

Planning Committee: 26 April 2022

Item Number: 7

Application No: [W 21 / 2185](#)

Town/Parish Council: Offchurch

Case Officer: Helena Obremski

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Registration Date: 23/02/22

Expiry Date: 20/04/22

Offa House, Village Street, Offchurch, Leamington Spa, CV33 9AS

Restoration of Offa House including the demolition of C20 extensions, and the construction of two new houses within the site, including rearrangement of garden area associated with Lodge Cottage. FOR Mrs and Mrs Hartog

This application is being presented to Committee as the Parish Council supports the application and owing to the number of letters of support received, and it is recommended for refusal. It should however be noted that whilst the Parish Council support the application, they also raise concerns regarding 'Property D'.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Committee are recommended to refuse planning permission for the reasons listed in the report.

THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

Offa House is a former Diocesan retreat house situated within the village of Offchurch. The property is a Grade II listed building situated within the Offchurch Conservation Area. There is a Grade II listed ancillary coach house to the west of the site, with high level wall which attaches to the property. The site is within the Green Belt, with open countryside adjoining the site to the north and west. The Grade II* listed St. Gregory's church is situated to the east of the site and the Lodge to Offa House is situated to the south in separate ownership. The next nearest dwellings are situated further to the south, on the opposite side of Village Street.

There is a vehicular access and driveway to the site from Village Street. This leads to a parking area to the front and side of the property. There is also an existing separate vehicular access from Village Street further to the west of the main access, which is not currently in use.

The premises was granted planning permission for short term refuge accommodation for refugees for a period of 5 years from November 2015 but this use was not implemented. Planning permission was granted in December 2017 for a change of use from the retreat to a single dwellinghouse, this has been implemented.

DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks planning permission for the redevelopment of the application site. In summary the works are as follows:

- Refurbishment and restoration of the existing main property (Offa House) on the site, including internal alterations, single storey rear extension following removal of existing C20 extensions and fire escape, window and door alterations, two front facing dormer windows, re-roofing, new roof lantern. This would provide a 6 bedroom property, with formalised parking area in front of the site, and garden areas to the north, west and south.
- Proposed erection of a new dwellinghouse to the north west of the site nearby to the existing Coach House which would become ancillary accommodation, collectively referred to as "Property C". This would provide a three bedroom property, with an L-shaped floor plan and would be two and single storey. The Planning Statement suggests that Property C has been designed to emulate a traditional coach house style property. Whilst there are no proposed physical alterations to the existing Coach House, a new wall would attach to the listed structure, forming a retaining wall and boundary treatment. The dwelling would be accessed from the existing secondary access point, with an area of hard standing for parking proposed to the north of the property.
- Proposed creation of a second additional dwellinghouse, referred to as "Property D" adjacent to the main highway and neighbouring property, Lodge Cottage. This would provide a three bedroom property which would be accessed from the secondary access from Village Street. The private amenity space serving Lodge Cottage would be reduced in size to accommodate the proposed dwelling and a hedge would separate the curtilage of Property D from the curtilage of Offa House. This also has an L-shaped floor plan and would be a two and single storey dwelling.
- Associated works include the installation of hard surfacing from the secondary access to provide a driveway for the two proposed residential properties, removal of trees, amendment to existing boundary walls and installation of gates.

This application follows a number of applications for redevelopment of the site, which are outlined below. The most notable of the previous applications are W/18/2145 & W/21/2146/LB which were refused by Planning Committee and dismissed at appeal for the refurbishment of Offa House and creation of 2no. additional dwellings through detachment of the main property from its later additions, by demolishing the 1960's and 1980's extensions - the remaining wing formed one additional residential unit, with extensions, and the existing ancillary Coach House, with extensions, formed the second additional unit.

The main differences between this scheme and the proposal are:

- total removal of the C20 extensions to Offa House;
- the curtilage listed coach house would not be extended, instead the new dwelling would be located in close proximity to it, rather than attaching to it, and has a different design inspiration;
- the second additional dwelling will not form part of the existing extensions to Offa House and would be positioned next to the highway.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

W/19/1908 & W/19/1909/LB - Refurbishment and restoration of the main property (Offa House) including internal alterations to provide a single residential dwelling (including change of use from retreat (Sui Generis to C3 residential), single storey rear extension (following removal of existing rear and side extensions), window and door alterations, 2no. dormer windows to front, re-roofing and new roof lantern. The existing Coach House to be renovated for home office use in association with Offa House. Proposed creation of 2no. additional dwellings through detachment of the main property from later additions by demolishing the 1960's and 1980's extensions - the remaining wing will form one additional residential unit, with extensions (Unit A). Unit B, a new detached 3 bed property will be sited to the south west. Proposed gates and alterations to hardstanding - withdrawn 29/01/2020

W/18/2145 & W/21/2146/LB - Refurbishment and restoration of the main property including internal alterations to provide a single residential dwelling (including change of use from retreat (Sui Generis to C3 residential), single storey extensions, window and door alterations, 2no. dormer windows, re-roofing and new roof lantern. Proposed creation of 2no. additional dwellings through detachment of the main property from later additions by demolishing the 1960's and 1980's extensions - the remaining wing will form one additional residential unit, with extensions, and the existing ancillary Coach House, with extensions, will form the second additional unit. Associated landscaping and gates - Refused 31/09/2019 and dismissed at appeal 23/12/2019

W/18/0881 & W/18/0882/LB - Refurbishment of main dwelling, including internal and external alterations, demolition and extensions; detachment of existing wing of main dwelling and extensions to create a separate dwelling; extensions and alterations to the existing coach house to provide additional new dwelling, and associated works including new access and landscaping - Withdrawn 14/08/2018

W/17/2104 - Change of use from retreat (Use Class Sui Generis) to dwelling (Use Class C3) - Granted 19/12/2017

W/17/0903 - Change of use from short term residential accommodation for refugees (for a temporary period of up to five years) - to permanent residential residence for private ownership - Withdrawn 09.06.2017

W/15/1738 - Change of use from Diocesan retreat house to short term residential accommodation for refugees (for a temporary period of up to five years) - Granted 16.11.2015

RELEVANT POLICIES

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029
- BE1 - Layout and Design
- BE3 - Amenity
- BE4 - Converting Rural Buildings
- NE2 - Protecting Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets
- NE5 - Protection of Natural Resources

- HE1 - Protection of Statutory Heritage Assets
- HE2 - Protection of Conservation Areas
- HE4 - Archaeology
- DS18 - Green Belt
- H1 - Directing New Housing
- H11 - Limited Village Infill Housing Development in the Green Belt
- H14 - Extensions to Dwellings in the Open Countryside
- TR1 - Access and Choice
- TR3 - Parking
- Guidance Documents
- Parking Standards (Supplementary Planning Document- June 2018)
- Residential Design Guide (Supplementary Planning Document- May 2018)
- Air Quality & Planning Supplementary Planning Document (January 2019)

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Joint Parish Council: Supports application for restoration of Offa House and provision of Coach House dwelling. However, concern raised regarding 'Property D' and impact on village street scene. The removal of trees and the proximity of the building to the boundary will significantly change the street appearance. Viewed from the west, at Park Gates the road rises when entering the Village. Consequently, a sizeable part of the new building elevation would be visible, rather than the current brick boundary wall. The Parish Council would urge that changes are made to building D to minimise its impact upon the street. Moving the building further back from the boundary wall would be an option to consider.

Historic England: No objection.

Waste Management: No objection.

Public Rights of Way: No objection.

WCC Highways: No objection.

WCC Landscape: Objection, harmful to landscape character; the development fails to harmonise with the established character of the area and does not enhance the settlement pattern; loss of trees.

Conservation Area Forum (CAF): CAF were in agreement that the proposal is a significant improvement on the previous submission, but were split as to whether this improvement equated to a wholly appropriate scheme. The removal of the modern extensions to the main house was praised. The size of the two new dwellings within the site was debated, as it was felt they may possibly overwhelm or be in competition with the existing Coach House and the neighbouring Lodge. It was felt the size and scale of the houses could give the feel of a small rural housing estate rather than a country house and grounds with the new dwellings possibly going beyond enabling development to new development within the green belt.

Whilst it was agreed that there were positives and negatives to the application, it was noted by some members that the new houses were of an attractive and well

thought out design, located at the boundaries of the site thereby preserving optimum green space, so whilst there are issues, a good scheme may be passed over for a faultless scheme that may never come, at an overall detriment to the asset.

Conservation Officer: Objection, there are very much similar issues associated with these proposals as with previous applications on the site. The scheme proposes to subdivide the grounds of Offa House into 3 separate residential units. As stated very clearly in the appeal decision, any proposed subdivision of land is harmful to both the setting of the listed building and appearance and character of the Conservation Area. The Inspector explained that the subdivision of the site to create self-contained residential plots *'would have an intrusive urbanising effect that would detract from the setting of the listed building'*. It was also noted that the character and appearance of Offchurch Conservation Area is heavily influenced by the inclusion within the designation of large areas of green space between buildings, some of which allow views through to the open countryside beyond. The Inspector added that Offa House makes an important contribution to the character and appearance, both as a key historic building in the village and its garden as undeveloped green space. The stance of the Planning Inspectorate is therefore clear – any proposal to subdivide the site results in harm to both the setting of the listed building and the appearance and character of the Conservation Area.

Whilst 'House D' is small relative to the overall size of Offa House, it appears dominant in terms of bulk and massing on the street scene and overwhelms the modest The Lodge Cottage building. The Lodge, located adjacent to the driveway of Offa House, clearly contributes towards the setting of the principal listed building and the proposal diminishes the contribution that the building makes towards the setting of Offa House and the Conservation Area.

Property C is substantially larger in terms of volume, height and massing when compared to the curtilage listed outbuilding. The visuals presented show that this is clearly visible from the 2 storey bay window of Offa House and its rear elevation, which creates a strong impression of increased urbanisation that is harmful to the setting of the listed building. As with House D, House C clearly overwhelms the adjacent curtilage listed outbuilding. Its design also creates an inappropriate impression of grandeur that appears alien within the direct setting of a Georgian Vicarage.

Therefore, the scale, bulk, massing and design of proposed houses C and D, combined with proposed subdivision of the site, results in less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets (listed building and Conservation Area), albeit on the higher end of the scale. There are limited public benefits to the proposal given the current 5+ year housing land supply in the District. The listed building is not considered to be at risk and the scheme has not demonstrated optimum viable use.

No objection to proposed alterations to Offa House, subject to confirmation of materials shown annotated on the plans.

WCC Ecology: Holding objection - requested bat mitigation measures and evidence of biodiversity impact assessment.

Tree Officer: No objection, subject to condition.

Public Responses:

1 Objection (Warwick District):

- subdivision of site is not supported which is central to value of heritage asset, and would be harmful to the heritage asset and Conservation Area, with limited public benefit.
- The Lodge Cottage contributes to the setting of Offa House. The addition of Property D would diminish this relationship and as such would be detrimental to Offa House as a Heritage Asset. Property D would also appear to have a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area due to the reduction in green space.
- Loss of boundary wall would have harmful impact on heritage assets
- Infill development considered to be harmful to character of Conservation Area and does not meet definition of limited infilling.
- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- Proposal would set a harmful precedent for additional infill development.
- The proposals bare similarities to the previous appeals on the site, and therefore as the reasons for dismissal of the appeal have not been overcome, the application should be refused.
- Development of the site on the scale proposed clearly removes the magnificence that the gardens bring to the property and removes the openness of the Green Belt land to the property and must surely be considered over-development.
- Works to Offa House itself supported in principle.

The Offchurch Group Parochial Church Council: Supports application:

- Concern raised regarding proposed fencing between the church and application site.
- Concern raised regarding the proposed gate obstructing access to churchyard.
- Supports new access, main desire for the church is to see the property renovated and in use again after standing empty for five years. The concern is that it will deteriorate further if the planning situation cannot be resolved.
- In general the new proposals will mean that Offa House itself will sit on a plot appropriate for its size and history and the two new properties will provide accommodation which appears not to impinge on it.

51 Support:

Outside of UK: 1

Outside of District: 18

Warwick District: 22

Within Offchurch Village: 12

- Detail and care will be taken by the owners.
- A beautiful building will be restored and updated in proportionate and appropriate way.
- The house and land will be improved.

- The listed buildings are in a very poor state of repair and needs to be renovated.
- Preserves and enhances listed buildings and conservation area.
- English Heritage have reviewed plans.
- Wildlife reviews have been completed.
- All of the local village is in support.
- There is plenty of scope to retain green belt policies and the plans do not create additional residencies.
- This house should have the opportunity to be brought back to its former self.
- The garden area will be beautiful.
- Alternative is to let building decay, the proposal will secure the future of the building.
- The proposal complies with planning policies.
- Would improve the character of the area and village
- Would not have a negative impact on the rural landscape.
- Green belt is preserved because new buildings are no larger than existing and screened by trees.
- Any adverse impacts are outweighed by positive aspects.
- It is a reasonable, pragmatic, realistic and rational scheme that balances the demands of being within a conservation area and the need to preserve a significant listed building, with how families live in the 21st century, and the growing need for homes in all parts of the country.
- Carefully and sympathetically subdivides into more manageable sizes, a potentially unrealistic and burdensome house and grounds in this day and age, provides new (and still generously proportioned) homes and gardens for new families to move to the village, whilst at the same time very largely preserving the overall character, aspect, and feel of the original plot.
- The proposal should be considered as self build development - one of the stated benefits of self/custom building is that it "helps to diversify the housing market and increase consumer choice". This is definitely the case in this scheme. The proposal will address shortfall of provision of self-build housing
- Any arguments made against this application on the basis of Offchurch being a conservation area must take this into account. It is not the intention, scope or purpose of the conservation of Offchurch to preserve it. It is by definition characterised by having a variety of different houses from different periods. The objections that rely on citing this being a conservation area, appear not to take this into account. Rather they misguidedly rely heavily on the preservation of Offchurch, not its enhancement. The scheme as detailed, will provide the necessary addition to having houses from the early 21st century, and will do so in a way that is sympathetic in design and which, given this is a very low density development, will also maintain the "green open spaces" that form part of the specification, and that these spaces are "interspersed" with houses - the very definition of "low density".
- All development will be carried out to current building control standards, and that this will result in some slightly improved efficiency in Offa House itself, it is the case that far greater building performance will be achieved in the construction of the two additional dwellings. If this scheme did not include these additional dwellings then Offa House would simply be restored in isolation and not achieve such impactful outcomes. As part of a wider scheme, the overall average energy efficiency envelope will improve. The two additional homes offsetting the limited potential of the original, leading to an

overall net gain in energy efficiency. There will not be an additional two houses built anywhere else in Warwick District to offset the lost opportunity for two that may be denied permission here. This gain is only achieved if the whole scheme proceeds in its entirety. This is the more sustainable option.

- It would be perverse, unfair and knowingly detrimental to the needs of a rural community to fail to give this due consideration in respect of this application, and to simply decree "no new homes" on the basis that Offchurch is not a Growth Village. Not being a growth village does not equate to not having a need for new homes. Demonstrably Offchurch does require some growth to keep it a strong community, and it should be able to contribute to providing some of the homes needed within Warwick District.

Assessment

The main issues relevant to the consideration of the assessment of this application are as follows:

- Principle of the Development
- Whether the proposal constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt and, if not, whether there are any very special circumstances which would outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm identified
- The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Archaeological Impact
- The impact on the living conditions of nearby dwellings and living conditions for the future occupiers of the site
- Car Parking and Highway Safety
- Drainage
- Ecological Impact
- Waste
- Climate Change
- Impact on Trees
- Other Matters

Principle of the Development

Local Plan policy H1 directs new housing, providing a hierarchy for new residential development, starting with the urban areas, then allocated housing sites, and then the growth and limited infill villages. Offchurch is identified as a limited infill village, therefore the principle of new housing development is acceptable. However, compliance with Local Plan policy H11 regarding what constitutes limited infilling will also be required, which is discussed in more detail below.

It is highlighted that policy H1 states that housing development on garden land, in urban and rural areas, will not be permitted unless the development reinforces, or harmonises with, the established character of the street and/ or locality and respects surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing. This is discussed in more detail below.

Given that the permission for the change of use to a dwelling has been implemented, the area in which the new dwellings are proposed to be erected is considered to represent garden land, so this part of policy H1 also now applies, which is a materially different consideration to the previous refusal as the site was in a different use.

Whether the proposal constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt and, if not, whether there are any very special circumstances which outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm identified

Supporters of the proposal consider that the development would have an acceptable impact on the Green Belt, which would be preserved. An objector considers that the proposal represents inappropriate development within the Green Belt which does not meet the definition of limiting infilling and would set a harmful precedent for additional infill development.

Limited infilling

Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the essential characteristics of Green Belt are openness and permanence. It sets out that inappropriate development within the Green Belt is harmful by definition. Exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt are listed and includes limited infilling in villages.

Policy H11 of the Local Plan allows housing in Limited Infill Villages in the Green Belt. The policy defines limited infilling as acceptable as long as the development comprises:

- a) of no more than two dwellings; and
- b) of 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) 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.

The applicant contends that Property D represents limited infilling. However, an objector considers that the proposal does not constitute limited infill development and that the development would be harmful to the character of the area.

The proposal would be for no more than two dwellings, satisfying criterion 'a' of policy H11. However, the fact that the house is not in an isolated location and is located within a limited infill boundary does not automatically mean that the proposal meets the Council's definition of infill development. The limited infill boundary shown on the proposal map identifies the relative sustainability of the site, but the development must also meet with the Council's definition of limiting infilling to be policy compliant, which Officers do not consider that it would. A significant material consideration regarding this matter are the findings of the Inspector for appeal APP/T3725/W/19/3232186 (application W/18/2145).

The Inspector describes the site as:

*"...a large green space, virtually all of whose former long road frontage has passed into separate ownerships. **There is no sense of any continuous frontage development on this side of the road.** The proposed new development would be set in the heart of the site and would comprise detached dwellings set in substantial plots. They would adjoin the site's boundaries to open countryside, and would not be enclosed by any existing development to the west or north. The appeal proposal would not comply."*

The above is a very clear statement from the Inspector that the site is not a small gap and is not part of a largely built up frontage. There is a lack of compliance with H11 which can be applied directly to this application, in terms of a lack of any continuous street frontage. Moreover, whilst it is noted that Property D would have a building positioned to its east (Lodge Cottage), there would still remain a large open space, consisting of a wooded area to its west. There is some 80 metres before there is another neighbour to the west of Property D. This cannot be therefore considered as a small gap in an otherwise largely uninterrupted built up frontage.

The Inspector also states that, *"... as outlined above the site's green space is characteristic of the village, so that there would also be conflict with the third criterion."* It is considered that the proposed development would also erode the openness of the site, by virtue of spreading the development across the site, in fact to an increased extent in comparison to the previous scheme, thus having a harmful impact on the site's green space. The proposal also therefore fails on the grounds of point 'c' of policy H11. This is also supported by the comments from WCC Landscape.

The Planning Statement suggests that there is a "sense of uninterrupted built frontage", but this is not the test which the proposal needs to meet and in any event contradicts the Inspector's conclusion on this matter. Property D therefore cannot be considered to meet the definition of limited infill development. It is also considered that Property C also fails to meet the definition of limited infilling; it would not be visible within or form part of the street scene and would not be enclosed by development to the north or west.

Therefore, although the site lies within a limited infill boundary, the proposal fails to meet the Council's definition of limited infilling and the requirements of Local Plan policy H11.

Brownfield Development

The NPPF states that the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, would also constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt. Openness in this sense is defined as an absence of built form.

Currently the site benefits from the main property, Offa House, which is a substantial building that has been significantly extended. The main part of the property is three stories, with the more recent extensions being single storey. The ancillary Coach House, attaching to a high level wall to the west of the site

has a footprint of just 35sqm. It is therefore considered that the majority of the existing built form is consolidated around the central part of the site as one main building, whilst the Coach House is read as a much smaller ancillary structure, positioned some distance away from the main property. The three storey element of Offa House has the most considerable impact on the openness of the Green Belt at present, although it is recognised that the extensions do also impact openness. The Coach House being so small at present is considered to have a limited impact on openness in its current form.

The Planning Statement suggests that Property C represents the partial redevelopment of previously developed land. However, the NPPF states that previously developed land **does not** include land in built-up areas such as residential gardens. The site is not located within the open-countryside, being in a limited infill village, therefore must be considered as a "built up area". Its use is a residential garden. The agent contends that the site does not form a built-up area, however, Officers do not agree. Offchurch and the application site are located within a settlement boundary identified in the Local Plan, thus cannot be considered as open-countryside and must be defined as within a built up area. **Therefore, it cannot be considered that the development falls within this exception to inappropriate development within the Green Belt.**

However, notwithstanding this conclusion, the NPPF also states that the redevelopment of previously developed land can only be considered appropriate development within the Green Belt where it would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the **existing** development. The Planning Statement suggests that the extensions which are to be removed from Offa House should be offset against Property C when assessing the impact on openness. It is suggested that there is a reduction in volume and footprint when comparing these two built areas.

However, the Inspector concluded that the appropriate way to look at the site in Green Belt terms was as a whole, rather than in parts as the methodology proposed by the applicant suggests. Notwithstanding this, even when comparing just Property C and the existing extensions serving Offa House, Property C introduces a large two storey building where currently there is no built form. Moreover, the proposal would also result in built development spreading more widely across the site than under the previous applications. The Inspector noted that the existing site appears as a single building on a large open site, and the development resulted in a number of large buildings spread across different areas of the site. These conclusions apply directly in this case and both of these factors are considered to have a significant harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, Property C is not considered to meet any of the requirements for brownfield redevelopment.

Moreover, when considering the site as a whole, the calculations provided within the Planning Statement which identify the % differences between the existing and proposed development highlight a nominal difference between the existing and proposed development of a betterment of 1.15% in terms of volume. Whilst the footprint and hardstanding at the site would be materially reduced, this has limited meaningful impact on the openness of the Green Belt – as stated by the Inspector, the volume calculations provide the more appropriate indication of physical impact on openness. As stated above, the sprawling nature of the

development across the whole site has a significant harmful impact on openness, introducing built form where there currently is none. Therefore the small betterment in % terms is strongly outweighed by the harmful impact of spreading the development across the site.

Under the previous application which was dismissed, the Inspector noted that the proposal would radically change the site, creating a perception of domestic plots containing built development, at least part of which would be two storey, spread right across the site. This proposal still seeks to split the site into separate plots, increasing the number of separate buildings on the site and in Officers' view worsens the impact on the Green Belt in comparison to the previous scheme, as Property D is to be constructed further away from Offa House, thus spreading the built form further across the site.

Whilst the Planning Statement suggests that the dwellings have been designed to nestle into the site and adapt to the typography of the land, they would still be perceived as two storey buildings, where currently there is no built form. The proposal significantly increases the built form around the Coach House, where there previously was none. The proposed dwelling adjacent to the Coach House would dwarf the existing very modest building and provides a large detached dwelling, where there previously was only limited harm to openness. This is considered to diminish the openness of the Green Belt and create a sprawling form of development across the whole site, which would be exacerbated by the fact that the site would also be split into three separate residential curtilages, with the potential for increased harm to openness once the properties are occupied.

The reduction in hard standing across the site is noted, but this is offset by the introduction of the new drive and parking areas next to the dwellings.

The NPPF states that one of the essential characteristics of the Green Belt is its openness. Openness is the absence of development notwithstanding the degree of visibility of the land in question from the public realm. Openness has both spatial and visual aspects. The Inspector concluded that the previous scheme would have a significant adverse impact on openness. Officers consider that the proposed scheme would still have a significant adverse impact on openness in spatial and visual terms, for the aforementioned reasons. The proposed dwellings therefore represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt by definition and also have a harmful impact on openness.

Very special circumstances

It is therefore necessary to consider whether there are any very special circumstances which would outweigh the harm caused to openness, and any other harm identified.

The proposal would provide two additional dwellings, which would contribute towards the Council's housing supply. However, as the Council has a 5+ year housing land supply and the proposal would only provide 2 dwellings, the weight which can be afforded to this benefit is limited.

It is recognised that the proposed development would result in the removal of some harmful elements to the Grade II listed Offa House. This is obviously recognised as an important benefit to the scheme as a whole. However, as discussed in detail below, the proposal is considered to have an overall harmful impact on the listed buildings serving the site and the Conservation Area. Given the concerns expressed by the Conservation Officer regarding the proposed development and detrimental impact which this would have on designated heritage assets, it cannot be considered that this would represent very special circumstances which would outweigh the harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt.

The Planning Statement suggests that the very special circumstances include significant heritage benefits, including the preservation and enhancement of heritage assets, and securing the optimum viable use of the listed building, along with securing its long term future. However, for the reasons set out below, overall, the proposal is considered to be harmful to the setting of the listed buildings and Conservation Area.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would have a harmful impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and that there are no very special circumstances identified which would outweigh the harm caused by definition and to openness or to the other harm identified. The NPPF directs that substantial weight should be given to this harm. The proposal is considered to be contrary to Local Plan policy DS18 and the NPPF.

The impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area and Impact on Heritage Assets

An objector to the proposal raises the following concerns:

- Subdivision of site is not supported which is central to the value of the heritage asset, and would be harmful to the heritage asset and Conservation Area, with limited public benefit.
- The Lodge Cottage contributes to the setting of Offa House. The addition of Property D would diminish this relationship and as such would be detrimental to Offa House as a Heritage Asset. Property D would also appear to have a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area due to the reduction in green space.
- Loss of boundary wall would have harmful impact on heritage assets.
- Infill development considered to be harmful to the character of the Conservation Area.
- Development of the site on the scale proposed clearly removes the magnificence that the gardens bring to the property and removes the openness of the Green Belt land to the property and must surely be considered over-development.
- Works to Offa House itself supported in principle.

Supporters of the proposal have the following statements:

- In general the new proposals will mean that Offa House itself will sit on a plot appropriate for its size and history and the two new properties will provide accommodation which appears not to impinge on it.
- A beautiful building will be restored and updated in a proportionate and appropriate way.

- The house and land will be improved.
- The listed buildings are in a very poor state of repair and need to be renovated.
- Preserves and enhances listed buildings and conservation area.
- English Heritage have reviewed plans.
- The garden area will be beautiful.
- Alternative is to let building decay, the proposal will secure the future of the building.
- Would improve the character of the area and village
- Would not have a negative impact on the rural landscape.
- It is a reasonable, pragmatic, realistic and rational scheme that balances the demands of being within a conservation area and the need to preserve a significant listed building, with how families live in the 21st century, and the growing need for homes in all parts of the country.
- Carefully and sympathetically subdivides into more manageable sizes, a potentially unrealistic and burdensome house and grounds in this day and age, provides new (and still generously proportioned) homes and gardens for new families to move to the village, whilst at the same time very largely preserving the overall character, aspect, and feel of the original plot.
- Any arguments made against this application on the basis of Offchurch being a conservation area must take this into account. It is not the intention, scope or purpose of the conservation of Offchurch to preserve it. It is by definition characterised by having a variety of different houses from different periods. The objections that rely on citing this being a conservation area, appear not to take this into account. Rather they misguidedly rely heavily on the preservation of Offchurch, not its enhancement. The scheme as detailed, will provide the necessary addition to having houses from the early 21st century, and will do so in a way that is sympathetic in design and which, given this is a very low density development, will also maintain the "green open spaces" that form part of the specification, and that these spaces are "interspersed" with houses - the very definition of "low density".

The NPPF places significant weight on ensuring good design which is a key aspect of sustainable development and should positively contribute towards making places better for people. The NPPF states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving character, the quality of an area and the way it functions. Furthermore, Local Plan policy BE1 reinforces the importance of good design stipulated by the NPPF as it requires all development to respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing. The Local Plan calls for development to be constructed using the appropriate materials and seeks to ensure that the appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding built and natural environment does not detrimentally impact the character of the local area. Finally, the Residential Design Guide sets out steps which must be followed in order to achieve good design in terms of the impact on the local area; the importance of respecting existing important features; respecting the surrounding buildings and using the right materials.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) 1990 imposes a duty when exercising planning functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a Conservation Area. Section 66 of the same Act imposes a duty to have special regard to the

desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting when considering whether to grant a planning permission which affects a listed building or its setting.

Paragraph 199 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 202 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.

Policy HE1 of the Local Plan states that development will not be permitted if it would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Where the development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The explanatory text for HE1 clarifies that in considering applications relating to Conservation Areas, the Council will require that proposals do not have a detrimental effect upon the integrity and character of the building or its setting, or the Conservation Area. Local Plan Policy HE2 supports this and states that it is important that development both within and outside a conservation area, including to unlisted buildings, should not adversely affect its setting by impacting on important views and groups of buildings within and beyond the boundary.

Local Plan Policy BE4 states that the reuse of rural buildings is acceptable where the proposed use or adaptation can be accommodated without extensive rebuilding or alteration to the external appearance of the building, and the proposal retains and respects the special qualities and features of listed and other traditional rural buildings.

The application site is an integral part of the village and is an important site. Each element of the scheme is turned to below.

Offa House

Offa House is a good surviving example of a vicarage or rectory of its period, providing evidence of the social and religious life of the village over a continuous period since its construction. Its historic value is enhanced by the evidence of the then incumbent's involvement in the substantial extension of the original property. The house's architectural interest is based on the treatment and fine proportions and detailing of its original front, and on the successful integration of the ambitiously scaled later domestic expansion.

There is no objection to the principle of restoring and making alterations to Offa House, such as the proposed internal restorative work, installation of dormers and roof lantern, removal of modern wings and removal of the intrusive fire escape.

Under the previous application, a single storey side extension was also proposed, which was considered to be harmful to the listed building. This was removed from the scheme for the appeal process and also has not been included as part of the current proposal.

A single storey rear extension is proposed, which is similar in scale to that which was proposed under the last application. The Inspector as part of the appeal determined that this addition would not overpower the property and that subject to detailed design, an extension could be accepted as a clearly new further chapter in the house's history.

The Conservation Officer has commented on this part of the proposal, and has no objection to the alternations to Offa House, subject to confirmation of the materials to be used. Historic England also confirm the alterations to Offa House to be acceptable. Some members of the Conservation Area Forum (CAF) however considered the extension to be overbearing.

Given the notable improvements to the listed building derived from the removal of incongruous modern additions to the property and conclusions from the Inspector regarding the similar single storey rear extension, it is concluded that the alterations to fabric of Offa House are acceptable.

The Coach House / Property C

The Inspector for the appeal stated that, *"The coach house is virtually hidden from view by the topography of the site, which provides a very generous plot. The extent of the grounds provides a spacious immediate setting for the listed building. I agree with the Council that the scale of the plot, befitting the house's status, contributes to its significance."*

The previous scheme consisted of an extension to the Coach House, to provide a new dwelling. This proposal is materially different in that a new dwelling would be positioned close by, but not attaching to the existing Coach House. The large existing wall attaching to the Coach House would be retained, with a parking area provided next to it. Access to the dwelling would be provided through an existing opening in the wall, leading to a formal garden area and the L-shaped two and single storey dwelling. The Planning Statement describes the design of Property C as emulating a traditional coach house style property, complementing the age and existing character of Offa House.

The Conservation Officer has assessed Property C and notes that it would be substantially larger in terms of volume, height and massing when compared to the curtilage listed outbuilding. The visuals presented show that this is clearly visible from the 2 storey bay window of Offa House and its rear elevation creates a strong impression of increased urbanisation that is harmful to the setting of Offa House. Officers agree with the Conservation Officer that Property C clearly overwhelms the adjacent curtilage listed outbuilding. Its design also creates an inappropriate impression of grandeur that appears alien within the direct setting of a Georgian Vicarage. Although the coach house is now a free-standing structure, the visuals submitted demonstrate that the legibility of the coach house would largely be diminished given the dominance of the proposed dwelling, reducing the legibility of the coach house as an ancillary building to Offa House.

Members of the CAF debated the impact of the two additional dwellings, stating that they may overwhelm or be in competition with the existing Coach House

and the neighbouring Lodge Cottage. It was felt the size and scale of the houses could give the feel of a small rural housing estate rather than a country house and grounds with the new dwellings possibly going beyond enabling development.

Moreover, Officers consider that the proposal to provide a large building next to the existing listed Coach House and enclose it through the introduction of additional boundary treatments fundamentally affects the significance of the listed building, through the substantial reduction of the plot size which it would benefit from. As noted above, the Inspector identified the sizeable plot in which it is situated as an important part of the Coach House's significance.

Giving the competing nature of the Property C with the Coach House and fact that it would be absorbed into the curtilage of the proposed dwelling, severing it from Offa House, its heritage value as an historic service building would be fundamentally compromised, causing harm to the special interest of the listed building of which it forms part.

It is noted that Historic England consider that the scheme for the Coach House to be satisfactory. However, Historic England have provided little commentary on how they have reached this conclusion, and in any event, for the aforementioned reasons, Officers have taken a different view.

It should also be noted that a new wall is proposed adjacent to the Coach House. This will act as a boundary marker for the new dwelling and as a retaining wall. This is likely to be a sizeable structure, and the plans show this connecting to an existing wall which is connected to the Coach House. The agent has however stated that there would be a small gap between the walls. Officers have requested details of the wall (design, height, materials, details of the gap between the walls) in order to make an assessment of the impact of the development on the listed buildings, however, this has not been forthcoming. Officers therefore have insufficient information to assess this part of the proposals.

Property D

Property D is proposed adjacent to the highway and next to Lodge Cottage. It is a two and single storey building which would be L-shaped. This element of the proposal is materially different to that which was proposed under the previous scheme as a completely new build property (rather than formed from the existing extensions serving Offa House). The Planning Statement describes the design of this dwelling as similar to that of a converted barn, ensuring an ancillary relationship with Offa House and Lodge Cottage, whilst seeking to complement the character of other properties in the street scene.

The Conservation Officer considers that whilst Property D is small relative to the overall size of Offa House, it appears dominant in terms of bulk and massing on the street scene and overwhelms the modest Lodge Cottage building. The Lodge Cottage, located adjacent to the driveway of Offa House, clearly contributes towards the setting of the principal listed building and the proposal diminishes the contribution that the building makes towards the setting of Offa House and the Conservation Area. Lodge buildings are also typically isolated from the main

house and therefore a new house in greater volume would appear alien in this context.

Officers agree with these conclusions. It is also noted that whilst supporting the application, the Parish Council raise concerns regarding 'Property D' and impact on the village street scene. They consider that the removal of trees and the proximity of the building to the boundary will significantly change the street appearance. They note that when viewed from the west, at Park Gates the road rises when entering the village and consequently, a sizeable part of the new building elevation would be visible, rather than the current brick boundary wall.

It is noted that Historic England have stated that the proposal for the new house adjoining Lodge Cottage has a low impact on the setting of the main house and on the character of the Conservation Area. However, again, Historic England offer no explanation of this stance, and Officers do not agree with these comments for the aforementioned reasons.

Subdivision of the site

The Inspector stated in reference to the previous application that, "I agree with the Council that the subdivision of the existing site to create self-contained residential plots would have an intrusive urbanising effect that would detract from the setting of the listed building. The historic map evidence does not confirm actual past subdivision, for which no conclusive evidence has been found on the ground, as the purpose and history of the one fragment of brick wall are unclear. The contribution to the listed building's significance made by its setting would be harmed."

The Conservation Officer reiterated that the stance of the Planning Inspectorate is clear – any proposal to subdivide the site results in harm to both the setting of the listed building and the appearance and character of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Officer acknowledges that the topography of the site assists in mitigating some harm associated with the proposed subdivision, however Property C is highly visible when viewed from the architecturally significant bay window to Offa House. The dominance of the proposed dwelling dwarfs the existing coach house and gives a clear impression of subdivision.

WCC Landscape also note that the two proposed dwellings are of a substantial size and do not relate well to the existing dwellings of Offa House and Lodge Cottage. Property C appears to have as large a footprint as Offa House, with the existing Coach House in addition, and therefore Offa House will no longer read as the principal building on the site. They consider that likewise, Property D is considerably larger than Lodge Cottage and will visually dominate it.

The scheme is materially different to the previously refused scheme, in that the layout leaves more curtilage available for Offa House, using the typography of the site and hedgerow to delineate in the main where the boundaries between the properties would lie. Previously, estate fencing separated the site. However, given the conclusions from the Inspector regarding the historic layout of the site and fact that the proposals would still reduce the garden area serving Offa House, providing two new dwellings within relatively close proximity of the listed building, which would diminish its significance, Officers conclude that the

subdivision of the site would still be harmful. Moreover, the urbanisation and affect on the views from Offa House further exacerbate the impacts of the splitting of the site.

The applicant suggests that Property D would actually be located within the curtilage of Lodge Cottage, thus not sited within the curtilage of Offa House. However, a curtilage listed building cannot (by their very nature) have a curtilage that lies outside the curtilage of the principal listed building. In addition, there is no evidence to suggest that Property D is located wholly within the curtilage of the Lodge Cottage. This stance is therefore not supported.

Conservation Area

Offa House requires a substantial open garden to protect its special historical interest and significance. A substantial garden with open views of the surrounding land and wider countryside is integral to Offa House's historic character, identity and status in the village. This adds value to the Conservation Area.

The Inspector stated that "The character and appearance of the conservation area are heavily influenced by the inclusion within the designation of large areas of green space between buildings, some of which allow views through to the open countryside beyond. Offa House makes an important contribution to the character and appearance, both as a key historic building in the village and its garden as undeveloped green space."

The Inspector concluded, "As the quality of the site's green space contributes to the character of the conservation area, its subdivision and development as individual house plots would detract from that character, even though the site is screened from many public viewpoints. The character of a conservation area also depends greatly on the heritage value of the buildings it contains. Harm to the special interest of a key listed building in the village must inherently have an adverse effect on the conservation area's significance. In this case, the harm to the listed building due to insensitive alterations, the extension to the coach house and the poor relationship of the other house with the main building would all be detrimental to the character of the conservation area."

Officers have concluded above that the development would still have a harmful impact in terms of splitting the site and in terms of the significance of Offa House, the Coach House and Lodge Cottage. The overwhelming and alien nature of Property C on the Coach House, the overbearing nature of Property D on Lodge Cottage and harmful impacts of the subdivision of the open green space of the site are therefore considered to have a harmful impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

Conclusions

Given the nature of the development, proximity of the development and typography of the site, the proposals are not considered to have a harmful impact on the nearby listed church.

However, whilst there are benefits brought about as a result of the removal of incongruous additions to Offa House, there would also be a significant degree of harm caused to the setting of both of the listed buildings within the site boundary, the Lodge Cottage and also to the Conservation Area. This harm is considered to be less than substantial. The public benefit of the delivery of additional housing is offered limited weight given the small number of additional dwellings proposed and fact that the Council has a 5+ year housing land supply.

It is noted that some of the CAF and supporters of the proposal considered that the new houses were of an attractive and well thought out design, located at the boundaries of the site thereby preserving optimum green space. However, for the aforementioned reasons, Officers disagree with these statements.

Moreover, within the Inspector's decision, it was noted that whilst the use as a dwelling would be highly appropriate for Offa House, given its past institutional use, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that it would be the optimum use. The applicant proposes that the development would ensure the optimum use of the property as a residential dwelling. However, the residential use of Offa House has already been implemented. There is no enabling case presented to suggest that the works proposed are required in order to deliver the works to Offa House.

The applicant suggests that other public benefits of the scheme are the delivery of the objectives of paragraph 79 of the NPPF in terms of the provision of housing which enhances or maintains the vitality of rural communities. However, this would attract limited weight owing to the Council's 5+ year housing land supply and fact the that it would provide only two dwellings.

The applicant suggests that another public benefit is raising the standard of design in rural communities. Officers do not agree that this is a benefit, owing to the level of harm identified above.

The applicant states that a public benefit is the significant reduction of hard standing across the site. As discussed above this is offset in terms of the proposed development and harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

The applicant states that a 10% biodiversity net gain is a public benefit of the scheme. However, whilst a biodiversity net gain is welcomed, this has not yet be confirmed by WCC Ecology as being achievable. In any event, if this is confirmed by WCC Ecology, this is not considered to outweigh the significant degree of harm identified above.

The applicant states that another public benefit is avoiding the fallback position of retaining the unsympathetic additions. Officers consider however that it has not been demonstrated that this is the only scheme which would facilitate the removal of the incongruous additions to the property.

The applicant states that the fact that Historic England and the Georgian Society raise no objection to the proposal means that the development should be considered as acceptable and should be approved. However, Historic England were consulted in relation to the impact of the proposed development on the listed church which neighbours the site. Whilst their comments on the proposal

have been taken into consideration, it is the duty of the Council's Officers to weigh the balance of the scheme as a whole and come to a planning judgement based on all of the information provided. The Council's Conservation Officer has provided a detailed and well-justified case in relation to the harm caused to heritage assets. From the information provided, Officers have not been presented with any additional information to justify a departure from Officers' professional views. The Georgian Society who have been consulted on the proposal, have not responded to the consultation.

Therefore, it is considered that when taking all of the above information into consideration, the proposed development would have a harmful impact on the listed buildings and their setting, and the Conservation Area. The harm identified is considered to be less than substantial, however, the public benefits are considered to be limited and are not considered to outweigh the significant harm identified above. The development is also considered to have a harmful impact on the street scene and fails to respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing, and has a harmful impact on the character of the area. The development is therefore considered to be contrary to the NPPF and Local Plan policies BE1 and HE1.

Archaeological Impact

WCC Archaeology have assessed the application and note that the application site lies within an archaeologically sensitive area, within the probable extent of the medieval settlement of Offchurch and is adjacent to the Church of Saint Gregory a Grade II* listed building, probably dating from the 11th or 12th century. There is a potential that the proposed development could disturb archaeological remains relating to the medieval occupation of Offchurch, such as structural remains, boundary features or rubbish pits. They therefore recommend that a condition is attached requiring the provision of a written scheme of investigation and an Archaeological Mitigation Strategy document. This is considered to be reasonable and the condition could be added if the application were being approved.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Local Plan Policy HE4.

The impact on the living conditions of nearby dwellings and living conditions for the future occupiers of the site

Warwick District Local Plan Policy BE3 requires all development to have an acceptable impact on the amenity of nearby users or residents and to provide acceptable standards of amenity for future users or occupiers of the development. Development should not cause undue disturbance or intrusion for nearby users in the form of loss of privacy, loss of daylight, or create visual intrusion. The Residential Design Guide SPD provides a framework for Policy BE3, which stipulates the minimum requirements for distance separation between properties and that extensions should not breach a 45 degree line taken from a window of nearest front or rear facing habitable room of a neighbouring property.

Impact on living conditions of nearby dwellings

The nearest residential property to the application site is the Lodge Cottage to the south of the site. Given the typography of the site, Property D would be set down from this neighbour. There are windows at ground and first floor which would face towards the proposed dwelling. Property D would be single storey where it is positioned near the shared boundary with the neighbour. Whilst the ground floor window facing west of the site would be a primary window serving a habitable room, there is no minimum distance separation required to a single storey side facing elevation. The first floor side facing window serving Lodge Cottage would have views over the roofslope of Property D, providing sufficient outlook and privacy.

The proposal also references alterations to the garden of Lodge Cottage, making this area of private amenity space smaller in order to accommodate Property D. During Officers' site visit, this work had already been carried out. The garden area serving Lodge Cottage would still meet the minimum size requirement set out within the Council's Residential Design Guide, thus this alteration is considered to be acceptable.

It is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

Living conditions for the future occupiers

All of the proposed dwellings would provide adequate living conditions for their future occupiers and would provide adequately sized private amenity areas in accordance with the Council's adopted Residential Design Guide SPD.

It is noted that the first floor side facing window serving Lodge Cottage would have some views down into the courtyard garden area serving Property D at a reasonably short distance from the boundary. However, the future occupiers of Property D would also have a rear garden which is more likely to be used by the future occupiers given that it is larger and further from the road, which is private apart from occasional views into this area which the occupiers of Property C could obtain when accessing the site. With this in mind, and considering the constrained nature of the site in other regards, on balance this arrangement is considered to be acceptable.

The development is therefore considered to provide adequate living conditions for the future occupiers of the dwellings and would not have an unacceptable harmful impact on neighbouring residential amenity. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the NPPF, adopted Local Plan Policy BE3 and the Council's Residential Design Guide.

Car Parking and Highway Safety

Offa House would be accessed via the existing driveway and the proposed dwellings would be served by a new driveway, leading from an existing gated access which is not currently in use.

The Highways Authority have been consulted regarding the proposals. They have no objection to the development.

The proposed development would provide adequate parking in accordance with the Council's adopted Vehicle Parking Standards SPD and there is space within the site boundaries to store cycles.

The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Local Plan policies TR1 and TR3 and the Vehicle Parking Standards SPD.

Drainage

The application site lies within Flood Zone 1. Limited details have been submitted in relation to the drainage details for the site. However, the required information could be secured by condition if the application were being approved.

The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and Local Plan Policy FW2.

Ecological Impact

The application site is a part of a large Ecosite (Offchurch Bury Park Ref. 41/36), which is a non-statutory site identified by the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) as having some ecological value and recorded history.

WCC Ecology have requested information regarding the mitigation measures for bats and how the proposal will achieve a biodiversity net gain. Additional information has been provided by the applicant to address this matter which is with WCC Ecology for consideration. Councillors will be updated on this matter prior to the meeting.

Waste

Adequate waste storage can be accommodated within the site boundaries and Waste Management have no objection to the proposed development.

Climate Change

Local Plan policy CC1 states that all development is required to be designed to be resilient to and adapt to future impacts of climate change through the inclusion of adaption measures. Requirements 'a', 'b' and 'c' of the policy (layout, building orientation, construction techniques, materials, natural ventilation, green spaces, water efficiency) could be controlled via condition in the event that the application were being approved. In regards to point 'd' of the policy regarding minimising flood risk, it is noted that the site is located within Flood Zone 1, with the lowest probability of flooding and that the development is not likely to cause increased risk of flooding.

A member of the public states that all development will be carried out to current building control standards, and that this will result in some slightly improved efficiency in Offa House itself, therefore it is the case that far greater building performance will be achieved in the construction of the two additional dwellings. They consider that if this scheme did not include these additional dwellings then

Offa House would simply be restored in isolation and not achieve such impactful outcomes. They state that as part of a wider scheme, the overall average energy efficiency envelope will improve. They conclude that the two additional homes offset the limited potential of the original, leading to an overall net gain in energy efficiency, thus this is the more sustainable option. However, Officers disagree with this interpretation - all proposed dwellings will need to be constructed to a high energy efficiency standard, this is true of any new dwelling. This does not preclude the extension to Offa House being constructed in an energy efficient manner.

Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Local Plan policy CC1.

Impact on Trees

The Tree Officer requested additional information, and an updated Tree Report was provided in support of the application. There are seven trees and one group of trees to be removed to facilitate the development, and replacement tree planting has been proposed to offset the impact of each removal. On this basis, the Tree Officer has no objection, subject to a condition to ensure that the works are carried out in accordance with the details contained within the Tree Report. Officers consider this condition to be reasonable and necessary for the purposes of the development.

It is noted that WCC Landscape raised concerns regarding the loss of trees, stating that it is disappointing that the design and layout of the proposed new dwellings does not seek to retain more of the existing trees. They note that whilst trees can be replaced, it takes many years to reach maturity and provide the same benefits both visually and for climate change, biodiversity etc. Officers acknowledge these comments, but consider that given the replacement planting results in an overall betterment, this would not represent grounds on which to refuse the application.

Other Matters

Warwick District Council has adopted an air quality and planning supplementary planning document (AQ SPD) (2019) to tackle the cumulative air quality impacts of new development in the district. The AQ SPD establishes the principle of Warwick District as an emission reduction area and requires developers to use reasonable endeavours to minimise emissions and, where necessary, offset the impact of development on the environment. The guidance sets out a range of locally specific measures to be used to minimise and/or offset the emissions from new development. The proposed development would be classified as a minor scheme under the AQ SPD and therefore Type 1 mitigation measures will be necessary. The applicant's planning statement proposes the installation of 1no. electric vehicle charging point per dwelling which would be sufficient to satisfy Type 1 air quality mitigation requirements. The provision of electric vehicle charging points could be secured by condition.

The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Local Plan policy NE5.

The Offchurch Group Parochial Church Council have raised concerns regarding access to the site and boundaries. However, these are not material planning considerations.

A member of the public suggests that the proposal should be considered as self build development and that the proposal will address shortfall of provision of self-build housing. The applicant does not suggest that the dwellings are self-build developments. Notwithstanding this, if the properties were considered as self-build development, Local Plan policy H15 states that proposal for custom and self build housing are encouraged and will be improved in suitable sustainable locations. It gives a list of such locations, including "appropriate locations within infill villages" subject to compliance with Local and national policy, including Green Belt and historic designations. As detailed above, the dwellings do not meet with policies pertaining to the Green Belt or heritage assets.

Planning Balance / Conclusion

Whilst the site is considered to represent a sustainable location for new housing, policy H1 of the Local Plan also requires that housing development on garden land will not be permitted unless the development reinforces, or harmonises with, the established character of the street and/ or locality and respects surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing. As discussed above, the proposal is not considered to harmonise well with the street scene, by virtue of the fact that Property D would provide an overbearing form of development which would be harmful to the Lodge Cottage, the character of the area and street scene. WCC Landscape also state that Property D will completely alter the character of the road on the approach to the village, creating a sense of urbanisation when taken with the access to Property C. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Local Plan policy H1.

The proposed development is considered to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is harmful by definition and by reason of harm to openness. It is also considered to cause less than substantial harm to heritage assets. There are no public benefits or very special circumstances identified which would outweigh this harm. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Local Plan policies DS18, BE1 and HE1. These matters should be offered significant weight.

The applicant notes the level of support from local residents and the Parish Council. However, the Parish Council only in part support the scheme, and many of the comments submitted in support of the application are not from within the District. It is important that local residents are in support of a significant redevelopment such as this in a small village such as Offchurch. However, it cannot be considered that local support for this proposal outweighs the harm caused.

There are some modest benefits of the scheme as a whole, such as the delivery of housing in a sustainable location and heritage benefits to Offa House by removal of incongruous extensions. However, these do not outweigh the significant harm identified above.

For these reasons, the application is recommended for refusal.

REFUSAL REASONS

- 1 Policy H1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 states that housing development on garden land will not be permitted unless the development reinforces and harmonises with the established character of the street and/or locality and respects surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development would fail to satisfy the requirements of Policy H1 by reason that Property D would provide an overbearing form of development in terms of scale, design and mass which would be harmful to the Lodge Cottage and the street scene. Property D would detrimentally alter the character of the road on the approach to the village, creating a sense of urbanisation when taken with the access to Property C.

The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to the aforementioned policy.

- 2 The proposed development comprises inappropriate development within the Green Belt which is harmful by definition and by reason of harm to openness. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority no very special circumstances have been demonstrated which are considered sufficient to outweigh the harm identified. The development is therefore considered to be contrary to the NPPF and Warwick District Local Plan Policy DS18.

- 3 Local Plan Policy BE1 reinforces the importance of good design stipulated by the NPPF as it requires all development to respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing. The Local Plan requires development to be constructed using appropriate materials and seeks to ensure that the appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding built and natural environment does not detrimentally impact the character of the local area.

Policy HE1 of the Local Plan states that development will not be permitted if it would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Where the development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development would result in significant harm to designated heritage assets. 'Property C' would overwhelm the Coach House and would be of an alien design which diminishes the significance and legibility of the Coach House as an ancillary building to Offa House. 'Property D' would dominate and detract

from the Lodge Cottage, which contributes to the setting of Offa House, the Conservation Area and street scene.

The proposed dwellings and associated infrastructure have an urbanising affect on the character of the village, setting of the listed buildings and Conservation Area. Furthermore, dividing the site is considered to detract from Offa House and diminish the presence of this substantial house in extensive grounds, which is integral to the historic character of the listed building, and the identity and status of the property within the village. These factors in turn, have a harmful impact on the Conservation Area.

The development is also considered to have a harmful impact on the street scene and fails to respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing, and thus has a harmful impact on the character of the area.

Insufficient information has also been provided to assess the impact of the proposed retaining wall on heritage assets.

The proposal is thereby considered to be contrary to the aforementioned policies.
