Objection by The Market Bosworth Society
Re: Rainbow Cottage, Shenton Lane, Market Bosworth

The Market Bosworth Society wishes to object to the above application.
At the outset, we wish to make clear that this representation is not an objection to the principle of improved parking provision, nor is it intended as criticism of the owners of Rainbow Cottage. We recognise the practical difficulties associated with parking in this part of Market Bosworth and understand the attraction of securing an off-road parking space. Our concern is that the application has failed to demonstrate that the proposed solution preserves the significance, setting and character of one of Market Bosworth's most recognisable heritage assets, and that the supporting Heritage Assessment does not provide a sufficiently robust evidential basis upon which such conclusions can confidently be reached.

1. Conflict with Development Plan Policies
The application should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the Society is not persuaded that the proposal demonstrates compliance with key provisions of both the adopted Market Bosworth Neighbourhood Plan 2020–2039 and the adopted Hinckley & Bosworth Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD.
DM10 – Development and Design
Policy DM10 requires development to respond positively to local character and distinctiveness. The proposed removal of part of the established landscaped frontage of one of Market Bosworth's best-known listed buildings and its replacement with vehicle infrastructure does not, in the Society's view, demonstrate a positive response to local character or reinforce the qualities which make this part of Shenton Lane distinctive. [emeryplanning.com]

DM11 – Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment
Policy DM11 seeks not merely to protect, but to enhance, the historic environment. The applicant's own Heritage Assessment acknowledges the contribution made by planting, landscaping and boundary treatments to the site's significance and surroundings. The proposal would result in the partial loss of those very features. Consequently, the Society is not convinced that compliance with DM11 has been demonstrated. [emeryplanning.com]

DM12 – Heritage Assets
Policy DM12 requires heritage assets and their settings to be properly understood before impacts are assessed. The Society's concerns regarding the treatment of the reconstructed "1592 map", the limited consideration given to the 1848 Tithe evidence and the uncertain treatment of the surviving cruck frame raise doubts as to whether the significance of Rainbow Cottage has been fully understood. If significance has not been fully understood, the assessment of impact is inevitably weakened. [emeryplanning.com]

DM17 – Highways and Transportation
Policy DM17 requires satisfactory and safe access arrangements. The Society is concerned that adequate visibility from the proposed parking bay has not been demonstrated, particularly having regard to the altered traffic priorities at the nearby Rectory Lane/Shenton Lane junction. The application provides insufficient evidence to demonstrate that vehicles can safely enter and leave the proposed space without prejudice to highway safety. [emeryplanning.com]

2. Conflict with the Market Bosworth Neighbourhood Plan

The adopted Neighbourhood Plan repeatedly emphasises the importance of conserving the historic environment, maintaining local distinctiveness and ensuring that development respects the special character of Market Bosworth. The Plan's stated aims include reinforcing the quality and character of the town, protecting its landscape, taking account of impacts on heritage assets and prioritising local distinctiveness in every element of change.

Policy DC1 – Design Codes

Policy DC1 requires development proposals to demonstrate how they contribute positively to their character area and conform with the Market Bosworth Design Codes. Rainbow Cottage lies within the Historic Core character area. The Society is not convinced that replacing part of the landscaped setting of a Grade II listed building with a parking bay contributes positively to that character area.

Policy CE1a – Character Area Compatibility

Policy CE1a requires development to remain in keeping with its character area in terms of scale, layout and materials, whilst retaining local distinctiveness and creating a sense of place. Rainbow Cottage occupies a highly distinctive and historically important location at one of the principal approaches into the town centre. The application does not demonstrate how the loss of part of the frontage garden and introduction of a parking bay preserves or enhances that local distinctiveness

Policy CE3 – Important Views, Vistas and Landscape Character

Policy CE3 requires development to assess and avoid adverse impacts on landscape character and significant views. The Society considers that insufficient assessment has been undertaken regarding the contribution made by the existing frontage, planting and setting of Rainbow Cottage to the character of this important corner of the Conservation Area. It has not therefore been demonstrated that the proposal conserves or enhances local character as required by the policy.

Policy CE4 – Trees and Hedgerows

Policy CE4 reflects the importance that the Neighbourhood Plan places upon mature planting, greenery and landscape features. Whilst the proposal may not involve the removal of protected trees, it nevertheless reduces an established landscaped frontage which contributes positively to the appearance of Shenton Lane and the wider historic environment. This appears contrary to the spirit and intention of the policy.

Policy BD4 – Heritage Asset Protection

Policy BD4 provides that proposals causing harm to heritage assets should only be supported if it can be demonstrated that the overall benefit outweighs that harm. Rainbow Cottage is specifically identified within the Neighbourhood Plan as a Grade II listed heritage asset. The Society remains unconvinced that the applicant has demonstrated that the private benefit of a parking space outweighs the permanent alteration to the setting of this important heritage asset.

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3. Weaknesses in the Heritage Assessment

The Society has serious reservations regarding the robustness of the submitted Heritage Assessment.

The report places reliance upon what is described as a surviving 1592 map. However, enquiries undertaken by the Society indicate that no original 1592 map survives. The document referred to is understood to be a later reconstruction prepared by John P. Sayer.

This distinction is important.
The report appears to draw conclusions regarding the development history of Rainbow Cottage from its apparent absence on that reconstruction. However, if the original map is lost and the reconstruction was never intended to identify every structure present within the settlement, those conclusions become considerably less secure.
The Society is therefore concerned that historical interpretation is at times presented with a degree of certainty not fully supported by the available evidence.

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4. Insufficient Consideration of Historic Sources
The Heritage Assessment refers to the 1848 Tithe Map and Award but appears not to have examined them in any significant detail.
Yet the 1848 Tithe Map constitutes genuine survey evidence, recording the town and its buildings as they actually existed in the mid-nineteenth century. The Society finds it difficult to understand why greater weight appears to have been placed upon a reconstructed sixteenth-century plan than upon an actual historic survey and its associated documentary evidence.
This omission raises concerns regarding the completeness of the historical analysis and the reliability of the conclusions subsequently reached.

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5. Possible Understatement of the Building's Significance
Rainbow Cottage contains a surviving cruck frame visible internally.
The Society does not suggest that the building can be definitively dated earlier than currently recorded. However, cruck construction is generally associated with medieval and early post-medieval building traditions, and the feature raises legitimate questions regarding the developmental history of the structure.
No specialist building archaeology assessment or dendrochronological analysis appears to have been undertaken.
Where uncertainty exists regarding significance, the Society believes a cautious approach should be adopted.

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6. Harm to the Setting of a Grade II Listed Building
Rainbow Cottage is not merely another listed building. It is one of the most recognisable buildings in Market Bosworth and occupies a highly prominent position within the Conservation Area.
The proposal involves the removal of part of the established frontage garden and its replacement with a parking bay, retaining wall and associated works.
The frontage is not simply spare or underused land. It forms part of the setting of the listed building and contributes positively to the appearance of Shenton Lane and the wider street scene.
The garden has for many years contributed to the visual quality of the area. Former owners invested considerable effort in its presentation and maintenance, and it has received favourable comment over many years as part of the character of this important corner.
Once removed and replaced by a parking bay, the change is highly unlikely ever to be reversed.

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7. Impact upon Historic Townscape Character
The Society is particularly concerned that insufficient consideration has been given to the historic morphology of Market Bosworth.
Rainbow Cottage occupies one of the characteristic approaches into the historic Market Place and forms part of the distinctive narrowing of routes converging upon the town centre. This

arrangement contributes significantly to the historic legibility and character of Market Bosworth.
The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of the historic core and the relationship between its buildings, spaces and approaches. The Society is not persuaded that the cumulative effect of the proposed works upon this particularly sensitive location has been adequately assessed.

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8. Limited Public Benefit
The benefits identified by the application appear principally to comprise:

- Provision of a private parking space;
- Reduced on-street parking associated with a single property;
- Increased convenience for occupiers.

These are legitimate benefits and the Society does not dismiss them.
However, they are primarily private rather than public benefits. When balanced against the permanent alteration of the setting of a Grade II listed building and a prominent position within the Conservation Area, the Society is not persuaded that sufficient justification has been demonstrated.

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9. Highway Safety Concerns
The Society also wishes to raise concerns regarding visibility and vehicle movements.
Since changes to traffic priorities at the Rectory Lane/Shenton Lane junction, traffic movements differ significantly from those that existed previously.
Vehicles emerging from the proposed parking bay would do so immediately adjacent to Rainbow Cottage itself. The physical presence of the building may restrict visibility, particularly for drivers seated on the right-hand side of a vehicle emerging into Shenton Lane.
The application does not appear to contain a detailed assessment demonstrating that satisfactory visibility splays can be achieved or that vehicle movements can be undertaken safely.
Should the Highway Authority share these concerns, the practicality of the proposal may be fundamentally undermined.

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10. Listed Building Consent
The Society is surprised that no Listed Building Consent application appears to accompany the proposal.
Whilst the proposal seeks to avoid direct works to the listed structure itself, it clearly affects its immediate setting and associated curtilage.
We respectfully request clarification as to whether the Local Planning Authority has considered whether Listed Building Consent is also required.

Conclusion
The Market Bosworth Society recognises the desire for improved parking provision and does not object to the principle of achieving a parking solution.
However, we remain unconvinced that the applicant has demonstrated that this particular proposal preserves the significance and setting of Rainbow Cottage or the character of the Market Bosworth Conservation Area.
We further believe that the Heritage Assessment contains significant weaknesses, relies upon historical assumptions which are open to challenge and does not provide a sufficiently robust understanding of the significance of the heritage asset to support the conclusions reached.
For these reasons, the Market Bosworth Society respectfully requests that planning permission be refused unless and until a more comprehensive assessment is provided which

properly addresses the historic significance of the site, its setting, compliance with the Development Plan and the highway concerns identified above.

Nigel Palmer
For and on behalf of The Market Bosworth Society