



# Planning Statement

DEMOLITION OF A DETACHED DOUBLE GARAGE, WORKSHOP & CARPORT & ERECTION  
OF NEW DWELLING, CHURCH COTTAGE, SCHOOL HILL, OFFCHURCH

N Martyn MRTPI | April 2021

## Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr G Boulding and Mrs L Boulding ('the applicant') to support a planning application that seeks permission for the *demolition of a double garage, carport & workshop and the erection of a new build dwelling, and associated works including a modified access and parking, boundary treatment, landscaping and ancillary development.*

The purpose of this Planning Statement is to demonstrate how the proposal will satisfy both national and local planning policies and in particular those related to the preservation and enhancement of the Offchurch Conservation Area and the openness of the Green Belt.

This will be achieved by assessing the proposal against the site characteristics, relevant national and local plan policies and to demonstrate to the Council why planning permission should be granted.

In addition to this Planning Statement the application is also supported by the following:

- Application form
- Community Infrastructure Levy form;
- Detailed drawings (i.e. Location and Site Plan, Proposed Floor and Elevation Plans, Streetscene, Vehicle tracking plan);
- Heritage Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- An Air Quality Mitigation Statement
- Ecology PreApplication;

## Site Context

Offchurch is a small village approximately three miles east of Leamington Spa. The village is located within the Green Belt and the majority of the village is included within a Conservation Area and the site is classed as being within the Offchurch Infill boundary

The pattern of the village is scattered, comprising pockets of linear development with occasional tandem development. The character of the village is very mixed with a wide range of house types, including bungalows and houses (detached, semi-detached and terraced) from a range of periods. The palette of materials used on dwellings varies wildly from traditional thatch roofs and white render walls to modern red brick and tile roofs.

The village also accommodates a range of plot sizes and plot arrangements. Some dwellings are located immediately adjacent to the highway and others are set back at varying distances.

The application site is located immediately adjacent to Church Cottage which is located towards the northern end of Offchurch on School Hill.

The site is currently ancillary to Church Cottage and accommodates a detached single storey double garage, carport & workshop to the front with hard standing, a summer house and private amenity area to the rear.

The double garage, carport & workshop is set back from School Hill with a driveway to the front.

The ground levels along School Hill fall significantly south to north which means the application site sits significantly lower than the neighbouring property, Merryhill House.

## PLANNING HISTORY

There is no planning history of relevance to the current proposal.

## DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The development involves the demolition of an existing detached double garage, carport & workshop and the erection of a 1.5 storey, three-bedroom dwelling.

The dwelling will be constructed from local Leamington brick with a grey pitched roof, local corbel brick detail and grey aluminum windows.

The existing driveway will be modified to accommodate access and parking for both Church Cottage and the new dwelling. Two spaces will be provided for each property.

## PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires any planning application to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for Warwick District Council (WDC) comprises the WDC Local Plan (Adopted September 2017).

## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Government states that the NPPF is a material consideration (paragraph 2) in the decision-taking process and it should be read as a whole (paragraph 3).

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies the three overarching objectives that will achieve sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. They should be pursued in mutually supportive ways and includes the right type of development in the right places at the right time to support growth, to ensure a sufficient range of homes, support for communities' health, social and cultural well-being and the protection and enhancement of natural, built and historic environments.

Paragraph 38 adds that Councils should reach decisions on proposed development in a “*positive and creative way*” meaning there is a need for it to work proactively with applicants and to approach proposals in a positive way, rather than automatically looking for negative aspects and searching for reasons to refuse a planning application.

Paragraph 47 reiterates planning law, which states that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. We are firmly of the view that the proposal satisfies policy, but that material considerations also exist to further support the proposal.

Paragraph 77 relates to rural housing and states that decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. In this case there is very limited opportunity to provide any new housing within Offchurch unless opportunities such as the site subject of this application is utilised.

It is acknowledged that Offchurch is a relatively small village however paragraph 78 is pertinent where it states that housing in such places can enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. The new dwelling proposed in this application would make a positive contribution to achieving this objective. It continues, stating that “*development in one village may support services in a village nearby.*” It is noted that this can apply to shops and services located in the nearby smaller settlements of Long Itchingdon, Ufton, Hunningham and Weston under Wetherley, as well as other rural businesses located in the surrounding open countryside, and the growth village of Radford Semele.

Paragraph 117 promotes the “*effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment*”. It also promotes making as much use as possible of previously-developed or brownfield land.

Paragraph 124 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and Paragraph 127 adds that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of an area over the lifetime of the development, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change and ensure that a site’s potential to accommodate development is optimised.

Paragraph 189 states applications should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Regarding the above, it should be noted that the application is supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment.

## WARWICK DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

The WDC Local Plan was adopted in September 2017 and sets out the spatial strategy and detailed development management policies for the district from 2011-2029.

Objective A of the Local Plan is *Providing Sustainable Levels of Growth in the District*. Section 2 sets out that the plan will (with emphasis added):

*Provide a sustainable level of housing growth (and balance this with economic growth) to reduce the number of people who are currently homeless or living in unsatisfactory accommodation, to meet future housing needs, and to help deal with the issues of need for affordable housing.*

In respect of the spatial strategy, Policy DS4 sets out the following:

*'The Council's Spatial Strategy focuses growth within and adjacent to built-up areas. The majority of growth is focused on the main urban areas of Warwick, Royal Leamington Spa, Whitnash and Kenilworth and on the southern edge of Coventry. Some further growth is proposed for growth villages in accordance with Policy H1.'*

Policy H1 identifies locations where new housing will be permitted. It includes sites within the boundaries of Limited Infill Villages. Table 3 accompanies the policy and confirms that Offchurch is classed as being a Limited Infill Village. The site subject of this application falls within the defined settlement boundary for Offchurch.

Paragraph 4.7 of the Local Plan acknowledges that limited infill development "*will help to deliver a wider choice of housing and help to support services in any nearby Growth Villages.*"

It is pertinent that other Explanatory Text for Policy H1 found at paragraph 4.8 states:  
*"In the case of Limited Infill Villages lying within the green belt, the type and scale of development will be more restricted. In line with national green belt policy, appropriate development includes: -*

- *rural affordable housing;*
- *limited infill development;*
- *the re-use of buildings;*
- *the redevelopment or partial redevelopment of previously-developed land; and*

- replacement dwellings."

The proposed development is classed as limited infill development and therefore is considered appropriate development under Policy H1.

Due to its Limited Infill designation, proposals for new dwellings within the defined settlement boundary of Offchurch may be permissible provided that they are in accordance with the criteria specified in Local Plan Policy H11 (Limited Infill Housing Development in the Green Belt):

*Policy H11 states:*

*Limited village infill housing development in the Green Belt will be permitted where the site is located within a Limited Infill Village (as shown on the Policies Map) and the following criteria are satisfied:*

- a) *the development is for no more than two dwellings;*
- b) *the development comprises the infilling of a small gap fronting the public highway between an otherwise largely uninterrupted built up frontage, which is visible as part of the street scene; and*
- c) *the site does not form an important part of the integrity of the village, the loss of which would have a harmful impact upon the local character and distinctiveness of the area.*

The main considerations to the criteria set out in Policy H11 (above) are as follows:

Is the site located within the Limited Infill Village boundary? Yes

*Criterion (a)* – The policy defines limited infilling as acceptable as long as the development is for no more than two dwellings. The proposal is only for one dwelling within the infill development boundary of Offchurch. It therefore meets criterion a.

*Criterion (b)* - The policy defines limited infilling as acceptable as long as the development comprises the infilling of a small gap fronting the public highway between an otherwise largely uninterrupted built up frontage, which is visible as part of the street scene.

The proposed dwelling would front a highway and it would be within a largely uninterrupted built up frontage, and visible from and within the street scene.

The buildings along School Hill do not follow a uniform line with Merryhill House positioned much further back from the highway than Church Cottage. The new dwelling

would bridge the gap between these two properties and create a more coherent building line along this section of School Hill. Criterion b would therefore be met.

*Criterion (c)* - The policy defines limited infilling as acceptable as long as the site does not form an important part of the integrity of the village, the loss of which would have a harmful impact upon the local character and distinctiveness of the area.

As justified by the material submitted in support of this application, the development is of high-quality design which would not detract from the character of the village. The site of the new dwelling is presently garden land currently occupied by a detached garage of poor architectural quality. As such it is not considered to be an open space that adds to the character of the village.

The positioning of the dwelling will help establish a more coherent building line along School Hill and as such will not have a harmful impact upon the character of Offchurch. Criterion c is therefore met.

Given the proposed development meets both Policy H1 and H11 within the local plan, it should be considered an appropriate site to accommodate a new dwelling subject to other policy requirements being met.

## OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Development within the Green Belt

The NPPF states that inappropriate development within the Green Belt is harmful by definition and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The NPPF identifies that exceptions to inappropriate development would include limited infilling in villages. As identified above, the proposed dwelling is 'limited infilling' as meets the criteria set out within Local Plan policy H11(b) 'limited infilling'. The proposal therefore falls under exception (e) of paragraph 145, and as such does not require any 'very special circumstances' to be demonstrated. Therefore, the proposal is considered to represent appropriate development within the Green Belt.

### Impact on character of surrounding area and setting of the Conservation Area

The proposed development is located within Offchurch Conservation Area.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Historic Parks within the Offchurch Conservation Area. There are, however, six Listed Buildings. These include;

1. The Church of St Gregory (Grade II\*), Village Street

2. Holly Cottage (Grade II), Welsh Road
3. The Stag Public House (Grade II), Welsh Road
4. Offa House (formerly The Retreat House) (Grade II), Village Street
5. Tudor Cottage (Grade II), Welsh Road
6. Wisteria Cottage (Grade II), Welsh Road.

None of the listed buildings share a visual relationship with the application site. The closest listed building, The stag, is some 30m to the northeast and separated from the site by Church Cottage, School Hill, an agricultural field and tree planting.

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage assets, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Warwick District Local Plan Policy HE1 of the Local Plan expects development proposals to have appropriate regard to the significance of designated heritage assets. Where any potential harm may be caused, the degree of harm must be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.

Warwick District Local Plan Policy HE2 of the Local Plan expects development proposals to have appropriate regard to the character and setting of Conservation Areas.

The Offchurch Conservation Area Character Appraisal states that "*Offchurch Conservation Area is characterised by green open spaces interspersed with a variety of houses of different periods, together with long views into open countryside*" and that "*the characteristic small scale quality of the buildings, traditional boundary treatments and large open green spaces form the essential qualities of this Conservation Area*".

The proposed development site is located along a developed stretch of road within Offchurch rather than an 'open' space. There are also currently no long views from the public highway through the site into open countryside as these are obscured by the existing double garage, carport & workshop.

There is no 'established' building line in this part of the Conservation Area, with properties positioned both on the back edge of footpath and much further back into their plots. This results in no clear pattern of development and also means the position of the proposed dwelling will not appear incongruous in the street scene nor the wider village townscape.

The ridge height of the property is also consistent with the surrounding properties in that it maintains the stepping down of heights as you move down School Hill.

The site is located relatively centrally in the village and is surrounded by residential properties. The village offers a mix of housing types and styles from modern properties to traditional cottage style dwellings with a mix of materials including render and brick.

To the north of the site the properties are predominantly large detached dwellings in spacious plots and to the south the properties are much more tightly knit. The new dwelling is a detached dwelling located in a spacious plot that is in keeping with the surrounding character and style of properties in the village. The size of the plot is also consistent with other properties in the village. The proposed dwelling takes design inspiration from the rural setting of the village and uses similar materials to that which can be found within the immediate vicinity of the application site, which would be brick and grey tile.

The proposed dwelling is therefore considered to sit well within the Conservation Area and not have an adverse impact on local heritage assets.

#### **Impact on adjacent properties and amenity of future occupiers**

Policy BE3 of the Warwick District Local Plan states that new development will not be permitted that has an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby uses and residents.

The nearest neighbouring property would be Merryhill House to the north and the existing Church Cottage to the south. There would be no conflict with the Council's 45° guideline with Merryhill House. The new dwelling is set back into the site and is positioned no further forward than the neighbouring dwelling.

The new dwelling has also been positioned so the side rather than directly behind Church Cottage and any windows on the northern side facing onto the Church Cottage rear garden are limited to roof lights therefore avoiding any direct overlooking.

The proposed dwelling would provide adequate light, privacy and outlook to all habitable rooms and the internal floor areas and bedroom sizes exceed the Nationally Described Space Standards.

The proposed layout of the site would also ensure that both properties retain ample private amenity space in excess of the Council's minimum size requirements.

The proposal is overall considered to be acceptable in terms of amenity in accordance with Local Plan Policy BE3.

## **Access and Parking**

Policy TR1 of the Warwick District Local Plan requires all developments provide safe, suitable and attractive access routes for all users that are not detrimental to highway safety.

Policy TR3 requires all development proposals to make adequate provision for parking for all users of a site in accordance with the relevant parking standards SPD. In the case of 3 bedroom dwellings the requirement is for 2 parking spaces to be provided.

The proposed scheme retains the existing access off School Hill which would be shared by both the existing and the proposed dwelling. This would lead to a single access drive and parking provision of 2 spaces per dwelling. The tracking diagram submitted with the planning application demonstrates vehicles will be able to enter, park, turn and exit in a forward gear.

Cycle parking can be accommodated in a separate storage structure to the rear for Church Cottage and the existing brick built shed at the far end of the plot for the new dwelling.

The proposed parking arrangement meets the Council's requirements set out in the Vehicle Parking Standards SPD.

It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on highway safety and provides adequate parking in accordance with Local Plan Policies TR1 and TR3.

## **Low Emissions**

The proposal will result in additional vehicular movements and therefore there is a requirement for the provision of an electric charging point in accordance with the Council's adopted Low Emissions Strategy. The proposed site plan indicates an electric charging point will be provided in accordance with the adopted strategy

## **Recycling and Waste**

As indicated on the layout plan waste and recycling storage will be accommodated within the site boundary and out of sight, to the rear of the property. The waste can be transported to a kerbside collection via an alleyway which runs along the southern boundary for the new dwelling and the north boundary for Church Cottage.

## **Ecology / Biodiversity**

Policy NE3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 requires that all new development should protect, enhance and restore habitat biodiversity. Policy NE4 also seeks to ensure that development proposals address the importance of habitat biodiversity features and their contribution to the landscape and where possible enhance these features through any mitigation compensatory measures.

Pre-application advice was sought from the County Ecologist who advised that further ecological survey work would not be required. They have recommended a series of precautionary notes to be added to any planning approval.

### Flood risk

The proposed development is located within Flood Zone 1 and, therefore, is an area with a low probability of flooding.

In addition, as the proposed development is less than 1ha and not affected by other known sources of flooding, a flood risk assessment is not required to support this application.

### Meeting a Local Housing Need

The WDC Local Plan made an allowance of dwellings coming forward within windfall sites during the plan period (2015-2029). The Council's latest 5 year housing supply trajectory (April 2020) is assuming 202 windfall units will come forward over the next 5 years in order for the Council to maintain its required supply of housing. The proposed dwelling will assist the council in achieving this requirement.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 (Joint SHMA 2013) modelled demographic and household changes and the existing housing stock in order to gain an understanding of the future need for different house types until 2031. In Warwick District, the house sizes for which there was considered to be the greatest need were three-bed homes (40-45% of total new homes) followed by two-bed homes (30-35% of total new homes). In general the assessment concluded that providing smaller and medium-sized properties will help to meet local needs.

At a village level, opportunities to provide new dwellings within the settlement boundary of Offchurch is extremely limited. Providing additional dwellings where this is feasible will enable younger residents and families to move into the village and help ensure Offchurch is sustained as a vibrant community.

### CONCLUSION

This planning application seeks planning permission for the demolition of a detached double garage, carport & workshop and the erection of a 1.5 storey three-bedroom dwelling, and associated works including a modified access and parking, boundary treatment, landscaping and ancillary development.

The development will make beneficial use of surplus previously developed land within the settlement boundary of Offchurch and will meet all the criteria set out local plan policies H1 and H11 which guides the location of new housing within rural areas.

The proposed dwelling will provide much needed family style accommodation to Offchurch and help protect the vitality of the village and the support the surrounding rural area.

A new dwelling in this location would replace an unsightly structure, harmonise with the character of Offchurch and would fit in with the existing pattern of development. The development would therefore not introduce an incongruous feature in the street scene which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and will therefore comply with Policies H1 and BE1.

Furthermore, the dwelling would not have a harmful impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and would not be detrimental to public highway safety due the ample provision for off street parking in line with policy requirements.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in planning terms and the Council is respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the scheme.