materials
- Is modest, subordinate, and respectful of the host dwelling
- Does not affect key views, heritage assets, or the historic village form
- Preserves the character and appearance of the Kimpton Village Conservation Area

Accordingly, the proposal meets the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and aligns with both local and national heritage policy.

It represents a sensitive, well-considered, and appropriate form of development within the conservation area.