



Heritage Statement

Land north of
Blacksmiths Lane
Reed
Royston
Hertfordshire

20th November 2025

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Introduction & Site Location

1.1

This Heritage Statement has been written to support an application for planning permission for the construction of 21 dwellings on land on the north side of Blacksmiths Lane, Reed. The National Planning Policy Framework February 2025 (NPPF) requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (paragraph 207).

1.2

This Statement provides an appraisal of the heritage assets affected and assesses significance in accordance with the policies contained in the NPPF and the guidance contained in Historic England's Advice Note 12 *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*. The impact of the proposed works on the significance of the heritage asset is then described and considered.

1.3

The site comprises a field on the northern edge of the settlement, bounded by roadside vegetation on its south (Blacksmiths Lane) boundary and along its north side. To the west, it is bounded by London Road (A10) without roadside hedging and to the east, it abuts residential development. A public footpath runs east-west along the north edge.



Application site and approximate line of the public footpath

1.4

The site has been allocated in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan for residential development of an estimated 22 dwellings (Policy RD1).

Ref	Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria	Dwelling estimate
RD1	Land at Blacksmiths Lane - Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery; - Sensitive design required where the site affects the Reed Conservation Area and adjacent listed buildings; and - Existing Right of Way should be incorporated or diverted as appropriate.	22 homes

The Heritage Assets: Description & Significance

2.1

There are no scheduled monuments or listed buildings within or adjoining the site. Just beyond the north-west corner of the site is the approximate site of a former windmill at Mill Corner, which is shown on the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) ref. MHT15351.

2.2

The Woolpack, a grade II listed building, is situated a short distance to the south of the site's south-west corner, on London Road (list entry no. 1175766). The list description is as follows

House. Mid C17, altered and extended C20. Timber frame. Rendered. Steeply pitched half hipped thatched roof. 3 bays. 2 storeys. Entrance in C20 gabled porch with a tiled head to left of centre. To centre and right are 3 light flush frame small pane casements. To left a C20 casement on ground floor, a 2 light casement on first floor. Ridge stack to right of centre. Left end has an early 1 storey thatched lean-to outshut, set back slightly with 2 light casements. Large C20 1 and 2 storey additions to rear. Interior: chamfered brick fireplace surround, stop chamfered bearer and fireplace lintel, exposed framing with tension braces, cambered tie beams, clasped purlin roof. Formerly a public house. London Road is the Roman Ermine Street.



2.3
Beyond the east edge of the site is the boundary of the Reed Conservation Area, which runs along the edge of Reed Green, cricket pitch.



Heritage assets

2.4
The conservation area embraces the historic core of the village which had a loose knit plan with buildings set around a central meadow bounded by High Street, Jackson's Lane, Church Lane and Driftway.¹ The conservation area includes the parish church and an area of homestead moated sites, some of which are scheduled monuments and six of them are shown on the map in Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England's inventory².

2.5
The northern section of the conservation area includes Reed Green which is sited on the south side of Blacksmiths Lane a short distance to the east of the application site.

¹ Reed Parish Council website https://www.reedparishcouncil.gov.uk/reed_village.htm

² RCHME *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Hertfordshire* pp169-70

Proposed Works & Heritage Impact Assessment

3.1
It is proposed to build 21 houses on the site in accordance with Local Plan Policy RD1. Full details of the design and layout are given in the accompanying Design, Sustainability & Access Statement.



Heritage Impact Assessment

3.2
The question is whether the proposal harms the setting of The Woolpack or the Conservation Area. The nearest part of the conservation area to the application site is Reed Green. Beyond that point, moving westwards, Blacksmith Lane is characterised by rows of houses and bungalows either side of the road, set behind roadside trees and shrubs



View from Reed Green looking west along Blacksmith Lane

3.3

The edge of the application site is seen in the distance behind its roadside hedge. The provision of houses behind this hedge will have no impact on the manner in which the conservation area is appreciated. It causes no harm to its character and appearance. The proposed design and layout repeats the 'grain' of the form of housing along the road, repeating the views of dwellings at the end of driveways behind roadside vegetation.

3.4

The glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework (annex 2) defines 'setting' as

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

3.5

The Department for Housing and Communities Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) July 2023 states in paragraph 013 that

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

3.6

The Woolpack is a timber framed and thatched house believed to date from the mid-17th century. Probably taking advantage of its roadside location on the ancient Ermine Street (London Road) it traded as a public house. Its setting, the manner in which the building is appreciated and understood, owes much to this setting which contributes to its significance. It looks out towards open countryside across the road to the west, with building to the east and north along the south side of Blacksmiths Lane.

3.7

Sited to the north of Blacksmiths Lane, the application site plays little part in this setting. It forms part of the rural setting of the settlement, which will have been taken into account when it was designated in the Local Plan for residential development. The proposal will alter this approach along London Road, but will not harm the manner in which the former public house is appreciated and understood. The retention of vegetation at the corner of Blacksmiths Lane will also help to 'soften' the impact.



Looking uphill from The Woolpack to the application site (arrowed)



Looking downhill from the application site at the corner of Blacksmiths Lane to The Woolpack (arrowed)



The proposed development facing London Road at the corner of Blacksmiths Lane

Conclusion

4.1

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering applications for development which affects a heritage asset or its setting, local planning authorities shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting (section 66.1). Special attention shall also be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area in the exercise of any powers under the planning Acts (section 72).

4.2

The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2025) expands on the 1990 Act. Paragraph 202 notes that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

4.3

Paragraph 207 of the NPPF requires an applicant to “describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”. Paragraph 210 requires local planning authorities, in determining applications to take account of “the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage.

4.4

Paragraph 213 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification and paragraph 212 advises that when considering the impact on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

4.5

The level of any harm caused by the proposal to the setting of the listed building is low. But if harm is perceived then the public benefits which accrue should outweigh the level of harm caused (paragraph 215). In this case, the planning balance favours the proposal. It provides 21 dwellings in accordance with the adopted Local Plan, which identifies the site for residential development, meeting local housing needs and according with current Government policy. The design responds to the existing character along Blacksmiths Lane without causing any harm to the character or setting of the conservation area.

References

Department for Housing and Communities	<i>National Planning Policy Framework</i>	February 2025
Department for Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government	<i>Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment</i>	July 2019
Hertfordshire County Council	<i>Historic Environment Record</i>	
Historic England	<i>Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance</i>	2008
Historic England	<i>Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Advice Note 12)</i>	2019
Historic England	<i>The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (Second Edition)</i>	2017
Historic England	<i>Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2</i>	2015
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME)	<i>An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Hertfordshire</i>	HMSO London 1910