

Heritage Statement

Site:

Henley Cricket Club, Matson Drive, Remenham, Henley on Thames, RG9 3DB

Date:

June 2026

1 Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the installation of safety netting, approximately 10 metres in height, along the western boundary of Henley Cricket Club adjacent to Remenham Lane. The proposed development is required to improve safety for neighbouring properties, road users, and surrounding land by preventing cricket balls from leaving the site.

The statement assesses the significance of nearby designated heritage assets and considers the potential impact of the proposal on their setting. It has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Policy TB24 of the Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.

2 Site and Surroundings

Henley Cricket Club is located to the east of Henley-on-Thames within the rural area outside defined settlement limits and within the Green Belt. The site comprises an established recreational landscape centred around a cricket pitch, with built facilities positioned primarily along the northern boundary.

The western edge of the site runs parallel with Remenham Lane and is defined by a mature hedgerow and tree belt, which forms a strong vegetated boundary between the cricket ground and the public highway. This boundary also aligns with the edge of the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area.

To the south-west of the site lies The Little Angel Public House, a Grade II listed building situated at the junction of Remenham Lane and White Hill. The wider area includes the designated Park Place and Temple Combe Registered Park and Garden, which contributes to the historic landscape context.

3. Description of Proposed Development

The proposal consists of the installation of safety netting supported by slender vertical posts reaching approximately 10 metres in height. The posts would be set at regular intervals along the western boundary of the cricket ground, forming a continuous protective barrier parallel to Remenham Lane.

Importantly, the netting is intended to be operable and would be lowered when not in use, with the potential for seasonal removal or storage outside the cricket season. This temporary and reversible characteristic forms a key element of the design approach.

The materials are expected to be lightweight, with posts finished in a recessive colour such as dark green to minimise visual prominence within the landscape

4. Heritage Assets and Significance

The site lies in proximity to several designated heritage assets, the significance of which derives largely from their historic setting, landscape character, and visual relationships.

The Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area is characterised by its rural edge setting, strong vegetation boundaries, and its relationship to the River Thames corridor. Its significance is particularly sensitive to visual intrusion, vertical structures, and changes to its open, semi-rural character.

The Little Angel Public House, a Grade II listed building, derives its significance from its historic fabric, architectural character, and its contribution to the local streetscape. Its setting is influenced by its immediate surroundings, including boundary vegetation and the road junction context.

The wider historic landscape, including Park Place and Temple Combe, contributes to the broader heritage significance of the area, although its relationship to the site is more distant.

5. Visual Appraisal

The visual assessment of the site is informed by a series of street-level images. These images provide a reliable representation of existing conditions along Remenham Lane over time and form an appropriate basis for understanding public views.

The images demonstrate that the site boundary is currently characterised by a continuous hedgerow and mature trees, forming a strong green edge that limits views into the cricket ground. While this vegetation provides effective screening during the summer months, visibility becomes more open in winter when deciduous trees lose their leaves.

Views along Remenham Lane are predominantly linear and contained, with the boundary vegetation creating a consistent enclosure. The presence of occasional infrastructure elements, such as utility poles, indicates that vertical features are not entirely absent from the streetscape.

At the junction with White Hill, views toward the cricket ground are limited by dense evergreen planting, which screens the site from the immediate setting of The Little Angel public house.

Overall, evidence confirms that while the site is visible from public viewpoints, it is generally experienced as part of a vegetated edge rather than an open landscape.

6. Assessment of Impact on Heritage Assets

The proposed development introduces a series of slender vertical posts extending above the existing vegetation line. As a result, these elements would be visible in certain views along Remenham Lane, particularly during winter months when natural screening is reduced.

In relation to the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area, the introduction of these vertical elements would result in a degree of visual change to the character of the boundary. The currently soft, green edge would be supplemented by intermittent vertical structures, which may be perceived as additional visual clutter in some views. However, the lightweight nature of the netting, the spacing of the posts, and their recessive colouring would limit their prominence.

The Council's Built Heritage Officer has concluded that the proposal would give rise to less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area, at the lower end of that spectrum. This assessment is supported by the reversible nature of the development and the presence of existing vertical features within the streetscape.

In respect of the Grade II listed Little Angel public house, the impact is assessed as neutral. The strong boundary vegetation between the site and the building effectively limits intervisibility, ensuring that the setting and significance of the listed asset are preserved.

The wider Registered Park and Garden is sufficiently distant and visually separated such that the proposal would have no meaningful impact on its significance.

7. Mitigation and Design Response

The design of the proposal incorporates several mitigation measures that reduce its impact on heritage significance. The ability to lower or remove the netting when not in use ensures that the development is not permanently visually intrusive, thereby preserving openness and reducing long-term impact.

The slender construction of the posts avoids bulk and massing, ensuring that views remain largely unobstructed. The use of a recessive colour further reduces visibility, allowing the structures to blend with the surrounding vegetation.

Opportunities exist to further minimise impact through careful detailing and alignment with existing planting patterns.

8. Planning Policy Context

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard is paid to preserving the setting of listed buildings, while Section 72 requires attention to the character and appearance of conservation areas.

The NPPF requires that harm to heritage assets is clearly identified and weighed against public benefits. Where harm is less than substantial, this balance is a key consideration.

Policy TB24 of the Wokingham Local Plan supports the conservation of designated heritage assets, including their setting, while allowing for development where harm is appropriately justified.

9. Planning Balance and Public Benefits

The proposal delivers clear and demonstrable public benefits. It enhances safety for neighbouring residents and highway users by reducing the risk of cricket balls leaving the site. It also supports the continued use and viability of a long-established recreational facility, contributing to community wellbeing and outdoor sport.

These benefits align with local and national planning policy, which supports outdoor recreation in rural areas.

When weighed against the identified low level of less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area, the balance is firmly in favour of the proposal.

10. Conclusions

The proposed safety netting represents a modest and largely reversible intervention within the landscape setting of Henley Cricket Club. While it will introduce visible vertical elements along the boundary with Remenham Lane, the resulting impact on the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area is limited and falls within the category of less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale.

There is no harm to the setting of the Grade II listed Little Angel public house, and no impact on the wider historic landscape.

The design incorporates effective mitigation measures, and the development delivers clear public benefits relating to safety and recreation.

Accordingly, the proposal is fully compliant with national and local heritage policy, and the identified harm is clearly outweighed by the benefits of the scheme.

Appendix: Viewpoint Analysis

The viewpoints have been selected to assess:

- Visibility of the proposed netting from public receptors
- Relationship with the Conservation Area boundary
- Intervisibility with The Little Angel (Grade II)
- Perception of the site within the wider rural landscape setting

Viewpoints are focused along Remenham Lane and key publicly accessible positions.

Viewpoint 1 – Remenham Lane (Looking North)

Location: Southern section of Remenham Lane adjacent to The Little Angel

Receptor: Pedestrians and road users

Sensitivity: Medium–High (Conservation Area edge)

Description:

View northwards along Remenham Lane with the cricket ground to the east. Boundary vegetation (hedgerow and trees) forms a strong visual edge.

Assessment:

- Proposed posts would be visible above vegetation line
- Visibility increases in winter months (leaf-off conditions)
- Would introduce vertical elements into existing semi-rural roadside scene

Effect: Low-level less than substantial harm to Conservation Area setting.

Viewpoint 2 – Remenham Lane (Looking South)

Location: Midpoint along western site boundary

Receptor: Pedestrians, cyclists, drivers

Sensitivity: Medium

Description:

Linear view southwards showing the cricket ground boundary and vegetation corridor.

Assessment:

- Net posts would appear intermittently along boundary
- Would be read alongside existing vertical elements (e.g. utility poles)

- Visual impact reduced by spacing and slender form

Effect: Minor visual change; neutral to slight adverse effect.

Viewpoint 3 – Junction of White Hill / Remenham Lane

Location: Outside The Little Angel public house

Receptor: High sensitivity (heritage asset setting)

Description:

View across junction towards cricket ground boundary.

Assessment:

- Existing evergreen vegetation screens views into the site
- Limited or filtered visibility of proposed netting
- Listed building not visually dependent on open views into the site

Effect: No harm to the setting of the Grade II listed building.

Viewpoint 4 – Within Cricket Ground (Looking West)

Location: Internal view from pitch area toward Remenham Lane

Receptor: Club users (low heritage sensitivity)

Description:

Open view toward site boundary and roadside vegetation.

Assessment:

- Netting would be seen as functional sports infrastructure
- In keeping with recreational character of the site

Effect: Neutral (no heritage harm)

Viewpoint 5 – Wider Landscape View (White Hill / Elevated Position)

Location: Elevated section of White Hill

Receptor: Public viewpoints toward Conservation Area and countryside
Sensitivity: Medium

Description:

Wider contextual view across treed landscape including cricket ground.

Assessment:

- Visibility of netting limited by distance and vegetation
- Would not interrupt key long-distance views
- No effect on Registered Park and Garden setting

Effect: Negligible impact.