

North Hertfordshire District Council

## Ickleford

### Conservation Area Character Statement



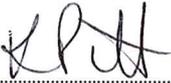
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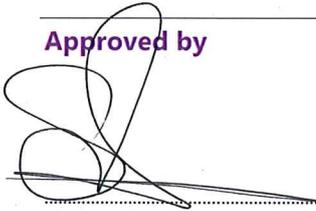
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## Document revisions

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Ickleford Conservation Area was designated by North Hertfordshire District Council in 1979 and has not been amended. The Conservation Area is centred on Arlesey Road, which is the primary thoroughfare running north to south through the village. Its boundary also includes Turnpike Lane, adjoining Arlesey Road in the south, and Chambers Lane, adjoining Arlesey Road in the centre and exiting the village to the west. Ickleford Conservation Area also incorporates several smaller residential streets, such as Duncots Close and Greenfield Lane.
- 1.1.2 Ickleford Conservation Area focusses on the historic core of the village, encompassing the Grade I listed St Katherine's Church (NHLE 1295821), the area of significant green space and trees bisected by Chambers Lane and several historic buildings.
- 1.1.3 This report has been produced for the purpose of appraising the character of Ickleford Conservation Area. It includes a character assessment highlighting key features, a statement of special interest, a list of designated heritage assets, undesignated heritage assets and key views within the Conservation Area, and opportunities for improvement. It is accompanied by an annotated map of the Conservation Area which can be found in Appendix A. This report does not consider potential boundary changes in the Conservation Area.

## 1.2 Setting of Conservation Area

- 1.2.1 Ickleford lies to the north of Hitchin. They are connected by Arlesey Road and Turnpike Lane (which becomes Bedford Road beyond the boundary of Ickleford). The Conservation Area is bounded by the River Purwell to the east and River Oughton to the south. On the southern edge of Ickleford lies an area of informal medieval parkland. Residential development extends beyond the boundary of the Conservation Area to the north until it merges with the small village of Lower Green. Ickleford is separated from additional agricultural fields to the east by the East Coast Mainline railway. The village is surrounded by further agricultural land to the west and north.

## 1.3 Historical Development

- 1.3.1 Although there is no mention of Ickleford in Domesday, it is thought that Ickleford derives its name from where the ancient trackway, the Icknield Way, crosses an unnamed stream. A medieval settlement had been established on the north-western perimeter of modern day Ickleford by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, as evidenced by the construction of the Church of St Katherine (1295821). The village is documented as *Hikleford* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the manor of Ickleford was held by the lords of nearby Priton.
- 1.3.2 The late medieval and post-medieval village of Ickleford remained relatively compact, with buildings largely centred on a double green (e.g. Rose Cottage, 1174443). Additionally, a series of 17<sup>th</sup> century former outbuildings and service ranges associated with Ickleford Manor (e.g. Barn House, 1174426 and Waltham Cottage, 1295767) have been preserved in the south of the Conservation Area where Arlesey Road joins with Turnpike Road.
- 1.3.3 Cartographic sources reveal that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Ickleford had several farmsteads occupying space within the village itself (e.g. Arnolds Farm, 1103232). The layout of the village, clustered around the greens, was evidently created by the fragmentation of a single, larger tract of common

grazing ground adjacent to the River Purwell. The siting of farmsteads close to village centres is typical of settlement encroachment in this area of Hertfordshire.

1.3.4

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century OS mapping illustrates how Ickleford remained rural in character during this period, including extensive allotment gardens and orchards immediately north and south of the village boundary. Although Ickleford has retained much of its historic layout, modern housing has been constructed along both Arlesey Road in the south and an unnamed road off Chambers Lane in the north-western corner of the Conservation Area.

## 2. Character and Special Interest

### 2.1 Character

- 2.1.1 The Conservation Area encompasses a large central area within the village of Ickleford. This frames the village green which is bisected by the Arlesey Road and Chambers Lane. Greenfield Lane marks the north and west edge and the churchyard of St Katharine's church (1295821) and the historic green which now has a short run of houses to the north of the church. As Arlesey Road turns to the south, from the junction with Turnpike Lane, elements of the green survive as a traffic island and as planting to the west side of Arlesey Road. Its current layout reflects the historic settlement pattern of Ickleford dating back to the medieval period, with buildings concentrated along the length of Arlesey Road. Historic buildings appear particularly clustered around the Old Manor Farm (1347058) courtyard complex in the south and Arnolds Farm (1103232) in the north. The Conservation Area can be regarded as a relatively urbanised, densely settled neighbourhood, characterised by an even distribution of historic buildings and modern infill.
- 2.1.2 The streets of Ickleford Conservation Area are one of its key spaces. However, the expansive areas of village green and churchyard, with their trees flanking the main road, provide another aspect of valued village character. These green areas are defined by built up frontages and property boundaries. To the north of the church, a short run of housing backs onto Greenfield Lane. Although these illustrate the urbanised setting of Ickleford, the high level of planting in their gardens also contributes to the green character of this area, and contrasts with the density of historic buildings to the north-west side of Greenfield Lane.
- 2.1.3 There is a concentration of historic listed buildings in the south-west of Ickleford Conservation Area, fronting the southern side of Turnpike Lane. Now converted into cottages (Waltham Cottage, 1295767, the Clock House, 1103231 and Barn House, 1174426), these were outbuildings – stables, a range, clocktower, gatehouse – associated with the original Grade II listed, 17<sup>th</sup> century manor of Ickleford (Old Manor, 1347058). The 16<sup>th</sup> century Old George Inn (1347090) is sited opposite, on the junction between Turnpike Lane and Arlesey Road (Figure 2.1). Also present in this southern area, along the eastern side of Arlesey Road, there is a row of predominantly 20<sup>th</sup> century housing interspersed with occasional 17<sup>th</sup> century cottages (Ivy Cottage, 1174180 and Orchard Cottage, 1103224), enhancing the distinctive mixed historic character of this southern part of Ickleford Conservation Area.
- 2.1.4 The central part of the Conservation Area is less densely occupied. This section is primarily occupied by the Grade I listed Church of St Katherine (1295821) (Figure 2.7), the 16<sup>th</sup> century Old George Inn (1347090). The village green is bounded by Arlesey Road, Greenfield Lane, Ickleford School and the churchyard, and bisected by Chambers Lane. There are single rows of 20<sup>th</sup> century housing sited along both its southern and northern sides. Modern housing occupies the eastern side of Arlesey Road, but this area is not included in the Conservation Area. There is a second concentration of historic buildings occupying the north-western corner of the Conservation Area, in the space between Arnolds Farm and the church (e.g. along Greenfield Lane).
- 2.1.5 Fronting Turnpike Lane in the south, a row of contemporary 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings exhibit a distinctive assortment of sizes (Figure 2.2). This includes a combination of elongated low single storey ranges, one and a half storey stable blocks, two storey gatehouses and an elevated clock tower. Steeply pitched roofs are typically hipped to neighbouring structures creating an attractive group of varied roofscapes. These buildings are also highly visible and situated close to the margin of the street front, presenting an impressive facade upon entering the village along Turnpike Lane.

- 2.1.6 Fronting the eastern side of Arlesey Road, surrounded by modern housing, Ivy Cottage (1174180) is a distinctively symmetrical structure with a W-shaped front, three windows wide, a steep pitched tile roof, exhibiting a gabled central porch (Figure 2.3). By contrast, further along Arlesey Road, to the north, Orchard Cottage (1103224) is a small, one and a half storey cottage with two eyebrow dormers at eaves and a small bay window. Both these 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings are prominent within this area due to their appearance, distinguished from the modern properties elsewhere along Arlesey Road. The modern properties in this area, however, are largely one and a half storey detached houses, displaying low, sloping cat-slide roofs and dormer windows. To some extent, therefore, this retains the cottage-style quality of the area and, unlike the buildings fronting Turnpike Lane, preserves a sense of architectural unity and scale.
- 2.1.7 The organic and loose arrangement of 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings situated around Arnolds Farm (1103232) has preserved the historic character in the north-western corner of the Conservation Area. Arnolds Farm presents its southern gable end facing the road, while the Plume of Feathers public house (1295731) is an unusual T-shaped building exhibiting a later lean-to extension added to its side. These buildings are highly visible, situated close to the road margins, with limited tree or hedgerow screening. Small-scale 20<sup>th</sup> century properties, fronting the western side of Greenfield Lane, are consistent in scale with the earlier 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, one and a half storey houses situated at the southern end of Greenfield Lane (3-5, Church Path, 1174389 and Greenfield Cottage, 1347092), presenting a continuous 'cottage-style' character to this part of the Conservation Area. A series of six terraced properties fronting the northern side of the green are presented as a single, substantial building (1 – 6, Upper Green) (Figure 2.4). Although their greater scale serves to negatively overshadow a neighbouring smaller 16<sup>th</sup> century house (The Cottage, 1174443) (Figure 2.5), the architectural unity of the houses positively contributes to the northern side of the significant green space north of Chambers Lane.
- 2.1.8 Many historic buildings along Turnpike Lane are timber-framed structures, sometimes with brick nogging (e.g. Barn House, 1174426). The walls enclosing the courtyard display impressive Flemish bonded brickwork, accentuating the historic ambience of the south-western part of Ickleford Conservation Area. The timber framing, including original jowled posts, is visible on the front exterior, gable ends and inside the covered carriageway, of Barn House and Waltham Cottage (1295767). The steep hipped, old red tile roofs and dormers with lead sheets further enhance the picturesque element of this courtyard group of buildings.
- 2.1.9 Several large 17<sup>th</sup> century red brick structures, such as the Plume of Feathers and St Katherine's Cottages (1103233) are prominent in the north-western corner of Ickleford Conservation Area. These display steep half-hipped old red tile roofs. The central bay of St Katherine's Cottage maintains part of its originally jettied exterior. The smaller historic houses found at the end of Greenfield Lane are timber-framed, encased in brick, with their exterior's painted. The larger Arnold's Farm (1103232) and public house (1295731) combine with the surrounding smaller vernacular cottages to provide a historic setting to the north-western corner of Ickleford Conservation Area.
- 2.1.10 Green space within the Conservation Area is represented by a small triangular historic green ('Upper Green'), situated at the junction between Arlesey Road and Chambers Lane, and the open approach to Ickleford Primary School (1347059) (Figure 2.6). Although the green has retained its small triangular form, as depicted in the 1880 First Edition OS map bounded by Arlesey Road, it is now surrounded by modern housing to the north and additional modern housing to the south, as well as being bisected by Chambers Lane. The green includes a selection of late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century features (village pump, village sign, commemorative bus shelter) that convey the historic character of Ickleford. There is a heavy coverage of trees planted around the green.
- 2.1.11 A significant number of trees are visible next to Arnolds Farm, down Greenfield Lane, along Chambers Lane and throughout the churchyard. Trees planted along the eastern side of Greenfield

Lane provide a green avenue, complementing the cottage-style feel to this area. Trees and hedgerows also provide soft planted margins to the edges of Chambers Lane. These offer a countryside setting to the north-western margins of Ickleford where the village meets surrounding agricultural land. The dense planting around the green is obvious when entering the village along Arlesey Road from the north and clearly signifies a disparity with surrounding built up areas.

- 2.1.12 The Conservation Area incorporates several roads: namely, Arlesey Road, Turnpike Lane, Chambers Lane and Greenfield Lane. The southern side of Turnpike Lane is defined by the elevations of historic buildings fronting the margins of the roadside. Arlesey Road, by contrast, is fronted by a pair of historic buildings which are well set back from the roadside and flanked by well-spaced out modern housing, effectively breaking up the road frontage.
- 2.1.13 There is a prevalence for low brick boundary walls and a general lack of soft roadside margins in the centre of the Conservation Area. An urban setting is further illustrated by the wide, paved and extensively painted surface of Arlesey Road. The road contains frequent street furniture in the form of road signs, bus signs and street lights. By contrast, Chambers Lane and Greenfield Lane in the north-western corner of Ickleford, are narrow country lanes with greener margins. Here, the buildings and tree coverage front directly onto the lanes, creating a sense of enclosure and conveying a more rural setting to this area.

## 2.2 Statement of Special Interest

- 2.2.1 The streets, fronted by clusters of historic buildings, are an important part of Ickleford's character.
- 2.2.2 Trees within the conservation area significantly also contribute to its special interest. This includes groups in and around the churchyard of St Katherine (1295821), to the east and west of Chambers Lane and to the south side of Arlesey Road. To the south of the junction with Turnpike Lane, the small area of green west of Arlesey road and bounded by wall of Ickleford Manor complex is softened in views by the presence of tree planting.
- 2.2.3 There is a strong historic character to the south-western part of the Conservation Area, which includes a historic 17<sup>th</sup> century courtyard complex associated with the original manor of Ickleford. Exposed timber frames with brick infill, as well as the distinctive variety in scale of the outbuildings that directly front onto the roadside, positively contribute to this area.
- 2.2.4 There is a countryside, 'cottage-style' feel to the historic timber framed and brick buildings located in the north-western part of the Conservation Area. The small green, narrow lanes and their tree and hedgerow-lined margins positively reflect a rural village edge surrounded by agricultural land.

## 3. Key Assets and Views

### 3.1 Designated Heritage Assets

#### Listed Buildings

List Entry	Name	Grade	NGR
1347058	The Old Manor, 1 Yew Tree Lodge, and remains of former manor house adjoining to west	II	TL 18223 31500
1347059	Old south range of Ickleford School	II	TL 18315 31797
1347090	The Old George Inn	II	TL 18223 31578
1347092	Greenfield Cottage	II	TL 18194 31652
1174180	Ivy Cottage	II	TL 18287 31523
1174389	3-5, Church Path	II	TL 18216 31639
1174426	Barn House	II	TL 18241 31542
1174443	The Cottage	II	TL 18277 31745
1295724	Gateway and frontage wall to Ickleford School	II	TL 18334 31737
1295731	Plume of Feathers Public House	II	TL 18209 31742
1295754	The Old Manor Cottage	II	TL 18233 31508
1295767	Waltham Cottage	II	TL 18192 31505
1295821	Church of St Katherine (Church of England)	I	TL 18240 31641
1103224	Orchard Cottage	II	TL 18281 31543
1103226	Rose Cottage	II	TL 18372 31777
1103231	The Clock House	II	TL 18211 31509
1103232	Arnolds Farm	II	TL 18221 31764
1103233	St Katherines Cottages	II	TL 18213 31715

## 3.2 Non-designated Heritage Assets

### Buildings of Local Interest

- 3.2.1 Recommendations for buildings to be included on North Hertfordshire's Register of Buildings of Local Interest will be included in the Summary Report at the conclusion of the project.

### Buildings or Features that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area

- 3.2.2 The following non-designated buildings and features are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of Ickleford Conservation Area. These have been selected for the contribution they make to the townscape of the Conservation Area.
- 1, Greenfield Lane
  - 2, Greenfield Lane
  - 7, St Katherine's Cottages, Greenfield Lane
  - 32a, Arlesey Road
  - 44 (Elmwood), Arlesey Road
  - 1 – 6, Upper Green
  - The 'Hertfordshire' Fingerpost on the road island between Turnpike Lane and Arlesey Road.

## 3.3 Key Views

- 3.3.1 A number of key views have been identified within Ickleford Conservation Area, as follows:
- View north up Turnpike Lane from southern boundary of Conservation Area. This key view highlights 17<sup>th</sup> century historic outbuildings directly fronting the edge of the road. The disparity in the heights of the rooflines present a historic quality to the street frontage (KV1);
  - View of village green from junction of Arlesey Road and Chambers Lane, looking west. The view highlights the dense planting forming the rural village quality for this part of the Conservation Area (KV2);
  - View from Chambers Lane, looking south-east from exit of Conservation Area. View shows the relatively rural character of this area, with trees and hedgerow opposite listed Plume of Feathers public house (1295731). The densely planted village green is in the distance. This part of Ickleford is consistent with the countryside setting beyond Conservation Area boundary (KV3).
  - View looking north along Arlesey Road from the junction of Arlesey Road and Turnpike Lane (KV4).

## 4. Opportunities for Improvement

4.1.1 There are several opportunities for improvement within the Ickleford Conservation Area, as follows:

- The loss of trees or hedging for parking access or increases of areas of hard standing within the Conservation Area, especially along Chambers Lane, should be resisted.
- Parking access to properties along the roads in Ickleford should be designed to reflect the rural character of the central area along Chambers Lane, avoiding extensive use of modern brick retaining walls, reducing hard surfacing and ensuring visibility splays are in character with surrounding property boundary treatments.
- Options should be considered to reduce parking around the margins of the green and the damage it causes to the edges of the grassed areas.
- Signage within the core of the village and around the green should be examined to see where it can be rationalised to improve views and the amenity of the green.

## 5. Bibliography

Online mapping from National Museum of Scotland <<https://maps.nls.uk/>>

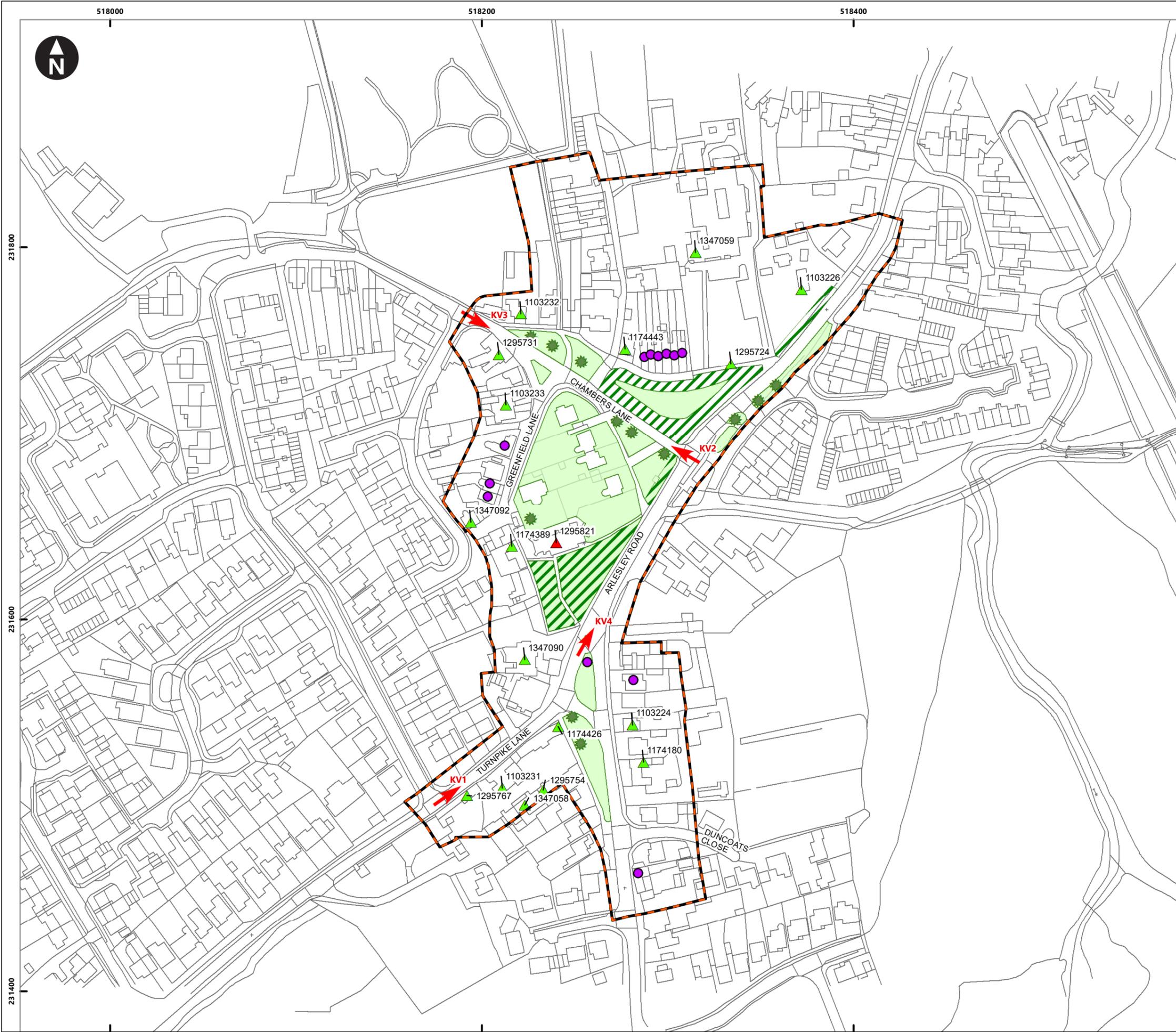
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# Appendix A

## Conservation Area Map





Key

- Conservation area
- Listed Buildings**
- Grade I
- Grade II\*
- Grade II
- Scheduled ancient monument
- Historic parks and gardens
- Heritage at risk
- Significant key view
- Building or feature that contributes to the character of the Conservation area
- Significant areas of trees
- Significant tree
- Significant green space
- Significant blue space

Note:  
The Historic England GIS data contained in this material was obtained on 26/06/2019. The most publicly available up to date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from <http://www.historicengland.org.uk>

0 25 50 75 100 m  
Scale at A3: 1:2,000  
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Client

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**



North Hertfordshire District Council  
Conservation Area Character Statement

**Ickleford**

June 2020



# Appendix B

## Photographs

### B.1 Character Photographs



Figure 2.1 The Old George Inn (1347090), a 16<sup>th</sup> century public house which occupies a position on the junction of Turnpike Lane and Arlesey Road, near the centre of the Conservation Area (looking west).



Figure 2.2 Non-uniformity of 17<sup>th</sup> century roof lines fronting Turnpike Lane, created by combination of elongated low single storey ranges (Barn House, 1174426), one and a half storey stable blocks, two storey gatehouses (Waltham Cottage, 1295767) and an elevated clock tower (The Clock House, 1103231) (looking south-east).



Figure 2.3 Ivy Cottage (1174180) a 17<sup>th</sup> century, near symmetrical fronted structure, distinguished by being surrounded by modern housing along Arlesley Road (looking east).



Figure 2.4 A series of six terraced properties fronting the northern side of the green are presented as a single, substantial building (1–6, Upper Green) (looking north).



Figure 2.5 A 16<sup>th</sup> century diminutive house (The Cottage, 1174443) fronting the northern side of the village green. Included in this photograph is the leftmost portion of 1-6 Upper Green (Figure 2.4), clearly overshadowing the smaller property (looking north).



Figure 2.6 The Grade II listed frontage wall to Ickleford Primary School (1295724). The school, with the same flint and red brick dressing is visible in the background. The shield over the gateway reveals a construction date of 1848. The wall and gateway positively contribute to the setting of the village green. The open approach to the school complements the green and provides one of the few open spaces in the centre of Ickleford.



Figure 2.7 The Grade I listed Church of St Katherine (1295821), from Arlesey Road to the south (top) (looking north-west) and of its tower from Church Path to the west (bottom) (looking north-east).

## B.2 Key Views



KV1: View north up Turnpike Lane from southern boundary of Conservation Area. This key view highlights 17<sup>th</sup> century historic outbuildings directly fronting the edge of the road. The disparity in the heights of the rooflines present a historic quality to the street frontage.



KV2: View of village green from junction of Arlesey Road and Chambers Lane, looking north. The view highlights the dense tree cover that characterises the rural village quality for this part of the Conservation Area.



KV3: View from Chambers Lane, looking south-east from exit of Conservation Area. View shows the relatively rural character of this area, with trees and hedgerow opposite listed Plume of Feathers public house (1295731). The densely planted village green is in the distance. This part of Ickleford is consistent with the countryside setting beyond the Conservation Area boundary.



KV4: View looking north along Arlesley Road, with the church to the west of the road, taken from the Old George Inn, north of the junction of Arlesley Road and Turnpike Lane.

**wood.**

