

Offchurch

Conservation Area

Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest



CONSERVATION AREAS

General Introduction

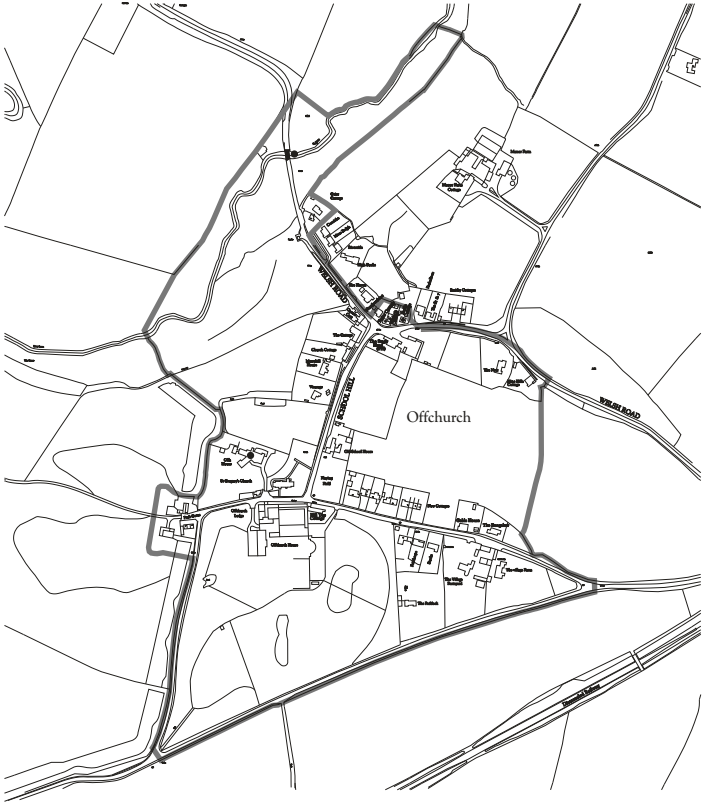
Old buildings and their settings are an important part of our local and national heritage. It is important to preserve them both as a historical and social record, together with a pleasant environment to be enjoyed both by those who live in them and for the enjoyment of others. To assist with the proper protection of these areas, the designation of areas of special architectural and historic interest as Conservation Areas was first introduced in 1967.

The village of Offchurch has been selected as a place with special characteristics worthy of designation as a Conservation Area. The maintenance of the character of this area is an important working partnership between those who live in the Conservation Area, the Parish Council and the District Council, with a view to householders and visitors to the village enjoying its special characteristics.

In many ways, Conservation Areas are a fragile environment which can soon be destroyed by unsympathetic changes or lack of maintenance. It is, therefore, important that all the partners involved are aware of, and appreciative of, the qualities which exist in the Conservation Area and also the controls that may be used to assist in its maintenance.



Offchurch Conservation Area.



 Conservation Area Boundary

 Listed buildings

This small publication has been designed to give a brief introduction to the Conservation Area by looking at its historical background, its characteristics and identifying those areas which need to be preserved or enhanced. General information is also given in the leaflet to enable those who live in the Conservation Area to both enjoy this privilege and also to understand how to seek further advice when it is needed.

Offchurch Conservation Area

The area designated as a Conservation Area in Offchurch is outlined on the map above. The Conservation Area in Offchurch was designated in 1976.

Listed Buildings

The following properties are statutorily protected as Listed Buildings within the Offchurch Conservation Area. Because these buildings are of high architectural and historic interest, they are among the top 2% of buildings in England statutorily protected. Any works to a Listed Building which affect its character or appearance will require Listed Building Consent. Certain repair works may be eligible for grant aid. Further information concerning Listed Buildings may be obtained from the District Council's Conservation staff :-
Church of St Gregory (II*), The Retreat House, **Welsh Road**, The Stags Head Public House, Holly Cottage, Tudor Cottage, Wisteria Cottage and Offchurch Bridge.

Areas included within the Conservation Area

The following streets/roads are included within the Offchurch Conservation Area. If you are unclear whether or not your house is included in the Conservation Area please contact the Conservation staff at Warwick District Council.

Welsh Road (parts), School Hill, Offchurch Village Street and parts of the main road from Radford Semele.

Scheduled Monuments, Historic Parks and Sites of Special Scientific Interest

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks or Sites of Special Scientific Interest with the Offchurch Conservation Area.

In certain instances, works within the Conservation Area adjacent to the boundary of one such area of Special Interest may need to be considered in the context of the location of the specially designated area.

Historical Background

Evidence of the Roman settlement in Britain survives in Offchurch as the remains of a building from that period, which was possibly a small fort or a guard post. However, it was under Anglo Saxon rule that the village gained greater historical significance. It is suggested that the village derived its name from King Offa, a Mercian King (757-796), meaning "the church founded or owned by Offa". Offchurch is traditionally known as the site for King Offa's palace, located at Bury Park. The King died at Offchurch and is buried in the parish church. Dugdale wrote of Offchurch that, "this hath been a town of no small note in Saxon times", and he further suggested that the manorial name of Bury denoted a fortified place. The sixteenth century writer, Camden, further posited that Offchurch was also the burial site for the murdered Fremund, son of King Offa. The Anglo Saxon

settlement of the village is supported by the discovery of remains of an Anglo Saxon cemetery to the south of the church in 1875. There is, however, no mention of the village in the Domesday book. The first mention of Offchurch, after the Norman Invasion, was as part of an endowment towards the foundation of Coventry Priory in Henry III's reign in 1267. By 1291 the total monastic estate was valued at £26. 12s. 3/4d. Offchurch remained under the tenure of the Prior until the Dissolution. In 1502, the Manor of Offchurch is recorded as being leased from the prior to Richard and Margery Palmer, and then later to the Alcocke family. The estate reverted to the Crown with the Dissolution, and in 1542, it was acquired by the Sir Edmund and Lady Ursula Knightley, whose successors, then held it almost continuously until 1919. The Offchurch lands were confiscated by the Crown in 1626, partly because the Knightleys had continued to adhere to the Catholic faith after the English Reformation. For a period of twenty one years, the estate was then held by John Pecke. After the short break in ownership, the estate remained with the Knightley family, although in 1688, as a consequence of family feuding, the lands passed to a step-grandson, John Widgwick, on the condition that he adopted the family surname. In 1846, the last daughter of the family, Jane Knightley married the Earl of Aylesford and after her death, the estate was sold to John Watson, first Baron Manton, and then later to Harry Johnson, a textile manufacturer of Coventry and Macclesfield. The estate is now held by his successors. The first church in Offchurch was Saxon, built typically of wood. Dedicated to St Gregory, it was rebuilt in the twelfth century in the traditional layout of a nave and a small square-headed chancel. A tower was later added in the fifteenth century. In 1866 the chancel was almost entirely rebuilt.

Character of Conservation Area

Offchurch Conservation Area is characterised by green open spaces interspersed with a variety of houses of different periods, together with long views into open countryside.

The village is entered from the south east past the Lodge House to Offchurch Bury. Offa House (the former rectory) and Church of St Gregory form a gradual bend with trees and established planting on the eastern side; this is an important entrance into the village, encapsulating several historic features.

Main Street leads off in an easterly direction and is lined by a mixture of eighteenth to twentieth century properties. The character of the eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings is small scale and distinctive brick colour. It is important to the character of the Conservation Area that the detailing such as windows and doors are maintained, where they are traditional, or restored back to original details where modern replacements have been made. Many of the properties retain their original boundary treatment of fences and hedges and it is important that these are retained or strengthened and replaced, where they are missing. From Main Street there are important views to the east across open countryside.

School Hill drops steeply to the west beyond the church and forms a boundary to the large green area in the centre of the village. This is still in agricultural use and should remain, thus retaining the villages past associations as an agricultural community. There are also a number of dwellings and the former village school, a typical nineteenth - twentieth

century school building. There are a number of mature trees lining school hill which add to its character.

School Hill links to the lower part of the village. At the junction of School Hill and Welsh Road is the Stags Head Public House, a traditional building of seventeenth century origins, with later additions. It is important that the character of this junction should be maintained and enhanced. In Welsh Road are a variety of buildings, the character of which is their scale and traditional boundary treatments. At the river crossing is the stone bridge and remains of the former osier beds. This part of Offchurch is the interface between the countryside and the village and it is important that the "soft edges" should be maintained.

The western edge of Offchurch links back to the higher ground and from the south western boundary to the green space within the centre of the village. The characteristic small scale quality of the buildings, traditional boundary treatments and large open green spaces form the essential qualities of this Conservation Area.

Important Views

The significant views at Offchurch are across the Conservation area from Main Street and out of the village to the open countryside. There are important views from the entrance of the village from the Lodge Cottage access to Offchurch Bury, and from Main Street there are views across the central green area to the Warwickshire countryside beyond. There are important views within the Conservation Area along Main Street and Welsh Road. No new development should be permitted which would dominate or obstruct these views.

What does Conservation Area Designation Mean?

The formal definition of a Conservation Area within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is "an area of special architectural historic interest, character or appearance of which it is desired to preserve or enhance". The designation of a Conservation Area has several formal consequences which includes:-

- The demolition of all complete buildings and certain parts of buildings within Conservation Areas is controlled, requiring Conservation Area consent from the District Council.
- It is an offence to cut down, uproot, lop, top or wilfully damage or destroy any tree in a Conservation Area, except with the consent of the District Council.
- The amount of permitted development "that which can be built without planning permission" is more limited in a Conservation Area and additional limitations apply to the display of advertisements.



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Fax: 01926 456542

If you are considering carrying out any form of development in a Conservation Area, for example, the erection of a fence, or the alteration of your house, it is advisable to contact the Development Control Section of the Planning Department at Warwick District Council before you start work.

Where can I find out more information about Offchurch Conservation Area?

The Local Plan, which determines all land use within Warwick District, will contain certain policies which are relevant to the Offchurch Conservation Area. These will be both specific to Offchurch and also to Conservation Areas in general and will always need to be taken into account where any form of development is proposed within the Conservation Area. Copies of relevant Local Plan policies can be made available from the Policy, Projects and Conservation Section of the Planning Department at the District Council. Other helpful information may be obtained from the District Council's Design Guidance Leaflets which include general guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, specific guidance on windows, roofs, doors and the conversion of agricultural buildings.

Certain buildings within Conservation Areas may be eligible for grant aid for the maintenance of their character and terms of the overall preservation of the Conservation Area. Specific details of the availability of grant aid may be obtained from the Conservation Section at Warwick District Council.

Should you need to fell or lop trees or shrubs within the Conservation Area, written application should be made to the Planning Department.



Where possible, information can be made available in other formats, including large print, cassette tape, CD and other languages if required. Tel. 01926 450000.



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