

**Representation received from Mr T Tootill, Head of Building and Engineering,  
Downside Abbey**

Dear Sir/Madam, thank you for this notification on the draft neighbourhood plan. I note that our RC church site is referred to a couple of times in the report as a site for infill development within the defined development boundary of the village. However, I have a concern that the PC are making very generalised statements and imposing quite arbitrary conditions on the site, which have not been discussed in advance with the owners and seem to have no basis under existing planning rules. In particular:

1. There is a presumption that the former RC church can accommodate 2 semi-detached properties. This seems to assume demolition of the church, which currently is not our intention. In fact, we believe that conversion of the existing church into a single family home would be a more sensitive and less damaging change. The church is representative of a particular architectural style and is quite beautiful inside. It has been a recognised venue for many parishioners in the village over the years and we believe most villagers would support retaining the building - albeit as a conversion. The elevated site and narrow access is also a challenge, which makes demolition and redevelopment particularly undesirable.
2. The paddock behind the church is already subject to a planning application for two properties. The application has been carefully designed to limit impact on the majority of the original orchard area, but we object strongly to the PC seeking to define a completely arbitrary development line across the southern limit of the carpark - this is not within their remit. Regardless of whether the PC feel there are logistical challenges relating to the buried power cables, this is not for them to determine. The paddock is not a designated green space and it sits clearly within the development limits for the village. It should not be for the PC to define such specific designs for development. The reality is that there is insufficient space on the car park area alone to accommodate two new houses, especially as the PC has failed to take into account that the car park includes parking for tenants and visitors to Wayside Cottage and also that the parking/turning requirements for such a confined development could not be accommodated in the area you have defined.
3. The draft document does not mention enforcement. The PC has failed to take any action on the owners/developers of 7 Bell Hill, who have carried out a completely incongruous re-development of the original bungalow. Materials have been used which are completely unsuitable and totally at odds with the design recommendations of the neighbourhood plan. In addition, the ridge height of the new building is significantly higher than agreed under the approved planning consent. For such a recent development, it is quite disgraceful that the PC seem to have abdicated their responsibilities to address this issue.

Please amend the current draft plan and reissue a further draft to reflect these comments.