

Planning Statement, Amberwell House, Box Hill

1. INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement supports an application for the erection of a two-bay timber carport within the domestic curtilage of Amberwell House, Box Hill, Corsham. Amberwell is a detached dwelling on Lower Common, Box Hill, located within the North Wiltshire Green Belt and the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB).

The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate that the proposed development constitutes an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, causing no harm to its openness, and conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the Cotswolds National Landscape, in accordance with:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (December 2024)
 - Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan (2025–2030)
 - Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015)
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2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Amberwell occupies a sloping, terraced plot of approximately 0.6 acres in a rural setting. The site contains:

- A two-storey, four-bedroom period dwelling (not listed)
- A detached outbuilding with planning permission for conversion into an annexe
- A large garden with mature trees, hedgerows and stone boundary walls

The surrounding area is characterised by dispersed dwellings and traditional vernacular structures, including garages, stables and agricultural-style outbuildings. The site lies within the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape, and according to NPPF paragraph 189, great weight must be given to conserving landscape character in National Landscapes.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is for a detached, double-bay timber carport, positioned on the existing driveway, close to the main dwelling and set against a substantial, pre-existing retaining wall.

- Use: Incidental domestic car parking only
- Footprint: 6.0m x 5.0m (30 sqm)
- Scale: Clearly subordinate to the host dwelling (approximately 170 sqm)
- Design: Simple, barn-like form with a pitched roof, reflecting local rural typologies and preserving the character of the area, as reflected in Wiltshire Core Policy 57

The carport will accommodate two modern vehicles and include provision for electric vehicle charging, supporting the Government's transition to low-emission transport in accordance with NPPF paragraph 112(e), which promotes sustainable transport and electric vehicle

infrastructure. The building's scale and open-fronted design ensure the structure remains lightweight and non-intrusive within the landscape.

4. MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION

The proposed carport will be constructed as follows:

- Timber frame with horizontal timber cladding to rear and gable ends
- The use of FSC-certified timber throughout
- Traditional clay roof tiles of a type found on the south side of the main dwelling
- Low profile conservation-style rooflights to allow natural light into the structure

These materials respond positively to: Wiltshire Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping.

The structure will stand on concrete strip foundations on the existing driveway; retaining the long-established permeable surface of compacted rubble and gravel. This minimises ground disturbance, reduces embodied carbon, and aligns with aspirations for sustainable construction with a lower environmental impact.

Collectively these measures contribute towards:

- NPPF Section 2, regarding Sustainable development; NPPF paragraph 164
 - Wiltshire Core Policy 41: Sustainable construction and low carbon energy.
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5. LOCATION WITHIN THE CURTILAGE AND GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

Green Belt Policy Context

Under NPPF paragraph 154, new buildings in the Green Belt are inappropriate unless they fall within listed exceptions. The proposed carport:

- Is incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling
- Is located wholly within the residential curtilage
- Is proportionate and clearly subordinate in scale

Siting and Openness

The siting and design of the carport ensure that the openness of the Green Belt is preserved, in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 153 and 154, as follows:

- The carport would be positioned against a pre-existing, three-sided retaining wall approximately 2 metres in height at the rear of the existing driveway
- It would maintain a clear visual and functional relationship with the host dwelling, a relationship which is reinforced by a prominently sited, continuous boundary fence

running behind the retaining wall, the carport and the dwelling. (It is not possible to attach the carport to the host dwelling because of the terraced site.)

- There is no intervening land between the carport, retaining wall/boundary fence, and the host dwelling which would reasonably be perceived as open countryside (photograph below with the host dwelling shown on the right)
- The siting consolidates built form within the established domestic curtilage and avoids the visual and spatial sprawl sometimes associated with detached outbuildings
- The carport would be read as part of the existing built form rather than as an encroachment into the wider Green Belt



Accordingly, due to the modest scale, limited footprint and discreet siting of the structure, the proposal would not represent a disproportionate addition to the dwelling and would result in no material harm to Green Belt openness, either spatially or visually.

6. TOPOGRAPHY, VISIBILITY AND LANDSCAPE IMPACT

Amberwell occupies a sloping, terraced site which substantially reduces the visual impact of the proposed carport.

To the south and east:

- The retaining wall, sloping bank, stone wall and boundary fence create a combined height of 5.45 metres
- Large conifer trees, smaller deciduous trees, and vegetation provide substantial screening from within the garden. Trees around the perimeter of the site on Lower Common, Box Hill, also provide additional screening



To the north:

- Mature trees and hedgerows screen views towards Colerne and downhill to Beech Road



To the east

Amberwell House blocks visibility of carport

As a result:

- The carport will not be visible from Lower Common, Box Hill
- It will not intrude into views across the valley
- It will not affect the setting or views from neighbouring properties, including the closest listed buildings, Cherry Tree Cottage and Hilden

This accords with:

- Wiltshire Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

- Wiltshire Core Policy 51: Landscape
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7. COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a statutory duty on decision-makers to give great weight to conserving and enhancing natural beauty within National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

The proposal responds directly to this duty by:

- Using locally appropriate materials and forms
- Minimising greenhouse gas emissions by using sustainable materials and retaining and re-using the existing compacted rubble and gravel hardstanding
- Siting the building to minimise visibility
- Retaining existing landscape features
- Introducing new planting to enhance biodiversity

This approach aligns with the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030, particularly:

- Policy CE1, concerning the conservation of the landscape character
 - Policy CC1.2: Climate change mitigation, particularly the use of sustainable materials and re-use of the hardstanding
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8. LANDSCAPE MITIGATION AND BIODIVERSITY

The proposal includes a landscape enhancement strategy, recognising that domestic gardens play an important role in nature conservation:

- New plantings of crab apple and coppiced mountain ash either side of the carport
- Berried wall shrubs (e.g. pyracantha) to soften and eventually screen the visible section of the retaining wall
- Creation of a gravel garden using native limestone grassland species, such as ox-eye daisies, knapweed, scabious, mullein; together with pollinator-friendly, long-flowering ornamental plants, such as *Verbena bonariensis* and lavender
- These landscape plantings are integral to the design, not an afterthought

These measures will:

- Improve the appearance of the entire driveway
- Reduce the visual dominance of the pre-existing retaining wall and hardstanding, helping to blend these elements into the rural setting
- Deliver biodiversity benefits, especially for birds and insects

This accords with:

- NPPF paragraph 187: Enhancing the natural environment; paragraph 189: Conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes
 - Wiltshire Core Policy 57(ii) regarding the retention and enhancement of natural features, and their role in integrating a new development into its setting
 - Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030, CE1.2, regarding the enhancement of the scenic quality of the location and its setting
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9. INTENDED USE

The carport is strictly for incidental domestic use and is not capable of conversion to independent residential accommodation. This is consistent with local planning controls on ancillary development.

10. ACCESS AND PARKING

No changes are proposed to the existing access across Lower Common. The driveway will continue to provide ample additional parking spaces.

11. PRECEDENT

Planning permission was granted in 2023 for a new detached double garage at Barberry Cottage, Box Hill (PL/2023/04092). In that case, the Council accepted that a modest, well-sited ancillary building within the curtilage would cause no harm to Green Belt openness, establishing a relevant local precedent.

12. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The proposed timber carport represents a modest, well-designed and sensitively sited ancillary structure that:

- Falls within the NPPF Green Belt exception for incidental buildings
- Preserves Green Belt openness, due to its siting against an existing retaining wall and its position on a sloping site with mature vegetation providing effective screening
- Conserves and enhances the Cotswolds National Landscape
- Complies with the Wiltshire Core Strategy

This proposal will improve the appearance and functionality of the driveway, enhance biodiversity, and support sustainable transport without harm to landscape character or residential amenity. Planning permission is therefore respectfully requested.