



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT & PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed Change of Use from Public House to a Single Dwelling and Construction of an Ancillary Summer House

The Cricketers Public House

107 Arlesey Road, Ickleford, Hitchin, SG5 3TH

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Binney & Sims Design in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the former Cricketers Public House, 107 Arlesey Road, Ickleford, from a public house (sui generis) to a single residential dwelling (Use Class C3), together with the construction of an ancillary summer house and associated external alterations.

The proposal seeks to secure the long-term future of a vacant building through its sensitive conversion into a high-quality family home. The development will preserve the character of the existing building whilst delivering a sustainable residential use that reflects the prevailing character of the surrounding area.

The application includes:

- Change of use from public house to a single dwelling;
- Internal reconfiguration of the existing building;
- Replacement of the existing lean-to extension with a smaller entrance extension;
- Alterations to fenestration;
- Construction of an ancillary summer house with integrated cycle storage;
- Associated landscaping, parking, access and external works.

2. Site Description

The application site comprises the former Cricketers Public House situated on Arlesey Road within the village of Ickleford.

The site contains a substantial detached building formerly operating as a public house, together with a large area of hardstanding, former customer parking, patio areas and associated external amenity space.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character and comprises a mixture of detached and semi-detached dwellings of varying ages and architectural styles. The site benefits from an established vehicular access from Arlesey Road which will be retained as part of the proposal.

The property is not a listed building and is not located within the Ickleford Conservation Area.

3. Planning History and Existing Use

The lawful use of the property remains as a public house (*sui generis*), with no previous planning permissions having altered the authorised use of the site.

The public house ceased trading in 2023 and has been actively marketed through Sidney Phillips Estate Agents since September 2022.

Despite extensive marketing, the property has remained vacant and no viable proposals have come forward to continue the public house use.

The village continues to benefit from two alternative public houses, namely The Old George and The Plume of Feathers, both located within approximately 800 metres of the application site.

The proposal therefore represents a practical and sustainable solution for securing the long-term occupation and maintenance of the building.

4. Principle of Development

The site comprises a long-term vacant public house which has been marketed for an extended period without securing a viable operator.

Policy C1 of the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect identified community facilities but allows their loss where it can be demonstrated that continued use is no longer viable and the property has been actively marketed.

The Cricketers has been vacant since 2023 and has been marketed since September 2022. The continued absence of a viable operator demonstrates that the premises no longer function as a sustainable community facility.

Furthermore, the village retains two public houses within walking distance of the site, ensuring that residents continue to have access to similar facilities.

The proposed conversion therefore represents an appropriate and sustainable re-use of an existing building and accords with both local and neighbourhood planning policy.

5. Design

Design Principles

The design approach seeks to retain the established character and appearance of the existing building whilst adapting it for modern residential occupation.

The proposal respects the scale, form and proportions of the existing structure and retains the majority of the existing built fabric.

External alterations have been deliberately limited and focused upon improving functionality and residential amenity whilst maintaining the character of the building.

Proposed Alterations

The proposal includes:

- Removal of the existing lean-to extension (north elevation)
- Construction of a smaller replacement entrance extension (north elevation)
- Conversion of internal commercial areas into residential accommodation
- Rationalisation of the existing fenestration;
- Associated landscaping and external works.

The replacement entrance extension has been designed as a subservient addition which improves the appearance and functionality of the dwelling whilst reducing the overall bulk of the existing structure.

The principal front elevation remains largely unchanged and retains its established appearance.

Additional window openings have been carefully positioned to provide appropriate levels of daylight and outlook without resulting in harmful overlooking of neighbouring properties.

6. Proposed Accommodation

The proposed dwelling will provide spacious family accommodation comprising:

Ground Floor

- Entrance Hall
- Sitting Room
- Games Room
- Office
- WC
- Utility Room
- Pantry
- Garden Room
- Open Plan Kitchen / Dining / Family Room

First Floor

- Five Bedrooms
- Five Bathrooms / En-suites
- Laundry Room
- Dressing Rooms

The proposal makes efficient use of the existing structure and provides a high-quality family dwelling suitable for long-term occupation.

Summer House

A detached ancillary summer house is proposed within the rear garden.

The building will have a maximum height of approximately 3.2 metres and incorporates dedicated cycle storage.

The structure is modest in scale, complies with GPDO technical guidance and remains clearly subordinate to the principal dwelling.

The summer house will be used solely for purposes ancillary to the residential occupation of the property and will not contain sleeping accommodation or operate as an independent dwelling.

Its position within the large rear garden ensures that it integrates comfortably into the site without detracting from the character of the area.

It is proposed that the summer house be finished in the same style as the extensions to the main building with Timber feather-edge horizontal cladding and UPVC/Aluminium windows and doors.

7. Materials

The proposed materials have been selected to complement the existing building and surrounding village character.

Materials include:

- Pale/light render finish to match the existing building;
- Plain clay roof tiles to match the existing roof;
- Reuse of salvaged slate tiles from the existing extension where practicable on the replacement extension;
- Timber feather-edge horizontal cladding to new and altered extensions;
- Timber windows to the principal front elevation;
- UPVC/aluminium windows and doors to secondary side and rear elevations.

The proposed palette reflects traditional rural building materials and will ensure that the development integrates successfully into its surroundings.

External Works/Landscaping

The proposal includes the enhancement of the external areas associated with the site. The existing commercial parking and service areas will be rationalised and converted into a private residential setting with a combination of hard and soft landscaping.

A gated vehicular entrance will be retained from Arlesey Road, providing secure access to the property whilst maintaining the established access arrangement. The entrance area between the public highway and the proposed gates will be surfaced in permeable block paving, allowing surface water infiltration whilst providing a durable and attractive finish adjacent to the public realm.

Beyond the entrance gates, the driveway and parking areas will utilise a gravel surface over a permeable sub-base. This approach reduces the visual impact of hardstanding, assists with sustainable drainage and reflects the rural character of Ickleford.

Areas of former pub car parking and external circulation space will be softened through the introduction of private garden areas, planting beds and additional soft landscaping. These measures will improve the appearance of the site, increase permeability and create a more attractive residential environment.

Existing boundary treatments will be retained wherever possible and repaired or replaced with close-boarded timber fencing where necessary to the rear of the property. Trees along the western boundary will be protected during and post construction, and no tree removal is required to facilitate the development.

8. Access, Parking and Highway Safety

Vehicular access will continue to utilise the existing access point from Arlesley Road.

The existing access will be retained and improved through the removal of the existing lean-to structure and replacement with a smaller entrance extension.

The site will provide:

- Three off-street parking spaces
- Turning area
- Secure cycle storage for five bicycles
- Refuse and recycling storage.

Whilst the proposed parking provision is below the Council's standard for a five-bedroom dwelling, the proposal represents a significant reduction in traffic generation compared with the lawful public house use and retains substantial on-site parking and manoeuvring space. The site provides three formal parking spaces together with extensive manoeuvring and ancillary parking opportunities within the gravelled driveway area.

The development will therefore not result in any adverse highway safety impacts.

9. Residential Amenity

The proposal has been designed to ensure that neighbouring residential amenity is protected.

No extensions are proposed closer to neighbouring boundaries than existing built development.

The proposal introduces fewer first-floor windows than the existing arrangement and all new openings have been positioned to avoid harmful overlooking or loss of privacy.

The summer house is modest in scale and located within a substantial rear garden, ensuring no unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring occupiers.

In addition, the change from a public house to a single dwelling will significantly reduce noise, activity and disturbance associated with the former commercial use.

10. Sustainability

The proposal will deliver sustainability improvements through the reuse and refurbishment of the existing building rather than demolition and redevelopment.

The development will be constructed in accordance with current Building Regulations standards and will incorporate:

- High levels of insulation;
- Energy-efficient glazing;
- Water-efficient sanitary fittings;
- Sustainable construction materials where practicable;
- Reuse of existing roof tiles where possible;
- Opportunities for recycled aggregates and responsibly sourced timber.

Soft landscaping and permeable surfacing will be introduced to assist surface water management and improve drainage performance.

The development is also compatible with future low-carbon technologies including air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

11. Conclusion

The proposal represents a sustainable and appropriate re-use of a long-term vacant public house building.

The scheme will secure the future of the property through its conversion into a high-quality family dwelling whilst preserving the character of the building and enhancing the appearance of the site.

The proposal has been carefully designed to respect neighbouring amenity, maintain highway safety, improve environmental performance and provide an attractive residential environment.

The loss of the public house has been justified through the prolonged vacancy of the premises, marketing evidence and the continued availability of alternative public houses within the village.

The proposal is considered to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, the North Hertfordshire Local Plan and the Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan and planning permission is respectfully requested.

Site Photos



Marketing

https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/127010957#/?channel=COM_BUY

<https://www.sidneyphillips.co.uk/business-detail/93359/> (marketed since September 2022)