



Planning and Heritage Statement




Infill plot on land adjacent to:

Dunollie
Church Road
Halstead
TN14 7HG

By:

Mr & Mrs R Brown

23/378

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. We have been instructed by Mr and Mrs R Brown to prepare and submit an application for full planning permission to be accompanied by a Planning and Heritage Statement concerning land adjacent to their existing detached property to form an infill plot at Dunollie, Church Road, Halstead, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7HG.
- 1.2. The application proposes the erection of a new detached dwelling to infill a plot between Dunollie to the northwest and the adjacent detached dwelling known as Avebury to the southeast.
- 1.3. The preparation of this application for full planning permission follows a pre-application meeting with Sevenoaks District Council and the receipt of detailed written pre application advice that followed this dated the 29th of January 2024 (PA/23/00340) with a copy of the Council' written pre-application advice forming **APPENDIX 1** of this statement.
- 1.4. The plans that have been prepared which accompany this submission are provided by Offset Architects who also provide a Design and Access Statement explaining the nature of the design that has been prepared.
- 1.5. This Planning and Heritage Statement considers the sites location within the village of Halstead and acknowledges that the adopted Sevenoaks Local Plan Proposals Map (2015) defines the site as being wrapped around by the confines of the village Conservation Area, and that the site is located within the confines of the Green Belt.
- 1.6. This statement considers the Council's pre-application advice that has been received and how the design has been amended to responded to this. It also takes into account all relevant planning policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011), the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management

Plan (2015) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Document that concerns 'Development within the Green Belt' which provides guidance on page 10 concerning how the Local Planning Authority will assess applications for limited residential infilling for villages in the Green Belt.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1. The application site currently forms part of the side and rear garden of Dunollie and is located on the north-eastern side of Church Road within the village of Halstead. The site is located a short walk away from the centre of the village, located to the south-east where Church Road meets with Knockholt Road, Halstead and Otford Lane. The village church is located to the north-west of the site further along Church Road. There is a pedestrian footpath located along the southern side of the highway on Church Road which provides safe and convenient access on foot to both the centre of the village and the village church.
- 2.2. The Local Plan Proposals Map concerning the land in question along with Dunollie to the north-west confirms that the site is positioned outside the confines of the village Conservation Area. This wraps around the site's north-western, north-eastern and south-eastern boundaries and extends to the north-west and to the south-east of the site. The village Conservation Area in conjunction with the village settlement boundary defines what forms 'the village' itself.
- 2.3. The Proposals Map also details that the plot forms a gap between Dunollie to the north-west and adjacent, detached dwellings at Avebury, Holly Cottage, Tudor Cottage and Fairfields all of which are located to the south-east. In addition, on the southern side of the road, Dunollie and the land in question and adjacent dwellings to the south-east face towards detached properties known as Brooklands, Cedar Meadow and Clac's Ley.



Aerial view of the application site

- 2.4. The plot in question is therefore surrounded on all but one side by residential development and forms a gap within an otherwise continuous frontage of dwellings on both sides of the road within this part of the village.

- 2.5. Via the existing footpath on the southern side of Church Road, the property is within easy walking distance of shops and local services within the village itself to the south-east along with the village school, and is also within walking distance of the village church located to the north-west.

- 2.6. The accompanying Design & Access Statement provided by Offset Architects includes photographs of the existing house at Dunollie and a photograph showing the vacant plot between Dunollie and Avebury.
- 2.7. In providing pre-application advice the Council confirmed that the new development would not likely cause any harm to the residential amenities of adjacent properties but sought for the application documents to set out what windows serve the adjacent dwelling at Avebury on its flank elevation. The below extract from the plans available on the Council's public access website confirms that either or secondary non habitable windows are located on the flank wall of Avebury at first floor level and that the secondary windows serve rooms that have principal windows front and rear facing.



Image showing first floor layout of neighbouring dwelling at Avebury.

3. THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 3.1. The District Council’s Conservation Area Appraisal concerning Halstead Village was adopted in December 2003.
- 3.2. This describes the Halstead Conservation Area as covering some 3.5 hectares and it contains 6 listed buildings together with listed flint boundary walls. The Conservation Area was originally designated in 1973.
- 3.3. The Conservation Area is centred around the old core of the village extending along Church Road and encompassing the main road junction. The Parish Church is located at the far end of Church Road to the west of Dunollie.
- 3.4. The guidance recognises that the area comprises mainly residential properties with some dwellings converted into commercial premises. The dwellings are generally of two storeys in height.
- 3.5. In relation to the type of residential property that can be seen, the guidance details that roofs on houses are either slated with lead hip or involve the use of clay ridge tiles.
- 3.6. In terms of Church Road, a photograph of ‘Kent Acre’ is provided with this being of brick-built design at ground floor level with mock Tudor at first floor level. There are several similar types of properties of this design that can be seen along the northern side of Church Road including the dwellings immediately to the east of the proposed plot.



View of 'Kent Acre' Church Road, Halstead referenced in Conservation Area Appraisal with house of brick and Mock Tudor design.

- 3.7. The guidance acknowledges that the village will be a location where there will be a demand for suitable building land and accepts that development within the Conservation Area is not necessarily unwelcome but the impact that this can have on the traditional form of the village has to be carefully considered before consent is granted.
- 3.8. There will be an expectation that any architectural detailing of new buildings must have regard to their surroundings and local context and the character and appearance of the village Conservation Area.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1. This application seeks full planning permission to introduce an infill dwelling of two storey design with accommodation within the roof space to be served by an existing secondary access that at present serves Dunollie.
- 4.2. The proposed house would infill a gap which exists in an otherwise continuous frontage between Dunollie to the northwest and Avebury to the southeast. Both adjacent dwellings are of two storey design.
- 4.3. The proposed house would be of two storey design incorporating a single storey rear extension.
- 4.4. As can be seen from the plans provided by Offset Architects, at ground floor level a living room, study, utility room and integral garage will be provided with an open plan kitchen/dining/family room to the rear.
- 4.5. At first floor level the design would enable four double bedrooms to be provided in conjunction with three bathrooms. All bedrooms would exceed 11.5m² in size in order to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards Document and the overall size of the dwelling would also meet the Nationally Described Space Standards for four-bedroom 8 person dwelling houses.
- 4.6. Within the roof space, an additional bedroom would be provided along with an ensuite bathroom. The ensuite bathroom would be served by a modest conservation roof light on the front elevation of the dwelling and two modest dormers would serve the bedroom on the rear elevation. These dormers would be of appropriate proportions in accordance with the Council's guidance in relation to residential alterations to existing properties.

- 4.7. In terms of its architectural detailing, and in accordance with the Council’s pre-application advice, the proposed design takes a traditional form that responds to the architectural detailing and use of materials that can be seen along this side of the road in association with existing properties.
- 4.8. At ground floor level, the dwelling would be of traditional brick design and the first-floor level the dwelling has a Mock Tudor appearance in order to appear in keeping with other houses with similar detailing along this side of the road, including the example of a dwelling that is given within the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance concerning the Halstead Village Conservation Area.
- 4.9. The proposed site plan confirms that parking and a turning area in front of the house would be provided in order to ensure that adequate parking spaces are achieved in accordance with the Council’s adopted standards. Furthermore, there will be no need for a new access with the dwelling to take advantage of the existing secondary access serving Dunollie at present.
- 4.10. The proposed dwelling would share a similar building line both at the front and rear of the adjacent properties and would also be served by a generous garden. Here two existing outbuildings as shown in the photographs that accompany this submission, that currently serve Dunollie would be retained to serve the new house. The proposed garden is of generous proportions that would meet the needs of a family that would occupy the house.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. Relevant planning policy to the Council's pre-application assessment principally contains that contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011), the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance document relating to development within the Green Belt (2015).

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

5.2. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages an increase in housing supply throughout the country.

5.3. With Sevenoaks District Council unable to demonstrate a five-year housing supply at this time the tilted balance of the Framework as detailed in paragraph 11 (d) is engaged and there will therefore be a presumption in favour of delivering new housing providing no significant conflict with other policies of the Framework exists.

5.4. In relation to policy concerning the Green Belt, paragraph 154 (e) confirms that limited residential infilling in villages represents an acceptable form of development in such locations.

5.5. In accordance with Section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework which encourages receipt of pre application advice, early engagement with the Local Planning Authority has occurred in this case through the receipt of the Council's detailed pre-application advice prior to the submission of this application.

5.6. Section 16 of the Framework focuses on conserving and enhancing the historic environment and although the application site is positioned outside the confines of the Conservation Area, the boundary of this wraps around the site and it is therefore important to consider the setting of the Conservation Area as a result.

- 5.7. Paragraph 205 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of this heritage asset great weight should be given to its conservation although paragraph 212 encourages Local Planning Authorities to look for opportunities for new development in Conservation Areas.

Sevenoaks Core Strategy (2011)

- 5.8. Policy LO8 of the Core Strategy concerns the countryside and rural economy and states that the extent of the Green Belt will be maintained, and policy will be applied consistently with that as detailed above within the NPPF. Within the countryside, development will be expected to preserve the openness and setting of the landscape.
- 5.9. Policy SP1 concerns the design of new development in Conservation Areas and requires for all new development to be of a high quality of architectural design responding to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated.

Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) (2015)

- 5.10. Policy EN1 outlines the design principles that are used to assess all planning applications. This requires for the form of new development to respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area and also states that the layout of new development must respect the topography and character of the site and its surroundings.
- 5.11. Policy EN2 refers to amenity protection and requires all new development to have regard to the privacy and amenities of surrounding properties.
- 5.12. Policy EN4 is of relevance with this site located adjacent to a Conservation Area which comprise a heritage asset. This requires for all new development within or around heritage assets to ensure that no harm is caused to their setting and character.

5.13. In relation to the Green Belt, section 7 of the ADMP acknowledges in paragraph 7.9 that limited infilling in a village represents an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, although more specific guidance in this regard on the Council’s interpretation of infilling is contained within the Council’s Supplementary Planning Document concerning development in the Green Belt.

Sevenoaks – Development in the Green Belt SPD (February 2015)

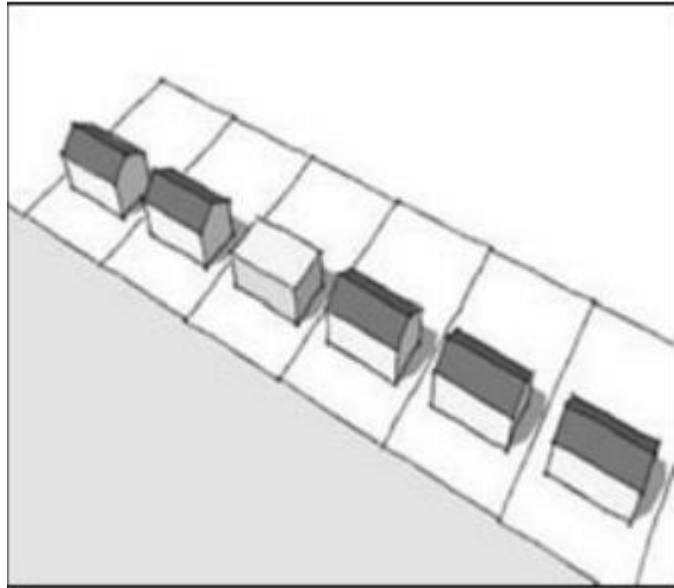
5.14. Section 3 of this document provides detailed guidance concerning what will be deemed to comprise acceptable limited residential infill in villages in the Green Belt.

5.15. This guidance states that development within villages in the Green Belt is limited to small-scale infilling only, due to the limited range of services and facilities in these settlements and the need to protect the openness of the Green Belt.

5.16. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is acknowledged with this stating that limited infilling in villages, and limited infilling of brownfield sites which would not have a greater impact on the openness of Green Belt are not inappropriate development on such land.

5.17. The guidance goes on to define what comprises limited infilling and this is judged to entail ***‘the completion of an otherwise substantially built-up frontage by the filling of a narrow gap normally capable of taking one or two dwellings only’***.

5.18. The District Council defines a substantially built-up frontage as an otherwise continuous and largely interrupted built frontage of several dwellings visible within the street scene. It contains the following diagram as an illustrative:



- 5.19. In relation to edge of settlements with Green Belt boundaries, the guidance accepts that where a change of character is not apparent between the defined settlement and development within the adjoining Green Belt, there may be circumstances where infill development is appropriate in the Green Belt provided the purposes of the Green Belt would not be compromised. This paragraph of the guidance is highly applicable to this case.
- 5.20. This view is supported by a Court of Appeal High Court judgement which concluded that a defined village boundary in a Development Plan is not conclusive to determining whether a site is within a village or not. It is down to the decision-maker to consider where there is a matter of fact and degree, on the ground, the site appeared to be within the confines of the settlement, in other words to appear within the village.

6. THE COUNCIL'S PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

- 6.1. As detailed in the introduction to this statement, a copy of the Council's pre-application advice can be seen in **APPENDIX 1** of this statement.
- 6.2. The advice considers the sites credentials as to whether it can form an infill plot within the Green Belt having regard to paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework, it also considers the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance concerning Development within the Green Belt notably paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of this document.
- 6.3. The Council's advice confirms that ***'the application site is a small gap in an otherwise consistent building line at this point of Church Road. the development would accord with the Council's definition of limited infilling and therefore meets the exception of the NPPF'***. The Council also accepts that Church Road is visually well connected to the heart of the village and has a residential character and appearance.
- 6.4. In terms of the pre-application proposal which showed how the site could accommodate a detached dwelling of two storey design the Council acknowledged that the one dwelling to be provided would be of a comparable scale to the neighbouring units and the development was therefore consistent with policy LO7 of the core strategy.
- 6.5. In relation to matters of heritage the Council reviewed the traditional illustrative sketched elevation of the dwelling that was provide as detailed below:



Pre-app scheme street scene sketch

- 6.6. The Council commented that the design was broadly in keeping with the established character of the dwellings within the Conservation Area and it was advised to review the Halstead Conservation Area Appraisal Document which is reviewed within this submission.
- 6.7. The pre-application scheme showed a dwelling to be introduced utilising one material only (brick). The Council’s advice was that a contrasting material at first floor level would be preferable and noted that many dwellings within this area included Mock Tudor detailing at first floor level and above. This has therefore been incorporated into the design that is now submitted for planning consent.
- 6.8. In relation to neighbouring amenity the Council’s advice noted that the new dwelling would bring built form closer to the side elevation of Avebury and it was therefore advised to review the rooms which the neighbouring windows serve at first floor level to demonstrate that there will be no loss of amenity. However, the Council acknowledged that the side windows serving the neighbouring dwelling were likely to be either secondary windows or serve non-primary habitable spaces such as a bathroom (non-habitable room). As detailed above, this statement includes details of the layout of the neighbouring property to assist the Council with its assessment of the application and this confirms that flank facing windows are either non habitable or secondary windows serving the neighbour’s house.

7. PLANNING MERITS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. This application has been prepared in accordance with Section 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework with detailed pre application advice obtained from the Local Planning Authority prior to the formal submission of this application for full planning consent.

7.2. The receipt of pre-application advice is confirmed, the site does comprise an infill plot within the Green Belt in accordance with Paragraph 154(e) of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to development within the Green Belt. As required, the case is set out below in Green Belt terms which also considers other material considerations:

- The sites’ location within the Green Belt and the proposal form of infilling that is acceptable having regard to the character of the site and surrounding area.
- The design of the proposed dwelling.
- The setting of the Conservation Area.
- Residential Amenity
- Highways and Parking.

The Green Belt

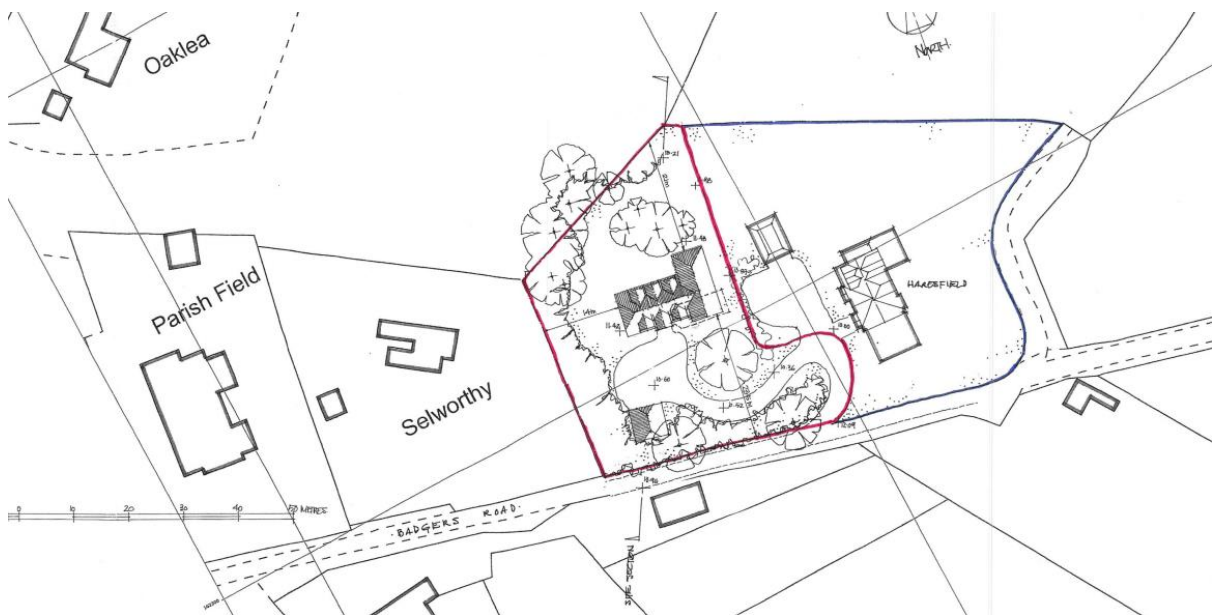
7.3. In providing pre-application advice the Council has appreciated that the existing plot which already forms garden land is served by a secondary access currently serving Dunollie and forms a gap within an otherwise continuous frontage of properties along this side of the road that is capable of accommodating one dwelling. It is also located directly opposite a row of detached houses. Furthermore, the site is positioned within direct proximity to the centre of the village and local shops and as the Council has accepted in providing pre-application advice the plot is visually well connected to the heart of the village.

- 7.4. The new dwelling would therefore be positioned within direct proximity to the centre of the village, local shops, services, the village hall and the school as illustrated by the Sevenoaks Local Plan Proposals Map. All local shops and services can be accessed safely on foot using the existing foot path located on the opposite side of Church Road which forms part of the highway.
- 7.5. In addition to these material considerations the site, along with Dunollie is almost entirely surrounded by the village Conservation Area, the boundary of which extends to the northwest towards the village church and to the southeast towards the centre of the village. The boundary of the Conservation Area helpfully defines what comprised the original village in conjunction with the street scene and the character and setting of this part of Church Road.
- 7.6. As the Council has accepted in providing pre application advice the plot is surrounded by residential development, to the northwest, south east and south west (on the opposite side of the street) and it is therefore reasonable to describe the site as comprising one of the few examples within the village where limited infilling within the Green Belt is acceptable.
- 7.7. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that case law establishes that the village boundary is not a determinative factor in assessing whether a Green Belt property is within a village or not. This is not the conclusive factor on determining whether a site is within a village. It is down to the decision maker to consider whether as a matter of fact and degree and on the ground, the site appears to be within the confines of the settlement, in other words appears within the village. The Council is satisfied that the site passes these Green Belt test and would comprise appropriate limited infilling in a village in the Green Belt.
- 7.8. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the site does comprise an opportunity for infilling where the erection of a detached dwelling would entail the completion of an otherwise substantially built-up frontage by the filling in of a gap that is capable of accommodating an

additional home that would appear in keeping with the architectural merit, scale and design of other detached dwellings along this side of the street.

7.9. The case for permission is also supported by other examples of decisions that have been made within the District where infill dwellings have been approved in accordance with the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to development within the Green Belt.

7.10. In the case of Haresfield, Badgers Road, Badgers Mount, an appeal as allowed on the 2nd of October 2009 under reference APP/G2245/W/19/3230759 for the erection of a single detached dwelling on an infill plot. A copy of the Inspectors decision can be seen in **APPENDIX 2** of this statement and the approved site plan can be seen below:



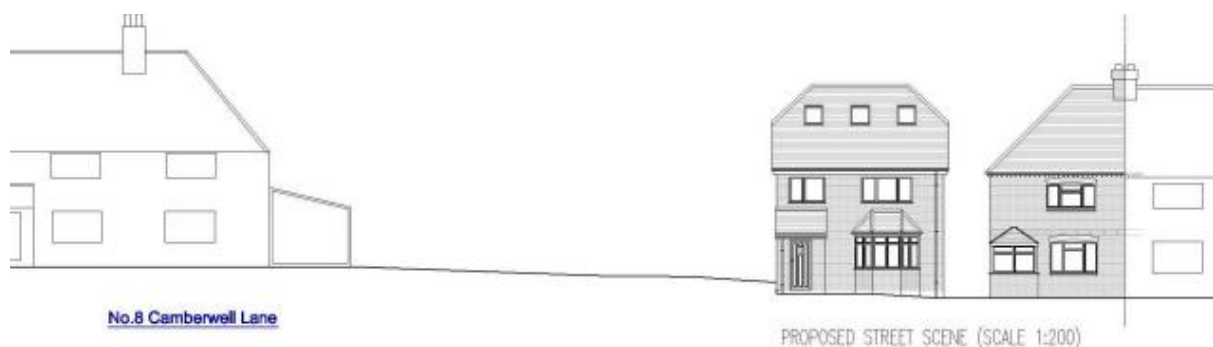
7.11. In allowing the appeal, the Inspector noted in paragraph 10 of their decision that the high court judgement (Wood vs SSCLG) confirmed that a defined village boundary in a development plan is not conclusive to determining whether a site is within a village or not. In that case, the Inspector noted that the properties lying off Badgers Road were a continuation of the Built

form of Badgers Mount and comprised part of the outer edge of the village although they were outside the defined village boundary.

7.12. The Inspector noted the separation between Haresfield and Selworthy was large but the gap between the properties was ‘a typical’ of the pattern of development in the area. In the case of Haresfield, the Inspector noted the term ‘narrow’ was open to interpretation as detailed within the Council’s supplementary planning document, they were satisfied that the size of the gap would allow the development of one dwelling whilst retaining spaces between it and the buildings on either side that was typical of the pattern of the development within the vicinity.

7.13. The Inspector therefore concluded that taking into account the established ‘grain and form’ of development they found the proposal would constitute limited infilling within the built-up frontage within the built-up frontage on the northern side of Badgers Road.

7.14. In the case of 9 Camberwell Lane Ide Hill, planning permission was granted on the 20th of November 2019 (19/02628/FUL) for the introduction of an additional dwelling between Nos. 8 & 9 Camberwell Lane Ide Hill. A copy of the approved street scene can be seen below:



7.15. The Council’s delegated Report that acknowledged that a generous gap would remain between the new house and No. 8 Camberwell Lane but that the proposal did comprise limited infilling. A copy of the delegated report can be seen in **APPENDIX 3** of this statement.

7.16. A further example was approved on the 12th of February 2019 under reference 18/03609/FUL on land to the west of 6 Seal Croft Cottages, Childsbridge Lane, Seal and a copy of the approved site plan concerning this application can be seen below:



7.17. As can be seen from the Council’s delegated report that forms **APPENDIX 4** of this statement, the Council formed the view that the site may be considered to be loose knit but was connected to the village envelope. The Council was satisfied that the proposal would not be out of character with the settlement due to the existing built form surrounding the site. The infill of the land was judged to not interfere with the five purposes of Green Belt policy.

The Design

- 7.18. As the plans provided by Offset Architects illustrate, the proposed dwelling would be of detached two storey design incorporating accommodation within the roof space. The dwelling would respect existing front and rear building lines along this side of the street and would be set back from the road. It would make use of an existing secondary access meaning there would be no need to introduce any further access points onto the street.
- 7.19. A review of the Conservation Area Appraisal for Halstead has helped to guide the traditional design of the dwelling that is proposed. Whilst the scheme submitted for pre-application advice showed a dwelling to be of entirely brick design, the Council's advice has guided the use of a different material to be employed at first floor level in order to appear in keeping with properties along the northern side of Church Road.
- 7.20. The Council's Conservation Area guidance provides an example of a property on Church Road that is of brick design at ground floor level and mock Tudor at first floor level. There are also other examples of dwellings of this character along this side of the street. The traditional design therefore proposes for the dwelling to be of brick construction at ground floor level and Mock Tudor above in order to appear in keeping with the architectural detailing of existing dwellings within this part of the village. Furthermore, in accordance with the Conservation Area appraisal the dwelling would be introduced with a clay tile roof that is considered to be an appropriate material to be used within the Halstead village Conservation Area.
- 7.21. The plans provided by Offset Architects demonstrate that the dwelling would meet the Nationally Described Space Standards in terms of its overall size and all bedrooms would exceed 11.5m². In addition, the house would be served by a generous rear garden and parking would be available in front of the house in accordance with the Council's adoptive standards.

7.22. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the traditionally designed dwelling would appear in keeping with this part of the village and would be of a high quality of traditional design.

Residential Amenity

7.23. In providing pre-application advice, the Council noted that the erection of a dwelling would bring built form closer to the adjacent dwelling at Avebury. The Council requested that details of the layout of this property be provided in order to demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable loss of amenity to the neighbours house.

7.24. The plans provided by Offset Architects confirm that no habitable windows would be located on the flank walls of the dwelling and therefore no overlooking to either neighbour would be caused. Habitable rooms would be front, and rear facing as per adjacent dwellings and will look out onto the garden and street scene. The dwelling would not therefore cause any unacceptable overlooking.

7.25. This statement includes details of the layout of the neighbouring dwelling at Avebury which confirms that habitable windows at first floor level either serve a non-habitable room (bathroom) or comprise secondary windows to rooms that have front and rear facing principal windows. No unacceptable harm to the residential amenities of any property would be caused, including Dunollie and Avebury. The application therefore complies with the terms of Policy EN2 of the ADMP.

7.26. The design of the dwelling would retain adequate side space gaps to both flank boundaries as required by policy and therefore no visual terracing would occur. The dwelling would sit comfortably within the plot commensurate with the spatial standards that can be seen on this side of the road.

Highways and Parking

- 7.27. As the Council acknowledged when it provided pre-application advice, the existing dwelling would be served by a secondary access that already exists. There would therefore be no requirement to introduce any additional access onto Church Road.
- 7.28. Furthermore, the proposed site layout details that parking would be provided for the new house in accordance with the Council's adopted standards and the garden and outbuildings to be retained would provide adequate space for cycle storage.
- 7.29. The application is therefore acceptable in relation to parking and access.

Other Material Considerations

- 7.30. With the proposal solely incorporating garden land associated with Dunollie which is regularly mowed, the Council has not requested the provision of an Ecology Statement. However, photographs of the garden are provided with this statement to illustrate its domestic appearance and well-maintained status.
- 7.31. The application is not therefore one that would cause any harm to any protected species and there should be no requirement for any further Ecology information as part of the Council's assessment. The photographs of the site are provided to enable KCC Ecology to review these when responding as a consultee.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1. This statement confirms that the erection of a dwelling on the plot would comprise limited infilling within the village as the Council has confirmed in providing pre-application advice. The proposal represents an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt in accordance with the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan.
- 8.2. The new dwelling is of a high quality of design that meets the Nationally Described Space Standards. Its traditional appearance would be appropriate within this part of the village and having regard to the setting of the surrounding Conservation Area.
- 8.3. The erection of the dwelling would not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities and privacy of any neighbouring property.
- 8.4. The new dwelling would be served by adequate parking and an existing access which is acceptable.
- 8.5. Taking these material considerations into account it is requested for full planning permission to be granted.