



HERITAGE & PLANNING STATEMENT

Variation of condition 04 on planning consent E/91/0531/F to allow the continued part-time use of former school building (the annex) as two-bedroom holiday let accommodation (Air B & B) with associated on-site parking (For 90 nights per year).

The Old School, High Street, Witcham

November 2023



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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Identified heritage assets
3. Brief history of the site
4. Assessment of significance
5. Heritage policy context
6. The proposals
7. Heritage Impact assessment
8. Other material planning considerations
9. Conclusions

References

[Appendix 1](#) Reviews from past visitors on Air B & B

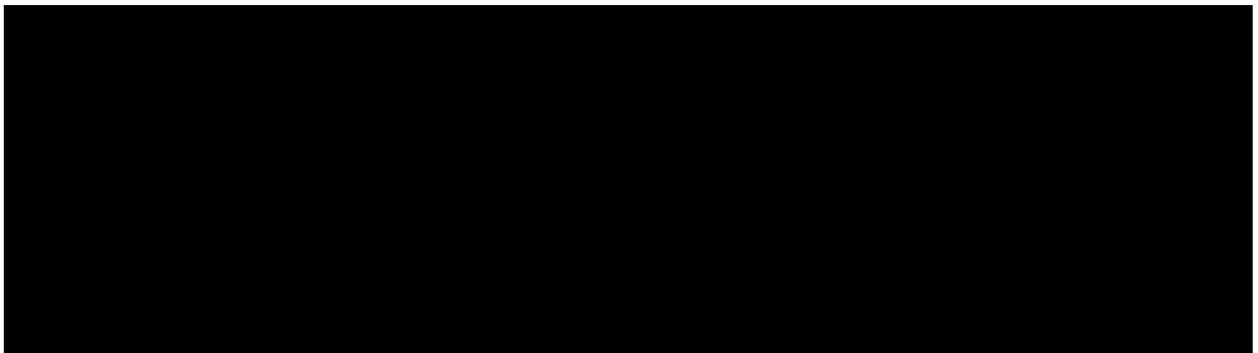
[Appendix 2](#) Email of support from Landlady of The White Horse Witcham



1 Introduction

1.1 Brighter Planning Ltd have been engaged by Edward Dickinson & Hilary Gresty, the owners and occupiers of The Old School site to prepare a Supporting Statement for the variation of condition 04 on the original consent for the site which granted approval for the main dwelling and the use of the school building as an annex to this. The variation seeks the proposed continuation of the use of the former school room as a part-time short term let holiday unit (Air B & B). It is proposed to limit this use to 90 nights per calendar year with the building continuing to be used as an ancillary annex to the host dwelling for the remainder of the time.

1.2 The application site was originally the village school but when this became redundant planning permission was granted initially for the conversion of the school site into two dwellings but when the applicants purchased the site in 1991 consent (91/00531/FUL) was obtained for the demolition of a modern classroom building and the erection of a new dwelling. The applicants implemented the 1991 consent, and lived in the school building whilst they built the new dwelling. The part of the planning consent relating to the old classroom building granted its use as ancillary accommodation to the new dwelling. The applicants have lived at the site for over 30 years and have used the old classroom building as ancillary accommodation for their family use, for both hobby and home office use.



1.4 The heritage element of this statement seeks to meet both the local requirements and the national guidance set out in the NPPF (2023). It identifies the heritage assets in the locality and their heritage value and significance. A summary of the background history of the site is set out. A heritage impact assessment is undertaken to assess the potential impact of the proposals on the identified heritage assets. An assessment of the level of harm resulting from the proposals is made together with any heritage benefits resulting.



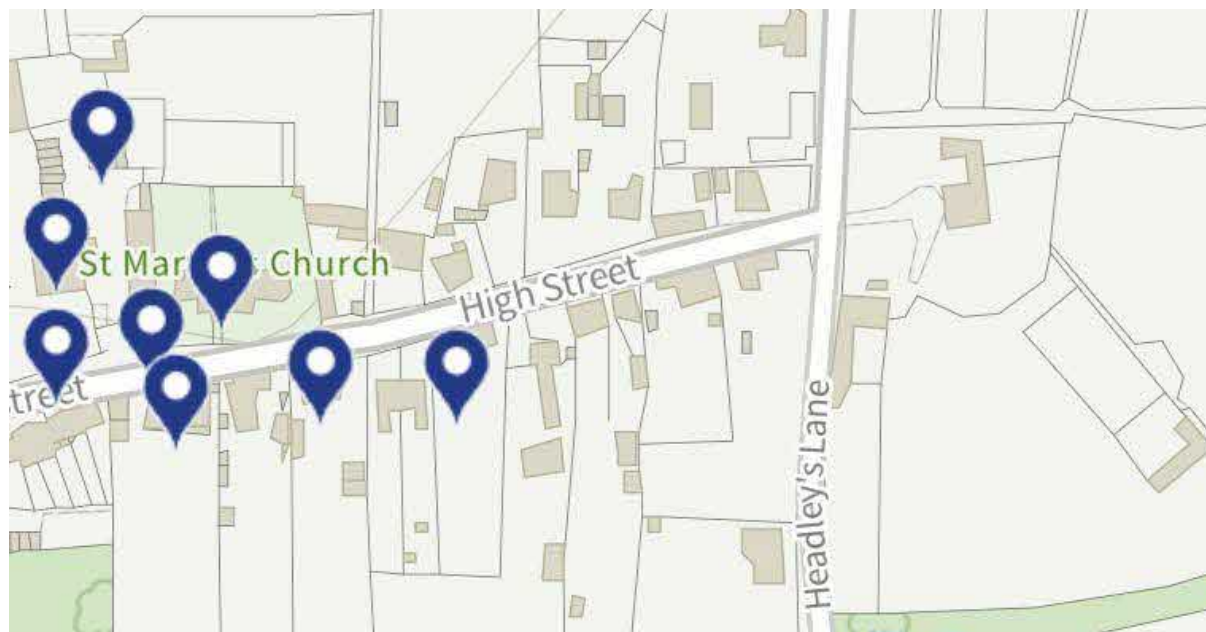
1.5 The planning section of this statement considers the other material considerations including the potential impact on the amenities of the occupiers of neighboring properties and the impact on the character of the High Street.

1.6 A site visit was undertaken in October 2023 when the photos, which illustrate the report were taken.



2 Identified Heritage Assets

Listed buildings



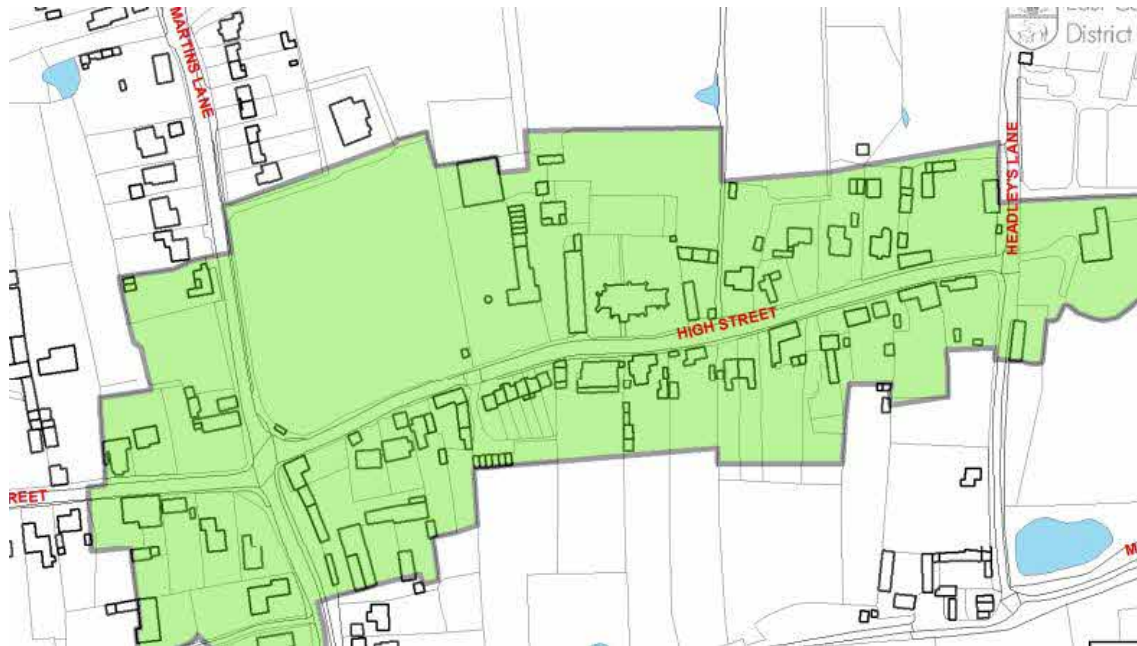
2.1 The above map extract identifies the Listed buildings on or in the close vicinity of the site. The former school buildings are not Listed. The property adjacent to the western boundary of the site is the only Listed Building in the immediate vicinity of the site, with a group of Listed Buildings further to the west focused on the Grade I Listed St Martin's Church on the northern side of High Street, which given their distance and relationship with the site are not considered in this statement.

The Old Crown House 28 High Street

2.2 The property was Grade II Listed in 1988. The listing describes the standing building as dating from the early C18, but it was re-fronted in the late C18. It is a brick building with a plain tile roof. It is one storey with an attic floor lit by dormer windows.



Conservation Area



Extract from the Conservation Area Map (East Cambs DC)

2.3 The site is located within the designated Witcham Conservation Area. There is currently no Conservation Area Appraisal for this area.

Cambridgeshire HERs records

2.4 The HERs site for Cambridgeshire includes an entry for the school site and on this basis the surviving buildings are held to be non-designated heritage assets.

2.5 The entry states that the school was built in 1873 following a National Society grant. The school originally provided spaces for 90 pupils but by 1910 this had been reclassified to 73. At the front of the site and not part of the application site is the former schoolteacher's house.



3 Brief History of the Site and its Context

3.1 The village of Witcham is located 5 miles west of Ely and is located on slightly elevated land within the Fens. The village has developed around a crossroads in the centre of the village, with High Street being the eastern spur of this. The name is derived from wych elms which were abundant in the area at one time.

3.2 The settlement had an economy based on agriculture with an open three-field system operating around the village until enclosure under an Act of 1838. The fields (north, east, and south) were granted to Ely Priory in the C13.

Witcham School

3.3 A school has existed in the village from the C16, with a John Fearnley licensed as the schoolmaster in 1582. By the C18 the village contained two schools – Anglican and Non-Conformist. These appear to have closed by the C19 as no existing schools are noted when a National Society grant was applied for to build the school on the application site. The school cost £537 13s to build of which two thirds was raised by subscription.

3.4 The land on which the school was built was bought from Clare College Cambridge for £20. Initially the school had 90 pupils but by 1948 this had dropped to 30. The children were accommodated in a hall with fireplaces at each end and sash windows with high cills so the children could not look out. The windows have been retained and the roof trusses, the sarking boards to the roof and the chimney breasts are still visible. The present kitchen in the annex was the staff room.

3.5 The Cambridgeshire County Record Office (CRO) holds on microfilm the records of the school from 1873-1925. This includes the lists of the pupils and attendance records. The CRO also holds the school records from the WWII period which included evacuated children and those housed in resettlement camps including Polish children.





Witcham School 1903 (Cambridgeshire Community Archive Network)

3.6 A large modern flat roof classroom was built in the 1960's where the applicants' dwelling now stands and this was demolished as part of the consent to build the house c. 1991.

3.7 A former headmaster of the school, John Tyson, established as a fundraising scheme the World Pea Shooting Championship in the village in 1971. This event has continued to take place annually long after the school had closed in 1982.

3.8 The applicants purchased the site in 1991 and have restored the school room building retaining the original sash windows and Gothic entrance doorways to the west elevation with secondary glazing. A mezzanine bedroom and shower room were formed in the building using timber reclaimed from the demolished 1960's classroom. More recently an air source heating system has been installed and the insulation of the building improved.





Photo c1991 showing the building pre-conversion (Applicants)

Map regression

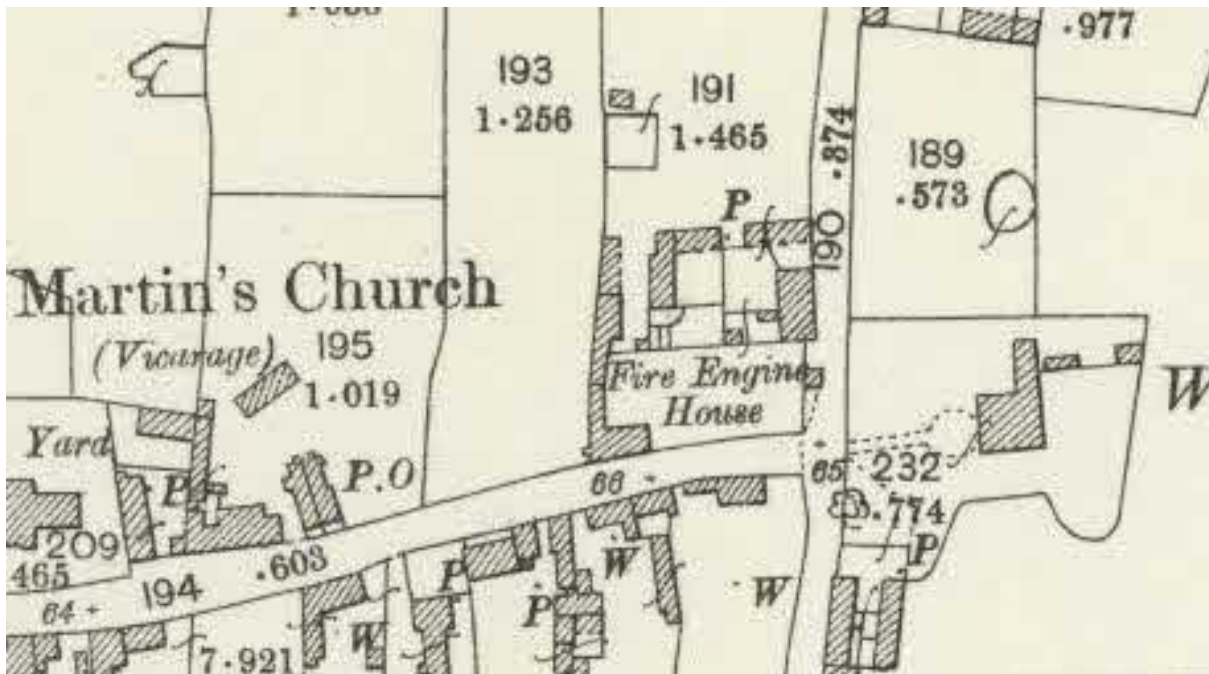
3.9 A map regression has been undertaken for the site using three Ordnance Survey maps. The first Ordnance Survey (OS) Map for the site dates from 1887 and the school buildings can be identified with the schoolhouse to the north, set back from the road and the schoolrooms behind this.





Six Inch OS map 1887 (Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland)

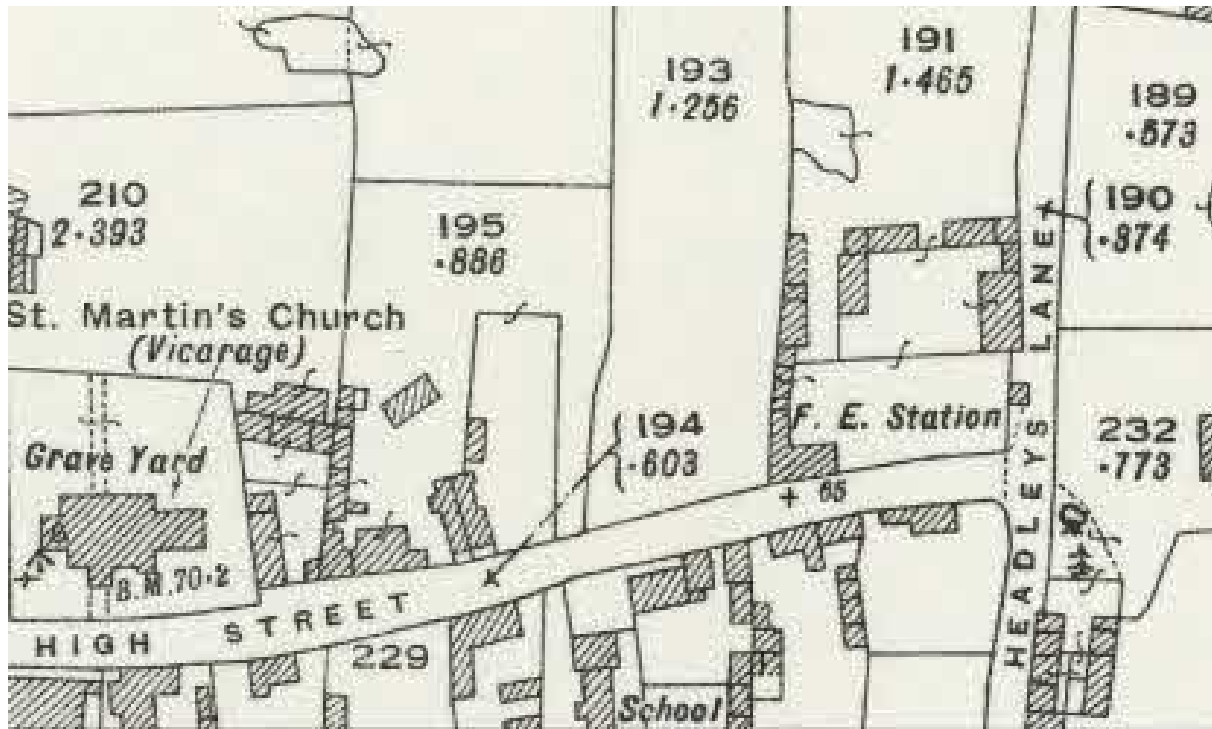
3.10 The second OS map dates from 1902 and is in the twenty-five-inch series. This larger scale map identified a pump to the east of the schoolhouse.



Twenty-five-inch OS map 1902 (Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland)



3.11 The third map dates from 1927 with little change to the layout on the site.



Twenty-five-inch OS map 1927 (Reproduced with permission of the National Library of Scotland)

Planning History of the school site

3.12 The planning history of the site is summarized in the table below.

Proposals	Reference	Decision
Alterations of existing buildings including part demolition to form detached dwelling and ancillary accommodation plus erection of garage.	E/91/0531/F	Approval

3.13 The above consent granted the current layout of buildings on the site. Condition 4 on the consent restricted the annex use of the school room building to being ‘for domestic purposes ancillary to the use of the dwelling hereby approved and shall not be separated from the curtilage of dwelling nor be occupied as a separate dwelling without the prior written consent of the LPA.’



4 Assessment of Significance

4.1 The NPPF (2023) sets out in paragraph 194 that in determining applications local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. It also makes clear that the level of information required should be ‘proportionate to the assets’ importance, and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.

4.2 Heritage assets and significance are defined in the Glossary in Annex 2 of the NPPF. The definition of heritage assets includes both national designations and assets identified by the local planning authority. The NPPF definition of significance states that ‘heritage interest’ may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic, and that significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

4.3 Heritage interests are defined as follows:

Archaeological interest in a heritage asset is if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point (NPPF, Annex 2)

Architectural and artistic interest These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture. (NPPG para 006)

Historic interest An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation’s history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity. (NPPG para 006)

4.4 Setting is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as follows:

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.

4.5 Historic England’s ‘Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets’ (2nd ed. 2017) makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset and can only contribute towards the significance of a heritage asset. This document sets out a series of attributes that it may be appropriate to consider when assessing significance, listed under two main headings: the physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets; and the way that the asset is experienced.

4.6 The old school buildings in the ownership of the applicants are assessed for their heritage interest following the definitions set out above.

The Old School



The rear of the former schoolhouse and school room looking east



Archaeological interest – Low

4.7 The standing fabric dates from the C19 and there are no recorded earlier archaeological finds on the site.

Architectural and artistic interest – Moderate

4.8 It is assumed at the point of redundancy that the buildings were considered as to whether they were Listable. The buildings had been altered and the applicants have restored much of the original character to the school room building.

Historic interest – High

4.9 The building served the village for approximately 110 years so many local people will have memories of attending the school. As set out in the previous section the school has a history for people relocated to the area in WWII.

Contribution to the conservation area



View down driveway looking south with former schoolhouse to eastern side and the associated 'new' dwelling in the far distance



4.10 The former school buildings are set back from the street unlike many of the older cottages which line High Street. The school building is located to the rear of the former schoolhouse and so as the photo below illustrates there is only a glimpse of the building from the public realm. The sensitive restoration of the building has ensured that the character and appearance of the old school has been retained.

Heritage significance of the old school building (excluding the schoolhouse)

Exterior

4.11 The school building is a long single storey brick building with windows to the east and west long elevations. The windows have high cills, which prevented the children from looking out and being distracted. The building has a slate roof. Garden areas have been formed on the eastern and western sides of the structure. The driveway leads to a courtyard area in front of the building.

The western elevation



West elevation



4.12 This is the principal elevation of the building, and it has three doors. The windows are four over four timber vertical sash windows with brick arches. The structure is separated from the schoolhouse by a roofed alleyway with a brick floor and doors at each end. This space is where the children originally hung their coats.

Interior

4.13 The school room was one large space which had a fireplace to each end. This room has been divided into two with one half containing the mezzanine floor and the second area currently a hobby room, but it is proposed to convert this second space into a second bedroom and ensuite. The roof frame and original sarking boards are exposed and visible in this space together with the northern chimney breast.



Northern end of former classroom

4.14 The southern end of the room is the living room where the mezzanine has been added with the stairs to the eastern side of the room. The former staff room is now the kitchen, and a replacement extension has formed a WC and shower room.





The former staff room with fireplace



The sleeping space



Staircase to mezzanine



4.15 The mezzanine is to the central part of the building, and it forms a small bedroom area at the top of the stairs.

Summary of the significance

4.16 The school building is assessed to have local heritage significance to the village and local residents. It is not held to be of Listable quality. It is a non-designated heritage asset and is located within the Witcham Conservation Area. Its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is limited by its setback location to the rear of the former schoolhouse.

4.17 The applicants during the period of their ownership have restored the external appearance of the building, removing some poor-quality additions and alterations added when it was still in educational use. They have put the building to a new alternative optimum use initially as an annex and as their personal circumstances have changed are now seeking to regularise and continue to use the building for occasional Air B & B accommodation in conjunction with its continued use for ancillary domestic accommodation to the main house.



5 Planning and Heritage Policy Context

National legislation

5.1 The **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004** came into force in September 2004. It carries forward the provisions of the **Town and Country Planning Act 1990**, giving statutory force to a plan-led system of development control. Under Section 38 of 2004 Act, the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the approved development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023** has just come into force, and this aims to speed up the planning process but the implementation of this relies on further publication of new regulations and revised guidance.

5.2 The statutory requirements of Section 66 of the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires the decision maker in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

National guidance

5.3 National planning guidance is set out in the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023**. Section 16 of the NPPF sets out policies aimed at conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 190 directs local planning authorities to take account of:

the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and,

the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.



5.4 Paragraph 200 of the NPPF requires that any harm to, or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset – which can be from its alteration or destruction or from development within its setting, requires clear and convincing justification.

5.5 Paragraph 202 states that where less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset is found to occur this harm must be weighed against the public benefits resulting from the proposal.

5.6 Paragraph 203 considers non-designated heritage assets and the effect on the significance of such assets must be considered in determining an application.

5.7 The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which is regularly updated online, provides additional government advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment. This includes in paragraph 006 (18a-006-20190723) a definition of what significance is.

Local Plan Policy

5.8 The adopted Local Plan is the East Cambridgeshire District Plan (2015) (as amended 2023). The relevant policies within this document are:

Policy EMP8 Tourist accommodation.

Policy EMP9 Holiday and seasonal occupancy conditions

Policy ENV1 Landscape and settlement character

Policy ENV11 Conservation Areas

Policy ENV12 Listed Buildings

Neighbourhood Plan

5.9 There is currently no ‘made’ Witchford Neighbourhood Plan, but the site falls within the area covered by the designated neighbourhood area (Jan 2023).

Historic England Guidance

5.10 The main guidance produced by Historic England of relevance to this application are:

The Setting of Heritage Assets – Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Planning Note 3 (2017).



6 The Proposals

6.1 The applicants are seeking permission to vary the condition relating to how the annex is used to enable the applicants to continue to use the old school building as occasional Air B & B accommodation. They started letting the building as a one-bedroom unit in September 2019 and were unaware that they need planning permission for this use, given the continuous ancillary residential uses they had put the building to since 1991. The use ceased during lock down but restarted in June 2021 and continued until contact was made by the Enforcement Officer in June 2023. As Appendix 1 illustrates they have had consistent five-star ratings. Within the Air B & B list of accommodation, the building is within the Air B & B's historic homes category. At the time it was added, it was the only such building listed in the Ely area.



6.2 They are seeking to use the building for up to 90 nights a year for Air B & B use, retaining the building for their own family use the rest of the time. Given that an application is being submitted this seeks to convert what has been studio hobby space to the ground floor into a second bedroom with an ensuite to be added so that up to 4 people could sleep in the building.

6.3 The applicants have kept a log of past users and their destinations with 30% coming from London for overnight/ weekend breaks. Demand is also from people taking or collecting their children to Ely schools or local events. They have also had overseas visitors. Given that the applicants live adjacent to the building they manage and control the use of the site.

6.4 The applicants have ownership of the driveway (the schoolhouse having right of access) and the former school yard to the west of the school building can accommodate two vehicles.

6.5 The accommodation includes a small, fully hedged and enclosed garden to the eastern side of the building.



7 Heritage Impact Assessment

7.1 The proposals are now considered regarding the potential impact on the identified heritage assets in the locality.

New optimum use of the building as a NDHA

7.2 The building was sensitively restored and converted to an annex as part of the approved works granted planning permission in 1991 when the applicants built their house on the site of the modern classroom block. The original character and appearance of the Victorian school building has been conserved. The Air B & B use continues the residential use on the site and provides a low-key part-time commercial use for the building. This new use is assessed as being appropriate and preserving the historic character of the building both internally and externally.

Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

7.3 The site is within the village conservation area but its location to the rear of the schoolhouse means that the building is largely screened from view in the street scene. There is a vista down the drive to the yard area where parking is available for the accommodation, and which is softened and screened by the potted plants and boundary vegetation.

7.4 The use sought would not result in any greater impact on the character and appearance of the area than the authorised use as an ancillary domestic annex.

Impact on the setting of 28 High Street

7.5 The Listed Building is located adjacent to the street frontage so that the principal elevation of this heritage asset is clearly visible in the public realm. The single storey form and the location of the range of the school building away from the boundary to the Listed Building, plus the fact that No.28 has its driveway adjacent to the application site, all ensures that the existing building has minimal impact on the setting of the heritage asset. Any potential impact is further mitigated by the boundary screen planting.

7.6 The driveway to the site follows the western boundary so the movement and activity associated with the Air B & B is focused on the western side of the application site. However,



the very low-key nature of the use ensures that the potential impact from this on the setting of the adjacent property equates to its use as an annex and will not harm the setting or appreciation of the adjacent building.

Compliance with Local Plan Policy

7.7 Policy ENV12 of the Local Plan 2015 (Amended 2023) seeks to preserve and enhance the setting of Listed Buildings. The proposals will not result in any harm to the immediate setting of 28 High Street or the wider setting of High Street where the cluster of other Listed Buildings are located to the west.

7.8 Policy ENV11 relates to conservation areas. This seeks a high standard of design and appearance within conservation areas and supports the finding of alternative uses for buildings to conserve them and avoid demolition. The way the building was converted in 1991 and refurbished in 2021 have successfully conserved the building so that its original function as a school building remains legible. The proposed use is seen as securing a new alternative optimum use for the building for a limited period of any calendar year, which is compatible with the building and its context.

Level of harm

7.9 In terms of potential harm to the setting of the adjacent Listed Building, the impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the direct impact on the school building itself as a non-designated heritage asset the proposals are held to result in no harm.

Heritage benefits

7.10 The heritage benefits flowing from the proposals are identified as follows:

The proposals find a new compatible alternative optimum use for the building which makes full but low-key use of the existing buildings on the site, removes risk from the old school building and secures its continued long-term conservation.



8 Other Material Planning Considerations

Principle of development

8.1 The Local Plan acknowledges the district's proximity to Cambridge and the Fens and the Ouse Washes which make the area an attractive destination for day visits and overnight stays. The need for additional tourist accommodation is acknowledged and the preference is for this to be located within settlements. The Air B & B use is within the settlement of Witcham and provides just one unit of accommodation within an interesting old building. Given that the business has operated from 2019 albeit with a break over Lockdown, the demand for such accommodation can be clearly demonstrated.

8.2 Within the village there is a caravan site and camping site, therefore there are already larger tourist accommodation facilities existing.

8.3 Visitors who have stayed at the Old School Air B & B in the past have given very complimentary reviews and five-star ratings. The low-key nature of the site is reinforced by the references to it being 'peaceful', 'relaxing' and 'secluded'. The proximity to the applicant's house ensures the site is well managed and the reviews note the friendliness and welcome offered.

Neighbour amenity

8.4 It is understood that the enforcement investigation was a result of a complaint with regard to on street parking relating to the Air B & B unit, this was ill-founded given that off-street parking is available for visitors to the application site to use. However, the applicants have sought to apply to enable them to continue to operate this business from the premises with the benefit of planning permission and have ceased to let the building during this Summers season.

8.5 The greatest potential for impact is on the owners and occupiers of the adjacent Old Schoolhouse to the front of the site who have a right of access over the driveway to the site. The driveway is owned by the applicants. This house has three windows to the side elevation,



two at ground floor. There is potential for movement to the dwelling and school building to the rear to cause disturbance.

8.6 However the scale and nature of the Air B & B use is assessed as not resulting in any significant harm to the amenities of the neighbouring property with the level and nature of activity equating to the use of the school building as a residential annex (its lawful use). The proposal is therefore considered to accord with one of the criteria of Policy EMP8 which seeks for the accommodation to be of an appropriate scale and location and to not result in significant adverse impacts from the amount and nature of traffic involved.

8.7 The applicants have discussed the application submission with these neighbours.



View down western side driveway



Green technology and energy conservation

8.8 The property has had an Air Source Heat Pump fitted in 2018 and the walls and roof were insulated to reach RHI payment standards. The windows are a mix of new double-glazed units and secondary glazing added to the original sash windows to improve the thermal efficiency of the building. The new ensuite to the proposed ground floor bedroom will have water-saving fittings fitted. The aims and objectives of Policy ENV4 energy and water efficiency of the Local Plan are therefore complied with.

Highway matters

8.9 The proposals indicate that two parking spaces can be achieved on the site, although most visitors would use one vehicle, which accords with the Councils Vehicle Parking Standards. There will be no resulting loss of any other onsite parking serving the host dwelling. The provisions of Policy of the Local Plan are therefore complied with.

Tourist accommodation Policy EMP8

8.10 Policy EMP8 sets out the following criteria when holiday cottage accommodation is proposed:

There is a need for the accommodation – this has been demonstrated by the demand for the accommodation since 2019 and this facility has undoubtedly promoted the local economy of the village and the wider area, including use of the local Public House. (Please see email of support from the Landlady of The White Horse Appendix 2)

The proposals are within an existing settlement boundary – this is complied with. In the countryside the requirement is that the proposals involve the reuse of an existing building for a maximum of two dwellings - this is also complied with only one unit proposed.

8.11 Policy EMP9 seeks to apply seasonal occupancy conditions which limit the letting to 140 days per year and for a maximum of 28 consecutive days per let. These limitations via a condition would be acceptable to the applicants given that they are seeking for the use to operate for just 90 days per year.



9 Conclusions

9.1 These proposals seek to regularise the new part time use already set up in the building, with the applicant's having not realised consent was required. The building has functioned part-time as an annex to their dwellinghouse since 1991 and the new use follows a similar ancillary function, which is managed by the applicants from their home adjacent to the site. The only change proposed as part of this application is that a second bedroom is proposed to the ground floor which enables a maximum of four people to stay although it is intended that the primary use will remain for two adults. All guests are vetted by the applicants given that the annex is adjacent to their home, and they are eager to ensure their neighbours are not disturbed. The application only seeks for this use to operate for 90 days per year and the remainder of the time the building will continue to be used as an annex to the host dwelling. It is therefore sought to regularise the position by seeking a variation to the condition relating to the use of the annex on the original 1991 consent.

9.2 The proposed use will retain the building in an economic use which will ensure the long-term conservation of the building and contribute positively to the village and surrounding area's economy. This is held to accord with the tourist accommodation policy objectives of the Local Plan.

9.3 The proposals have been assessed in terms of the potential impact on the designated and non-designated heritage assets which have been identified. No harm has been identified as resulting and there are clear heritage benefits for the long-term future of the old school building. The proposals are held to be an appropriate alternative optimum use and likely to be part-time given the occupancy conditions set out in Policy EMP9 of the Local Plan.

9.4 The proposals have been assessed in terms of their potential impact on the residential amenities of adjacent properties and the character of High Street. The proposals can provide on site parking to meet the required standards. The low-key nature of the use is held, given the scale and siting of the building to result in no harm to the locality.

9.5 The control of the use of the old school building will remain with the host dwelling and the reviews from guests to date illustrate how well the use has been run so as to ensure the accommodation provides a peaceful and tranquil place to stay and enjoy the area.

9.6 On this basis it has been demonstrated that this alternative use for the building accords with the national and local planning policies in the East Cambridgeshire District Plan 2015 (amended 2023) , relevant to the site and Planning Permission should be granted for



the variation to this condition to enable the annex to be used lawfully for this additional part-time function.



References

Pugh, R.B. (ed), 1953, The Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. Volume 4

ed. R B Pugh A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 4, City of Ely; Ely, N. and S. Witchford and Wisbech Hundreds, (London, 2002), South Witcham pp. 172-175. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/cambs/vol4/pp172-175>

[Witcham \(ccan.co.uk\)](http://ccan.co.uk)



Appendix 1

Reviews from past visitors on Air B & B

The Old School, Witcham, AirBnB Reviews

10–12 Jun 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) A return visit... and again another perfect weekend! The cottage is a perfect base to explore the area. The cottage is beautiful, well equipped and Hilary adds lots of extra special extras to make you feel both welcome and at home, flowers, delicious breakfast option to name a few! Thank you x

27–29 May 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) Felt immediately at home. Hilary has thought of everything you could possibly need. Peaceful, relaxing and tranquil oasis. Great pizzas at local White Horse pub. Easy to reach Ely and Cambridge. Would highly recommend.

15–26 May 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) Lovely, cosy accommodation equipped with all things of the daily needs. Friendly hosts. Would definitely book again.

9–12 May 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) Hilary's place is full of character and charm. House was clean and kitchen very well equipped. Hilary was responsive and welcoming. Highly recommended! (chocolate, fruits and many other). We really enjoyed our stay. All the best. Zsuzsi and Daniel.

4–7 May 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) Hilary is a wonderful host. The Old School was exactly like I expected. Had a great time. Private note from Lyndon Thank you Hilary for sharing your place with us. Truly enjoyed our visit.

26 Apr – 1 May 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) What a lovely garden school house stay. Ed and Hilary were wonderful accommodating hosts. We loved meeting them. The school house has a full stocked kitchen and Hilary left some delicious breakfast items for us. The location is perfect for visiting both Ely and Cambridge and Hilary had lots of suggestions for us.

21–25 Apr 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) We had a wonderfully relaxed stay at the school house. Hilary was very responsive and the school house was cozy and warm and delightfully secluded. The interior was tastefully furnished and it was spotless. Super spacious kitchen with everything you need - and especially liked the lovely extras, much appreciated after a long drive. The bed was very comfortable with soft linens and throws. Highly recommended and we hope to return. Private note from Emlyn. Thanks again for a lovely stay at the school house. It was perfect! Best wishes, Emlyn & Annie.

26 Apr – 1 May 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) What a lovely garden school house stay. Ed and Hilary were wonderful accommodating hosts. We loved meeting them. The school house has a full stocked kitchen and Hilary left some delicious breakfast items for us. The location is perfect for visiting both Ely and Cambridge and Hilary had lots of suggestions for us.

21–25 Apr 2023 [Overall rating 5](#) We had a wonderfully relaxed stay at the school house. Hilary was very responsive and the school house was cozy and warm and delightfully secluded. The interior was tastefully furnished and it was spotless. Super spacious kitchen with everything you need - and especially liked the lovely extras, much appreciated after a long drive. The bed was very comfortable

with soft linens and throws. Highly recommended and we hope to return.

8–10 Apr 2023 **Overall rating 5** I stayed here for a couple of nights visiting friends in the area. Witcham is very quiet and peaceful but very close to Ely and Cambridge. Hilary's place has lots of thoughtful touches and items so would be great for a longer stay (as well as shorter ones.) Everything was really clear and smooth - much appreciated. Interesting to read about the history and character of the place too.

31 Mar – 5 Apr 2023 **Overall rating 5** A totally delightful and interesting place. A magical mix of everything practical that you might ever need, combined with a very welcoming aesthetic. We had a wonderful stay and heartily recommend.

19–22 Mar 2023 **Overall rating 5** Lovely clean and cosy place to stay. Hilary made us feel very welcome. Would highly recommend. Well situated to visit all the attractions of Cambridgeshire.

18–19 Mar 2023 **Overall rating 5** Very good value a spacious place you can make feel home.

12–17 Mar 2023 **Overall rating 5** Well presented and full of character! lovely hosts.

25–26 Feb 2023 **Overall rating 5** Love the vibe, Hilary is a great host and we felt very comfortable in their little b&b

23–24 Feb 2023 **Overall rating 5** This was my second visit, and everything was excellent.

13–16 Feb 2023 **Overall rating 5** Very good value a spacious place you can make feel home. Well presented and full of character! lovely hosts. Love the vibe, Hilary is a great host.

11–12 Feb 2023 **Overall rating 5** This place is so nice and quiet. The decorations and flowers are beautiful. It's a very well designed place with thoughtful details. Hilary is a very nice host with care and attention. Will go back in the future definitely!

31 Dec 2022 – 1 Jan 2023 **Overall rating 5** Wonderful stay so close to Ely (10 minute drive). Highly recommended!

27–30 Dec 2022 **Overall rating 5** We had a fantastic 3-night stay at The Old School. We felt extremely comfortable and cosy despite the dreadful weather. The Old School was warm and welcoming from the start, and was an excellent place to spend a few days just after Christmas. Hilary had provided everything we could want and more - the range of provisions in the kitchen was amazing. The rooms were beautifully and tastefully furnished, and everywhere we looked there was something interesting and/or attractive to see. We had been a little worried about parking (and unloading) from the description, but this turned out to be completely problem-free. Hilary was extremely responsive, answering some slightly unusual questions, and always replying within an impressively short space of time. We would not hesitate to book The Old School again, and would love to visit during better weather to have a chance to appreciate the garden and explore local walks. Thank you, Hilary, for a stay that was memorable for all the right reasons.

9–11 Dec 2022 **Overall rating 5** Lovely place, lots of nice touches and Hilary was great. The kitchen was really well stocked and we will definitely be back. Thanks again Hilary for hosting Mia and I. We had a great relaxing time. Will be in touch about the Feb dates soon.

4–9 Nov 2022 **Overall rating 4** Fantastic property. Nice and quiet location. Thank you for a lovely stay and having such a well stocked property.

24–26 Oct 2022 **Overall rating 5** Beautiful cottage in a very quiet location. Extremely clean with good selection of teas, coffees,

breakfast items, etc. Lovely walled garden. Warm, cosy, tastefully furnished with eco products available to use.

21–24 Oct 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Lovely stay in a gorgeous village & super property! Very well-equipped. Thank you. Private note from Alexandra Thank you so much for everything. You leave the best goodies we've ever experienced at an Air BnB rental!

12–15 Oct 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) A real find for anyone who wants some peace, some pampering and easy access to the wonders of Ely, Peterborough and the Fens. Hilary has mastered the ability to make you feel welcome and even cossetted. The location was delightful, the entire property is superbly equipped, unless of course you need a TV. A haven in the Fens that it would be foolish to pass by. Private note from Timothy Thank you for all your kindnesses to us. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. The absence of a TV was a blessing as too was the abundance of goodies left around the apartment. The garden was a delight, at this time of year, with its peace and wonderfully 'chaotic' plantings.

30 Sept – 2 Oct 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) The hosts had thought of EVERYTHING. A home from home. So cosy and peaceful. Wonderful.

23–25 Sept 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Everything was perfect, great location for our weekend away. The accommodation was spotless throughout and Hilary was on hand to answer all of our questions before we arrived. Thank you so much.

16–18 Sept 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) This was our second visit to the Old School House! We absolutely love to come here, it's a perfect place to unwind and get away from the stresses of everyday! My husband and I enjoyed a very relaxed stay here for our anniversary, managing to visit Ely Cathedral this time which is amazing! Absolutely recommend staying in this beautiful, tranquil and restful Airbnb! Thanks Hilary for all the thoughtful touches! Private note from Heather - Everything was perfect again Hilary, thanks so much!

9–11 Sept 2022 **Overall rating 5** Such a brilliant stay! The homely atmosphere and the extra touches really made the difference. It was incredibly clean and we were so very impressed with how well equipped it was. The location was excellent and we couldn't have asked for more from Hilary. Brilliant communication and clear instructions for check in / out. Would love to stay again! Private note from Sophie Thanks again for such a lovely stay! Your beautiful home made us feel so comfortable and at home, we were more than happy to return back after exploring the local area. The little touches and extras left for us were especially appreciated!

30 Aug – 2 Sept 2022 **Overall rating 5** Had a lovely time here! Hilary was friendly & helpful, and the location was beautiful and very tidy. Everything we needed was provided.

24–27 Aug 2022 **Overall rating 5** Hilary and Ed's Old Schoolhouse is a gem of a find.. a beautiful house and small courtyard garden. It has everything you could possibly want provided and so many extra goodies too. Hilary and Ed are great hosts...friendly and quick to respond to queries. Great value for money. Easy to drive to Ely (15 mins) and Cambridge. Would definitely return. Private note from Christine We just loved our stay- the house and courtyard garden are beautiful-the perfect place for our short family getaway. Thank you for being such great hosts too!

17–18 Aug 2022 **Overall rating 5** A rare find but a treasure!! The cottage is beautiful, welcoming and homely. Attention to detail and lots of extra touches such as fresh flowers, delicious breakfast ingredients, candles and incense to name a few.... makes this the most wonderful place to stop, relax and enjoy some time away. Thank you Hilary for being such an amazing host. Private note from Kerrie As we said in the visitors book, just thank you Hilary for making us so welcome. The cottage is beautiful and all the extra touches make this a real treat, we will definitely come back!! X

5–8 Aug 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Fantastic and comfortable accommodation. very well equipped kitchen, quiet and peaceful location. very happy to recommend!

24–30 Jul 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Lovely house in a peaceful and relaxing location. The kitchen was so well equipped, and had anything you could possibly want. Loved all the little extra food goodies and the beautiful bouquet of gladioli. Private note from Katherine Thank you so much for all the little extras - it felt so welcoming!

16–17 Jul 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Lovely location to stay when visiting Ely

8–11 Jul 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Great place to stay for a quiet relaxing stay close to Ely and Cambridge.

5–7 Jul 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Great stay, looking forward to coming back again this week!

23–27 Jun 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) We very much enjoyed our stay at the Old School House. It was perfect for our needs and the location was perfect for what we needed to do in the area. It was very quiet and attractively tucked away with a delightful courtyard garden. We loved it.

17–19 Jun 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) A charming place to stay and very kind hosts!

7–12 Jun 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) The Old School cottage is truly a home from home. It is so quiet and a pleasant setting. The owner is helpful and not intrusive. It is truly charming and relaxing experience. Loved it....Private note from Kevin Hi Hilary - once again thanks for such a warm and wonderful stay in the cottage. Stephen & I both loved it -. It is such a home from home, easy to settle in and a joy. Good luck with future bookings and with your additional renovation.

3–5 Jun 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) We had such a wonderful stay in this gorgeous cottage. We absolutely loved all the features and cool decor and the garden was lovely to sit outside and enjoy the peaceful setting. We couldn't believe it when we arrived to a kitchen stocked with a lovely selection of breakfast foods (croissants, fruit, cereal and much more!). Everything was perfect, and we both agreed the bed was one of the comfiest beds we have ever slept in. We will definitely be recommending the place to friends and are hoping to return some time. Absolutely gorgeous!

20–22 May 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) This was our second stay at the Old School and it was just as charming as the first! Again arrival was by bike and train- lovely to have easy cycling routes and Ely so accessible.

7–10 May 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Characterful, comfortable and peaceful place to stay, with a warm welcome, and many generous touches by Hilary. A lovely sheltered courtyard garden, and a friendly village pub. This is an Airbnb we'd definitely stay in again if in the area. Private note from Gill Hilary Thanks again for a lovely stay, and all that you provided for us so thoughtfully. I loved the flowers from the garden. The Old School was a great place to stay, and it was lovely to meet you. Chris & Gill

29 Apr – 2 May 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) Probably the best Airbnb we've stayed in to date. Hilary has thought of everything, including welcoming touches. The property was very well equipped, clean, warm, comfortable & stylish - a joy to stay in. The location was ideal for visiting Ely, Cambridge & the fens, yet tucked away in a peaceful village setting. We highly recommend & hope to stay again next time we're visiting the area. Private note from Helen Thank you Hilary for all the thoughtful & welcoming touches, particularly appreciated after a long journey. We were immediately impressed on entering the School House. You've done a wonderful job with it. It was perfect for

our visit to Ely, in terms of location & facilities. We hope to stay again in the future. Helen & Chris

23–25 Apr 2022 **Overall rating 5** This was one of those times an airbnb cottage actually beat our expectations versus what was advertised. Everything about the cottage was well thought of and very clean. It's functionally way more spacious than it's actual size. Host was very accommodating. Good value and definitely recommend. Private note from Fope Thanks for being very flexible and accommodating with our check in/out. My wife really appreciated it.

4–17 Apr 2022 **Overall rating 5** A beautiful cottage, just the place to escape and relax. Private note from Lois Thank you for a wonderful break. We would love to visit again.

9–11 Apr 2022 **Overall rating 5** We loved staying at the Old School - very comfortable and homely with so many extra touches. Hilary had left a fantastic choice of things for breakfast and the kitchen was really well equipped with everything we could possibly need. The cottage was warm and cosy with plenty of hot water and an excellent shower. The little garden at the back was delightful. Downstairs, the cottage is very spacious and the mezzanine bedroom is cleverly organised with plenty of storage space. There is no dishwasher or TV but we survived without them and it was an excellent opportunity to settle down in the comfy sitting room with a good book. The directions and check in instructions were easy to follow. It was only a 10 minute drive into Ely. Private note from Debbie Everything was lovely. We appreciated the fresh flowers, plants and all the little extra touches. Thank you.

18–20 Mar 2022 **Overall rating 5** Fantastic spot. Great for Cambridge, Ely and St Ives. Really clean, cosy and set in a lovely village close to the church. This was a second trip there and it was just as nice. Well stocked with everything you need and more. Holly and Mark Private note from Mark We had a lovely stay once again and it

was more than warm enough. Well stocked as always. We will be back. All the best Holly and Mark x

11–14 Feb 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) The perfect countryside break - beautiful location (great for walks/cycling) and house. Great communication from host Hilary, who provided far more than we were expecting (food and drink, maps, and walking route pamphlets) to make our stay excellent. Private note from Jacob Thanks for a wonderful holiday - weather aside, it couldn't have been any better.

3–6 Feb 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) This is a delightful cottage in a peaceful and picturesque village with Ely and other interesting villages within easy reach. Hilary's cottage is warm and cozy and wonderfully well equipped. Hilary laid out a generous selection of tasty treats for our arrival. She responded very quickly to any questions we had and was a wonderful host. We loved our stay here and would highly recommend it to others. Private note from Chris Thanks Hilary - we appreciated the special touches of food and flowers. You've created a lovely cottage and we very much enjoyed our stay. Best wishes, Chris and Cathy

25–26 Jan 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) We had a lovely overnight stay here. The place is very attractive, clean and tidy. Hilary was a great host and the communication was quick and easy. She had provided some nice bits and pieces for breakfast, had fully stocked fruit bowl and there was everything else we needed. Would definitely recommend and would stay here again Private note from Simon Thank you Hilary for the lovely stay we had last night. I enjoyed meeting you and the place was lovely. I hope we left it in a good condition for you. All the best for the future and we may see you again some time. Take care, Simon.

3–4 Jan 2022 [Overall rating 5](#) This is a lovely cottage. We stay in quite a few Airbnb's for work and this is one of the best we have seen. Comfy and cosy. Well equipped and incredibly well stocked for

breakfast. Very helpful host. Private note from Clare Really comfortable Hilary and so well provided for. Thank you and thank you for accommodating the late check out.

28–29 Dec 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) The Old School House was perfect for our overnight stay. We were visiting friends in the next village and it was great to stay so conveniently. The cottage had everything we needed and more. It was great to have breakfast items provided and lots of lovely sweet treats. The bed was very comfortable and the sofa bed worked well for our kids. Highly recommended.

6–10 Dec 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) My time at The Old School was a sheer delight. Hilary was the most charming and considerate of hosts and that set the precedent for my whole stay. The property was very warm and cosy and there was nothing that Hilary had not thought of to make this home from home. There were welcome treats, a very well stocked larder and all the cleaning and personal items you could need but all with the environment and sustainability in mind. This old school has real history but every modern day comfort and the personal touches with furnishings etc were really nice. The bed was beyond comfortable and very snuggly and deserves a special mention. Had Storm Barra not blown in, the garden even in early winter would be a lush place to sit and have a warm drink but I did spend a lot of time standing at the back door watching a rather amusing group of long-tailed tits. Witcham is superbly situated to explore Cambridge, Ely and The Fens but it was just as pleasant to while away an afternoon in the cottage. If you book this you will not be disappointed, so enjoy your stay as I know I did.

19–22 Nov 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) Cannot recommend this little accommodation enough. Hilary's attention to detail was so welcome from toiletries to food supplies. A real gem and I'd definitely return.

12–14 Nov 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) We had such a lovely stay here! It's in a great location, so nice and quiet with only a short drive into Ely. The house is so cute and cozy, we wish we could live there! Can't thank Hilary enough for also providing a few vegan bits for us, made us feel really welcome.

5–7 Nov 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) The School House is just lovely, from the building, to the décor, to the garden, to the warmth and comfort. I can't rate it highly enough. The owner, Hilary, is kind and thoughtful and an all-round good person.

28–30 Oct 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) Hilary's converted school house was an excellent peaceful location. Extremely clean & modern. The touch that we liked was the bits that Hilary had gone out of her way to provide, which can be easily forgotten such as just about everything you would fancy for a first breakfast, shower gel etc. Overall my wife & I had a relaxing base from which to conduct our research into finding our own future retirement location.

16–24 Oct 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) This is a wonderful place: a beautifully crafted conversion of the schoolroom. It's comfortable, warm, well equipped (including lots of books!) and with a lovely small garden, if the weather allows.

12–14 Oct 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) Excellent accommodation, excellent, host, all just excellent.

24–27 Sept 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) The Old School surpassed all our expectations and we had a very happy relaxing stay. Everything is very well thought through and it is a very welcoming and restful place. Hilary provides all the little extra touches from varieties of tea, milk, butter - and vegan alternatives - with fresh fruit and wild flowers on the table and croissants for breakfast. The patio garden is a wonderful spot for reading a book in the sun or shade surrounded by herbs, scented flowers and plants. She and her husband Ed are very hospitable and accommodating. It is a great base for exploring Ely and

the surrounding area and (if we had had longer) Cambridge too. They also provide lots of books and information about local places and their history to browse through. A perfect break!

11–18 Sept 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) Hilary's place is absolutely fantastic - even nicer than the listing, with lots of thoughtful touches which made my stay even better. Its in a peaceful village setting and is comfortable (especially the bed - I slept like a log), and I spent a very happy week there touring the area. Highly and unreservedly recommended.

31 Aug – 3 Sept 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) As others have rightfully said, the accommodation and level to detail is lovely with nice touches all over, Plenty of things to do in the surrounding areas to keep you entertained, the house has a lovely to it, and is fully stocked with lots of nice things, on arrival there was food and snacks aplenty which was nice to see, I would have no worries recommending anyone looking for accommodation in the area to stay here. A++

26–28 Aug 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) The Old School is such a relaxing, light and welcoming house. Though we only had a short stay it was reinvigorating. A well equipped kitchen and well stocked cupboard and fridge added to the convenience and, as others have mentioned, the shower is awesome. Finally real thought has gone into considering the environment in a number of choices! would definitely recommend. I am obsessed with the styling and hygge feeling, felt so relaxing and what a wonderful space and peaceful location! Thank you for the really great check in instructions too!

23–25 Jul 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) The Old School is a cosy, comfortable and idyllic little cottage! We had a wonderful stay in a relaxing little place! The garden was a little flower haven, the bathroom was perfect and the kitchen was so well equipped! Hilary was a fantastic host, keeping all sorts of basics in the kitchen for your stay as well as biscuits, fruit and pastries!! We enjoyed plenty of walks

in the surrounding area and spent the day in Ely which is only 12 minutes drive away! We will definitely be back and would highly recommend to others! Thanks Hillary for letting us stay at The Old School! We had such a lovely stay.

25–28 Jun 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) Excellent countryside location near Ely. Made to feel very welcome Excellent value with lots of thoughtful little extras.

21–23 Jun 2021 [Overall rating 5](#) Spacious converted old school. Light and airy with a beautiful enclosed cottage garden behind. We were also able to store our bikes in a secure lobby next to the accommodation. Shower very good. Hilary very helpful and friendly. We visited Ely and Wicken Fen whilst there.

25–27 Aug 2020 [Overall rating 5](#) Hilarys place is a lovely place to stay. You couldn't ask for more.

17–23 Aug 2020 [Overall rating 5](#) Hilary's place is a ideal location to use to visit Ely/ Newmarket, Cambridge and the area, the property is to a high standard with extra touch's.

10–14 Aug 2020 [Overall rating 5](#) The Old School house was a treat to stay in, very peaceful, particularly in the beautiful back garden. The place has everything you need and feels very well designed as well as eco-friendly which we liked. Loved all the huge original windows and the feel of the space overall. The village is nice and quiet and within a close distance of Ely and Cambridge. Would highly recommend.

4–6 Aug 2020 [Overall rating 5](#) Hillary's place was immaculately clean with everything you need and very thoughtful and welcoming touches. Communication was clear and timely. A great space to explore fenland walks - thank you Hillary.

18–21 Jul 2020 [Overall rating 5](#) Whether you are an active, walking or cycling enthusiast or need a cosy place to read and relax,

Hilary's place is ideal for both. Located within easy reach from London, the converted school accommodation holds a unique charm with everything provided for a comfortable stay. Friendly, exceptionally well equipped, it will bring joy in all seasons and weathers. A scented sun-filled back garden is perfectly suited for al fresco dinners. While trips to surrounding villages add to a sense of discovery and adventure. Memorable and highly recommended. Hilary has gone out of her way to make us feel at home. We will be back.

22–24 Feb 2020 [Overall rating 5](#) Super little hideaway near to Cambs and Ely. Great value, lovely walks in the area.value, lovely walks in the area.

13–21 Feb 2020 [Overall rating 5](#) Lovely old school house, perfect for our week in the Fens. Highly recommended.

18–22 Jan 2020 [Overall rating 5](#) Hilary's place is the perfect little getaway. The old school is full of character and has been turned into a really stylish, cosy space with everything you need, and Hilary went above and beyond to ensure we had a comfortable stay. Highly recommended.

22–24 Dec 2019 [Overall rating 5](#) Very comfortable accommodation in a heritage building. Lovely interior design features. And spotlessly clean. Attentive host, who communicated effectively and added lovely touches, including a good selection of essential (and not so essential) foodstuffs. Our daughter particularly appreciated the pains au chocolat. Private note from Boyd Thanks for being an excellent host.

28 Oct – 8 Nov 2019 [Overall rating 5](#) Beautiful property in lovely settings, equipped extremely well. Would highly recommend staying here. Private note from Jeff Don't change a thing.

22–24 Oct 2019 [Overall rating 5](#) Superb, ALL the little extra touches, you were short of nothing.

18–20 Oct 2019 [Overall rating 5](#) Hilary's place is the perfect spot to explore a really beautiful part of the county. The space itself was clean, stylish and everything we wanted from a getaway; from the wealth of amenities to the thoughtful touches of breakfast, it felt like a home away from home. Before we had even left, we were planning our next visit! Nothing at all to fault - simply perfect.

12–13 Oct 2019 [Overall rating 5](#) Gorgeous space with quality furnishings and thoughtful touches. Spotlessly clean and well equipped. Very comfortable bed and surprisingly comfortable sofa bed. Although the sofa bed is basic Hilary provided a mattress topper for it, and all the bedding is good quality and very comfortable. Sofa bed suitable for two small adults. Lovely breakfast bits and welcome snacks and great communication. Didn't really have a chance to look much around Witcham but it seemed peaceful and a nice escape. Thank you Hilary!

4-11 Oct 2019 [Overall rating 5](#) The Old School is simply lovely. The space is light, very stylish and felt much bigger than expected. There's a really pretty courtyard garden that catches the sun all day. Sheltered enough for a cuppa outdoors, even in October! It's one of the best equipped holiday places I've ever stayed in, and Hilary had added several extra thoughtful touches too: fresh flowers, breakfast supplies, tea, coffee, milk etc. The location is perfect for exploring north Cambridgeshire - lots of birds, lots of water and big, big skies.

12–14 Sept 2019 [Overall rating 5](#) Very spacious accommodation and modern while still being very cute and quaint! The best shower we have had in the 3w we have spent in the UK! I would highly recommend a stay here with Hilary, a gorgeous place with a lovely host and many lovely unexpected touches including some yummy

breakfast goodies. Note that there is no television here but we both enjoyed the opportunity to have some reading time :)

14–28 Sept 2019 **Overall rating 5** Hilary is a fantastic host, made me and my dog Herman feel extremely welcome during our 2 week stay in between house moves. This was a very stressful time for us but Hilary went above and beyond even taking Herman out on her walks. The cottage is lovely, modern and comfortable and has everything you need. There is access from the double doors to an exquisite courtyard garden. The village itself is very friendly and there are excellent walks right on your doorstep. I would definitely recommend The Old School and will stay again when I come back to England.

2–14 Sept 2019 **Overall rating 5** Very spacious accommodation and modern while still being very cute and quaint! The best shower we have had in the 3w we have spent in the UK! I would highly recommend a stay here with Hilary, a gorgeous place with a lovely host and many lovely unexpected touches including some yummy breakfast goodies. Note that there is no television here but we both enjoyed the opportunity to have some reading time :)

31 Aug – 1 Sept 2019 **Overall rating 5** We have just returned from a one night stay in this lovely cottage in the small village of Witcham. Hilary was a lovely and thoughtful host who was available to help if needed and was very welcoming. The cottage was lovely and clean and had everything we needed for a short stay including some yummy food, cleaning products and bathroom products (all eco friendly!). The garden was small but very pretty and a lovely little sun trap with thought given to wildlife. Hilary had really thought about the space and provided lots of little thoughtful touches. It was an easy drive to Ely and we ate at the local village pub in the evening which was nice. I would highly recommend to others.

Appendix 2

Email of support from Landlady of The White Horse Witcham

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Wed, 15 Nov 2023 at 14:03
Subject: Air BnB Witcham
To: [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern
Ref: The old school house, Witcham

I am the owner of the Free house pub in Witcham, The White Horse. We purchased the pub eleven years ago & have yet to earn enough money to withdraw a wage or indeed make a profit. In order to open our doors at all, we rely on businesses such as Air BnB within the village, to boost our weekend takings, with short term customers looking for drinks & pizzas. This Air BnB at the old school is a valuable resource to us; Hilary recommends our establishment in her welcome pack & we often see her guests using the pub as a result. Please take this information into consideration when making your decision.

Regards

[REDACTED]
Sent from my iPhone

