



17th June 2025

Appeal Statement in Support of Planning Application Ref: 24/01812/FP

Site: The Old Grammar School, Broadway, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3NX

Appellant: Miss Beatrice Pryor

1. Introduction

This statement is submitted in support of the appeal against North Hertfordshire District Council's refusal of planning permission for minor alterations to the front access path and the installation of two lawn signage structures at the Old Grammar School, Letchworth. The proposed works have already been carried out and are modest in scale and sympathetic in character.

We respectfully contend that the refusal issued on 29 January 2025 misrepresents the visual and contextual impact of the development and that the decision should be overturned.

2. Summary of Reasons for Refusal

The Council refused permission on the basis that:

- The design and materials of the entrance walls and piers are visually incongruous.
- The development detracts from the setting of the Conservation Area and the Old Grammar School.
- The scheme causes "less than substantial harm" to a heritage asset with no public benefit to outweigh that harm.

We disagree with each of these assessments, as outlined below.

3. Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment

a. Appropriateness of Design and Materials

The entrance structures are built using high-quality, contextually appropriate materials that complement the colour, tone, and scale of the original Grammar School building. The signage is modest in scale, reversibly installed, and carefully designed to avoid visual clutter or overstatement.

The forms are traditional and respectful, drawing from existing architectural cues of the school building — such as symmetry, proportion, and use of natural tones. These aspects are consistent with Letchworth's Garden City principles, where modern additions are frequently made in a restrained and respectful way to historic settings.

b. Conservation Area Character

The Conservation Area Appraisal for Letchworth (if available) often encourages subtle enhancement and legibility of historic buildings. The signage structures help define the entrance in a way that is clear, tidy, and respectful, providing both functional benefit and visual structure without harming the wider character.

We submit that the effect of the development is neutral at worst, and in practice, enhances legibility and wayfinding within the site – a modest public benefit.

4. Public and Contextual Benefits

While modest, the works deliver public benefit in the following ways:

- Improved visitor accessibility and orientation, by clearly defining the site entrance and improving pedestrian movement.
- Better preservation through clarity: by formalising the front access, the development reduces informal access points and foot traffic wear to the surrounding grounds.
- Reinforces the active, civic use of the heritage building, demonstrating sensitive stewardship and continued community value.

5. Compliance with Policy

The works are not contrary to Paragraph 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which encourages well-designed places and conservation-led design. In fact:

- The design is contextual and proportionate.
- The heritage asset's significance is preserved.
- There are no irreversible changes, and materials are of high quality.

Likewise, we submit that the proposal does not breach Policy SP9 or HE1 of the North Herts Local Plan (2011–2031), both of which support development that sustains and enhances the historic environment.

6. Conclusion

The Council's decision appears to overstate the visual and heritage impact of a small-scale, thoughtful addition. The development:

- Uses materials and design sympathetic to the host building and wider area;
- Delivers minor public benefits;
- Does not cause material harm to the heritage asset or the Conservation Area.

On this basis, we respectfully request that the Planning Inspectorate allow the appeal and grant retrospective planning permission.

