

Parish:	Upwell	
Proposal:	Retrospective application for external cladding to building facade	
Location:	The Old Barn, 71 School Road, and The Stables, 71A School Road, Upwell PE14 9EW.	
Applicant:	Ms Caroline Parsons	
Case No:	25/01308/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Tabitha Kaye	Date for Determination: 2 October 2025 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 7 November 2025

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Call in by Cllr Spikings - issues of wider concern.

Neighbourhood Plan: Yes

Case Summary

The application seeks retrospective full planning permission for external cladding to properties Old Barn, 71 School Road, and The Stables, 71A School Road, under section 73(A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The site accommodates two semi-detached, two storey dwellings, The Old Barn (71 School Road) and The Stables (71A School Road) and is located within the Upwell Conservation Area. The properties are identified as important unlisted ('non designated') heritage assets.

Key Issues:

Principle of Development
Form and Character (and Impact on Heritage Assets)
Neighbour Amenities
Climate Change Mitigation
Any other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of the application.

Recommendation REFUSE.

THE APPLICATION

The site accommodates two semi-detached, double-storey dwellings: 71 and 71A School Road. Both properties front School Road and are sited in a prominent position within the School Road section of the Upwell Conservation Area. As such, there are long views of the side (north) and principal elevations of no.71 from the north direction, looking south.

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for the installation of external 'Cedral Lap Horizontal' cladding to both properties. 'Ocean blue' coloured cladding has been installed to the side (north) and principal (west) elevations of no.71 School Road. White coloured cladding has been installed to the principal (west) elevation of no.71A School Road.

SUPPORTING CASE

None received.

PLANNING HISTORY

10/01016/F: Application Permitted: 03/08/10 - Two Storey Extension to Dwelling - The Stables.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: SUPPORT.

The Upwell Parish Council Planning Group support this application in principal but would like to see the white cladding replaced with a more toned-down colour. The current white cladding creates a very stark appearance/contrast against the adjoining blue/grey cladding, and in the Planning Group's view does not compliment the street scene. A vast majority of existing painted render dwellings in the vicinity are detached so are one colour, but it is appreciated that this effort has been to identify two different dwellings.

Conservation: OBJECTION.

The building in question is shown as being an important unlisted building within the Upwell Conservation Area Appraisal document. This means that the buildings external appearance contributes positively to the street scene. This could be said to be particularly true for number 79 School Road, that externally, before being clad, was visibly constructed from the typical gault brick that is characteristic of Upwell.

The cladding is cedral cladding, fibre cement board cladding which is not appropriate for use within a conservation area. While the retention of appearance of two cottages is appreciated, the blue cladding is particularly jarring within the traditionally constructed street scene.

We are not convinced either that the introduction of the cladding will be the best method of keeping out damp as it traps the damp behind the cladding leaving it unable to be released. Other more traditional methods of damp remediation are available and could be utilised in this context.

As the development does not use materials which are appropriate to the local context (LP20 11B), the application fails to accord with Policy LP20 of the Local Plan.

It is therefore with regret that the conservation team object to this application as it would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area as a designated heritage asset and therefore paragraph 215 of the NPPF should also be given consideration in the decision making process.

REPRESENTATIONS: THREE representations in **SUPPORT**. Comments summarised below:

- Visual enhancement / positive contribution to street scene;
- Original fenestrations have been retained;
- Improved resilience of building(s);
- Improved insulation and noise reduction for occupiers.

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK LOCAL PLAN 2021-2040

LP06 - Climate Change (Strategic Policy)

LP18 - Design & Sustainable Development (Strategic Policy)

LP20 - Environmental Assets- Historic Environment (Strategic Policy)

LP21 - Environment, Design and Amenity (Strategic Policy)

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

Housing Policy H3: Design

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Design Guide 2021

OTHER GUIDANCE

Upwell Conservation Area Character Statement 2010

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Form and Character (and Impact on Heritage Assets)
- Neighbour Amenity
- Climate Change Mitigation

Principle of Development: Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) reiterates the requirements of planning law which is that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this instance the Development Plan comprises of the newly adopted Local Plan (2021-2040) and the Upwell Neighbourhood Plan (UNP), adopted 2021.

This application has been made under section 73(A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (hereafter 'the Act 1990'). Section 73(A) enables planning permission to be granted for development carried out before the date of the application ('retrospective'). This applies to *development carried out – (a) without planning permission; (b) in accordance with planning permission granted for a limited period; or (c) without complying with some condition subject to which planning permission was granted.*

In the context of this application, the installation of external cladding was carried out without planning permission. The site is located within the Upwell Conservation Area and is not subject to an Article 4 direction. Notwithstanding this, the use of cladding ('improvement or other alteration') would not be permissible under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A(2) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015(as amended): *In the case of a dwellinghouse on article 2(3) land, development is not permitted by Class A if — (a) it would consist of or include the cladding of any part of the exterior of the dwellinghouse.* Conservation Areas are within the definition of Article 2(3) land. Therefore, planning permission for the installation of external cladding is required.

Form and Character (and Impact on Heritage Assets): Development Plan Policies LP18 and LP21 outline the importance of high-quality development which responds positively to the character of the locality in scale, siting and use of materials, as is reiterated by Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024).

Policy H3 of the UNP contextualises this for Upwell, stating that development should be sympathetic to the distinctive character of Upwell and the Upwell Conservation Area.

The site is located well within the southern part of the Upwell Conservation Area boundary. The Upwell Conservation Area Character Statement identifies 71 and 71A School Road as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA) which contribute to the distinct character of the Conservation Area.

Impact on the Upwell Conservation Area (Designated Heritage Asset): Policy LP20 outlines that new development should seek to conserve the character of Conservation Areas, which is commensurate with the LPA's statutory duty to preserve and enhance the character of Conservation Areas, as outlined by s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Paragraph 208 of the NPPF outlines the LPA's duty to identify and assess the impact of a development upon the significance of a heritage asset.

As outlined by the Upwell Conservation Area Character Statement, the significance of the designated asset, with particular regard to School Road, can be attributed to the use of vernacular materials. Gault brick -the main material of 71 School Road- is cited by the Character Statement as being a prevailing vernacular material. Cedar cladding is not characteristic of the Upwell Conservation Area.

Specifically, Paragraph 11 of Policy LP20 states that development within Conservation Areas will only be permitted where the proposal: *(a) is of a design and scale that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area; (b) uses building materials and finishes (...) that are appropriate to the local context; (d) does not harm important views into, out of or within the Conservation Area.*

Taking the contribution of vernacular materials into account, the loss of gault brick from the street scene, caused by the introduction of a material which is incongruous with the character of the Upwell Conservation Area, is contrary to paragraphs 11(a) and 11(b) of LP20.

Properties to the north of the site are set back from the highway, meaning that there are long views of the side (north) and principal elevations of no.71 from the north direction, looking south. As such, the cladding -particularly to the northern elevation- is highly visible and harms views into the Conservation Area, as is contrary to paragraph 11(d).

For these reasons, the development causes less than substantial harm to the significance of the Upwell Conservation Area (as confirmed by the Conservation Officer). Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that *where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.*

The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) explains that the cladding was introduced to both properties to provide insulation 'to assist with property performance and damp issues'; specifically, to the principal and north elevations of no.71, where damp issues were most prevalent. The Client Supporting Letter states that the cladding provided noise insulation for the occupiers. The benefits outlined above are considered to be private benefits to the owner and occupiers. As such, the cladding does not provide sufficient public benefit to outweigh the harm caused to the significance of the Upwell Conservation Area.

It should be noted that existing examples of alternative colours (including blue), as well as cladding, along School Road have been considered in the officer assessment.

No.73 School Road has a painted brick façade in the colour of light blue. No.73 is also within the Upwell Conservation Area. Schedule 2, Part 2, Class C of the Order 2015 states that 'the painting of the exterior of any building or work' is permitted development, providing that the painting is not for the purposes of advertisement, announcement or direction'. Class C does not impose any restrictions for painting the exterior within Article 2(3) land. Therefore, the painting of the exterior of 73 School Road is permitted development and not a consideration in the determination of this application.

No.123 School Road, which is located outside of, but adjacent to, the Upwell Conservation Area boundary, features light blue cladding at first floor level of the principal elevation. There is no record of express planning permission for the installation of cladding. Google Maps street view demonstrates that cladding was installed between August 2011 and March 2019. Prior to the cladding, the principal elevation of the property was rendered entirely. Notwithstanding the question of lawfulness, this example has not been given significant weight in the determination of this application as the application of the cladding was unauthorised and outside of the Upwell Conservation Area boundary.

The pertinent issues of this application remain to be the additional harm sustained to the significance of the Upwell Conservation Area, and that it is the LPA's statutory duty to preserve the significance of Conservation Areas. While every application is assessed on its individual merit, the LPA would find it difficult to resist similar developments within the Upwell Conservation Area should this application be approved, which would cause further harm to the designated heritage asset.

Impact on 71 and 71A School Road (Non-Designated Heritage Assets): Commensurate with paragraph 216 of the NPPF, Policy LP20 of the Local Plan outlines criteria for assessing the impact a proposal will have upon the significance of a NDHA.

The importance of the site's original, external appearance (specifically, the gault brick on no.71) in forming the significance of the NDHAs is highlighted by the Conservation Officer in their comments. The visual loss of the gault brick adversely impacts the architectural significance of the NDHA, no.71 School Road. However, the main consideration is the harm caused to the significance of the Upwell Conservation Area through the loss of the gault brick and the subsequent introduction of cedar cladding.

Thus, it is concluded that the loss of the vernacular material, gault brick, and the subsequent introduction of cedar cladding, which is incongruous with the character of the Upwell

Conservation Area, causes 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the designated heritage asset, with no demonstrated public benefit. It is to be noted that the loss of gault brick impacts the architectural significance of the non-designated heritage asset, no.71 School Road, also. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Development Plan Policies LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan, Policy H3 of the UNP, as well as paragraphs 135, 208, 215 and 216 of the NPPF.

Neighbour Amenity: Development Plan Policy LP21 stipulates that development should not have an adverse impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residences. Policy LP21 defines amenity as overlooking, overbearing, and overshadowing impacts.

Due to the nature of the development, there are no overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts as a result of the cladding.

Thus, in relation to neighbour amenity, the cladding to 71 and 71A School Road is contrary to Development Plan Policy LP21 in so far as having an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the locality.

Climate Change and Mitigation: In response to the Government target of becoming a net-zero economy by 2050, Development Plan Policy LP06 states that new development shall seek to mitigate the challenges of climate change.

The Conservation Officer comments that the use of cladding is not the most effective way of preventing damp due to the implications it may have upon the historic fabric of the buildings. No evidence has been submitted to suggest that the cladding would prevent damp. Furthermore, the impact of the cladding upon the structural historic fabric of the properties is not a planning consideration. Therefore, it is difficult to suggest that the application would comply with Policy LP06.

CONCLUSION:

Due to the loss of traditional materials -in particular, gault brick- to the north and west elevations of no.71 School Road, the installation of cladding is considered to cause harm to the architectural significance of the NDHA, which is contrary to Policy LP20 of the Local Plan.

Given the contribution of nos. 71 and 71A School Road to the character of the Upwell Conservation Area, the loss of vernacular materials through the installation of cladding is directly contrary to paragraph 11(b) of Policy LP20 and, by extension, has an adverse impact upon views within the Conservation Area. Thus, the external cladding to nos. 71 and 71A School Road causes 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the Upwell Conservation Area with no demonstrated public benefit.

As the external cladding is incongruous with the local character, it is considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the locality. Thus, on grounds of form and character, and impact on heritage assets, the installation of external cladding is contrary to Development Plan Policies LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan, Policy H3 of the UNP, and paragraphs 135, 208, 215 and 216 of the NPPF.

Due to the nature of the development, there are no overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts as a result of the cladding.

No evidence has been submitted to suggest that the cladding would prevent damp. Furthermore, the impact of the cladding upon the structural historic fabric of the properties is

not a planning consideration. Therefore, it is difficult to suggest that the application would comply with Policy LP06.

The proposed development is therefore contrary to the Development Plan policies and NPPF paragraphs outlined above, and it is therefore recommended that this application be refused for the following reason.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE for the following reason:

- 1 Given the contribution of nos. 71 and 71A School Road to the character of the Upwell Conservation Area, the loss of vernacular materials through the installation of cladding is directly contrary to paragraph 11(b) of Policy LP20 and, by extension, has an adverse impact upon views within the Conservation Area. Thus, the external cladding to nos. 71 and 71A School Road causes 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the Upwell Conservation Area with no demonstrated public benefit.

As the external cladding is incongruous with the local character, it is considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the locality.

Thus, on grounds of form and character, and impact on heritage assets, the installation of external cladding is contrary to Development Plan Policies LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan, Policy H3 of the Upwell Neighbourhood Plan, as well as paragraphs 135, 208, 215 and 216 of the NPPF.