

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Application No: 261484

Site: 1 University Farm Cottages, Charvil Lane, Sonning, RG4 6TJ

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a householder planning application for extensions and alterations at 1 University Farm Cottages.

The site lies within the **Sonning Conservation Area**, and this statement assesses the significance of the heritage asset and the impact of the proposed works.

In accordance with the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, this statement describes the significance of the heritage asset and the potential impact of the development.

2. Site and Surroundings

The application property forms part of a group of cottages in a rural edge-of-settlement location.

The surrounding area is characterised by:

- Low-density residential development
- Traditional cottages and agricultural-style buildings
- Open countryside setting and greenery

The site lies within the **Sonning Conservation Area**, which is recognised as an area of special architectural and historic interest where the character and appearance should be preserved or enhanced.



Sonning Conservation Area

The character of the Conservation Area is defined by its:

- Rural village form
- Spacious layout and landscape setting
- Traditional building forms and materials

3. Heritage Assets

The application site lies within the **Sonning Conservation Area**, which is a designated heritage asset of special architectural and historic interest. The character of the Conservation Area is defined by its historic village form, traditional buildings, open spaces, and strong relationship with the surrounding landscape.

There are also a number of **listed buildings within Sonning**, including high-grade assets such as the Church of St Andrew and The Deanery, alongside numerous Grade II listed cottages, houses, and associated structures which contribute to the character of the area.

In addition, other heritage assets such as **Sonning Bridge (Grade II listed)** and historic buildings along Thames Street and surrounding areas contribute to the wider historic environment and setting of the Conservation Area.

The application property itself, while not listed, contributes positively to the Conservation Area as a building of traditional form. The significance of the site is therefore derived from both its individual characteristics and its contribution to the wider group of buildings and landscape setting.

The potential impact of the proposal on these heritage assets, including their setting, has been carefully considered and is addressed in the sections below.

4. Significance of the Heritage Asset

The property is not a listed building but is considered to make a **positive contribution to the Conservation Area** through:

- Its traditional domestic scale and form
- Its relationship with neighbouring cottages
- Its contribution to the rural character of the area

The significance of the site lies primarily in:

- The collective character of the group of buildings
- The visual harmony of simple forms and materials

- The setting within a rural landscape

In accordance with national policy, heritage assets are an **irreplaceable resource** and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

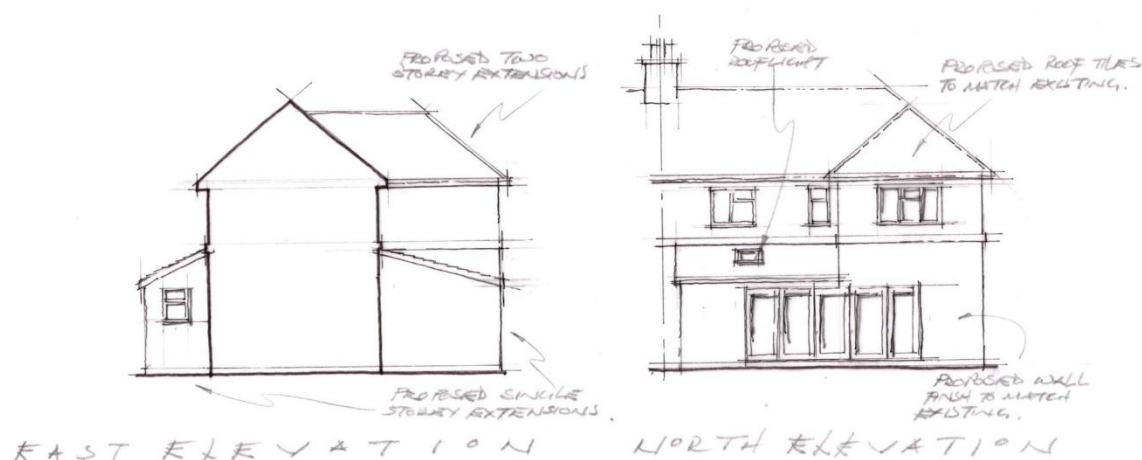
5. Description of the Proposed Development

The proposed development includes:

- A **part single, part two-storey rear extension**
- A **single-storey front extension with porch**
- Alterations to windows and doors
- Installation of **roof-mounted solar panels**
- Associated garden pergola

The extensions are designed to be **subordinate to the existing dwelling**, using materials that match or complement the existing property.

The proposal reflects national policy which encourages development to **make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness**.



Pre-application sketch elevations

6. Volume Assessment

In accordance with local validation requirements for development within the countryside, an assessment of built volume has been undertaken.

- **Original building volume:** 279 m³
- **Existing building volume:** 349.9 m³

- **Proposed building volume:** 461.6 m³

This represents:

- An increase in volume of **70.9 m³** (circa 25.4%) from the original to the existing building
- A further increase in volume of **111.7 m³** (circa 32.9%) from the existing to the proposed development
- A **total increase in volume of 182.6 m³** from the original building

Despite this increase, the proposed development remains proportionate and is designed to respect the scale and character of the original dwelling. The extension has been carefully designed to ensure it remains subordinate and does not result in overdevelopment of the site.



Sonning Conservation Area

7. Impact on the Conservation Area

Scale and Design

- The extensions are proportionate and subordinate
- The form reflects the existing building and surrounding development

Visibility

- The majority of development is located to the rear
- Limited visibility from public viewpoints reduces impact

Character and Appearance

- The proposal maintains the pattern of development

- Materials and detailing are sympathetic to the host building

Overall Impact

The development:

- Preserves the character of the Conservation Area
- Retains the significance of the heritage asset
- Does not result in harm to the setting of nearby buildings

In accordance with the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**, special attention has been given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

8. Planning Policy and Justification

The proposal has been assessed against relevant national and local planning policy.

- The **NPPF (Section 16)** requires proposals to conserve heritage assets and assess their significance and impact.
- The **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** requires development to preserve or enhance Conservation Areas.
- Local planning policy seeks development that respects the **historic character and identity** of the area and responds to its setting. The proposal complies with these policies as:
 - It respects the **scale, form, and materials** of the host building
 - It maintains the **rural character and openness** of the area
 - It preserves the **character and appearance of the Sonning Conservation Area**

9. Conclusion

The proposed development:

- Respects the significance of the heritage asset - The appearance of the proposal seeks to preserve the character of the surrounding area, where the existing use (residential), condition and physical form are a strong element within the site. The proposal will match the existing use in terms of form, scale and materials in order to be robust and appropriate for the use.
- Preserves the character and appearance of the Sonning Conservation Area – The proposal would complementary subservient and integrate well with the existing dwelling and would be sensitive to the existing surroundings. The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area. The massing is appropriate in terms of height, design and appearance. The modest new extensions will provide much needed additional accommodation and match the surrounding character of the area in terms of form, scale, and materials.

- Complies with national and local heritage planning policy - The proposal has been designed to have a limited palette to limit impact on the surrounding features. The resultant juxtaposition between the proposed form and the use of vernacular materials enables the strength of the existing form design to provide an appropriate and sympathetic visual reference to the characteristics of the existing site and its environs.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in heritage terms.