Supporting Planning Statement

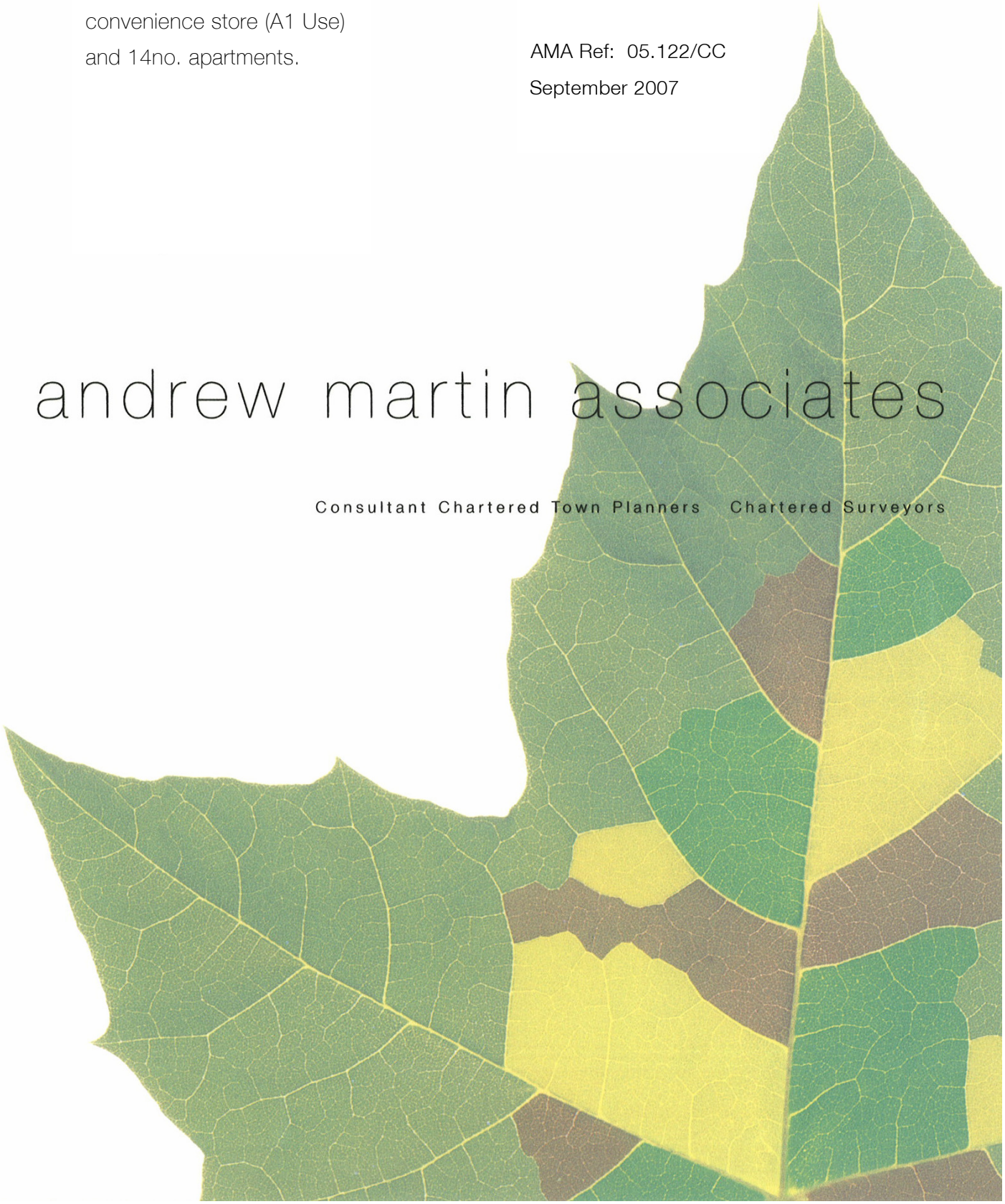
Redevelopment of site for the construction of a new convenience store (A1 Use) and 14no. apartments.

59 High Street
Barwell
Leicestershire

Tesco plc

AMA Ref: 05.122/CC

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andrew martin associates

Consultant Chartered Town Planners Chartered Surveyors

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This proposal concerns the redevelopment of a site within the centre of Barwell. The site presently comprises a dwelling to the site frontage and, to the rear, the premises of a garden ornament manufacturer with ancillary retail sales. It is proposed to redevelop the site for a new convenience store, 14 apartments, a new access road and associated car parking and landscaping.

1.2 The proposed convenience store will replace a use which is presently quite incompatible with its surroundings in terms of the heavy nature of the goods sold. The present use attracts customers mainly by car due to the need to transport purchases of heavy items; the use also involves a number of deliveries of materials. The premises are also authorised for the operation of a haulage business. As the site is within the retail centre of the settlement, it is considered that a convenience retail use is highly appropriate.

1.3 The pattern of development in the surroundings comprises residential areas behind the main High Street frontage; therefore the proposed residential development to the rear of the site makes the best use of the land, in a land use format which is compatible with the surroundings.

1.4 The existing buildings on the site are not worthy of preservation for their contribution to the character to the conservation area, either because they have been extensively altered or they have no architectural merit. Their replacement with a scheme of high quality design will result in a significant enhancement to the appearance of site and the character of the conservation area.

1.5 The proposal is well laid out in terms of highway safety and it seeks to create new spaces which follow urban design principles of high quality design and prioritising the pedestrian. The proposals protect and enhance the residential amenity of the area and the proposed convenience store supports the local retail centre by significantly adding to its choice and attraction to the local community. It is in a highly accessible and sustainable location. The proposals will aid the regeneration of Barwell and will set a new standard for design in the locality.

1.6 In view of the above, it is considered that planning permission should be forthcoming.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The following supporting information has been prepared by Andrew Martin Associates on behalf of Tesco plc. It is provided to explain the proposals and to demonstrate that the development is in accordance with the development plan and that there are no material considerations that would cause the usual planning policies to be set aside. The application is submitted in full with a comprehensive package of detailed drawings suitably illustrating the proposal. This statement also complements a Design & Access Statement, submitted to explain the design process, and a Conservation Area Appraisal, which assesses the qualities of the conservation area and the buildings on the site. A Transport Assessment, carried out by specialist consultants Pinnacle Transportation, also accompanies the application.

2.2 Andrew Martin Associates is an independent environmental consultancy with in-house expertise including master planning, urban design, environmental assessment, landscape design and all aspects of town planning. The Company has offices in Chelmsford and Nottingham and operates throughout England.

3.0 Site Description and Planning History

3.1 The site measures approximately 0.245 hectares in area and is situated fronting the High Street in the centre of Barwell. The site contains two main buildings; a dwelling fronting the High Street and a garden ornaments manufacturing business to the rear of the site, which also carries out ancillary retail sales. This business is carried out in a single storey building to the rear of the site and there is also a large area of open storage of ornaments, materials and vehicles. The site is also authorised for a haulage business to operate.

3.2 All the site boundaries, apart from the High Street frontage, are screened by a 5 metre high (approx.) leylandii hedge. No.59 fronts the back of pavement for almost the entire length of its High Street frontage. No.57 High Street is a hot food takeaway premises which adjoins the site to the north. Bungalows located on Doctor Cookes Close back directly onto the northern boundary of the site. Barwell C of E School adjoins the eastern and part of the southern boundaries. The school playground and playing fields are to the east and the school buildings and circulation areas are to the south. No. 61 High Street also adjoins the southern boundary; this is a 2 storey dwelling.

3.3 The site is in the hub of the village amongst a collection of local specialist shops, takeaways, public houses, a local store, a building society and a post office. The site is also very close to the village primary school. A 'free' public car park is nearby and it is understood that there is planning permission for a new community centre adjacent to this.

3.4 The planning history of the application site is detailed below. The planning permission for residential development of the site has not been implemented and has lapsed.

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
74/0209	Change of use from industrial to warehouse and repair workshop.	Approved	23.05.1974
77/1247	Vehicle repair workshop	Approved	22.11.1977
77/1816	Removal of condition 3 on 77/1247	Approved	24.01.1978
78/0704	Change of use of garage to carpenters workshop and erection of offices	Approved	27.06.1978
81/0319	Modification of condition 2 of 74/0209 (Opening hours).	Approved	28.04.1981
85/0293	Retention of standing of two road haulage tractor units	Approved	21.05.1985
95/0801	Extension to dwelling; chimney.	Approved	04.12.1995
98/0750	Erection of 4 bungalows & conversion of existing house to form 2 dwellings including extensions	Approved	09.12.1998

4.0 The Proposal

4.1 The application proposes to demolish all of the buildings on the site and to redevelop the site for an A1 retail convenience store on the site frontage, comprising 372 square metres of gross floorspace, and to erect 14 apartments to the rear of the site. The proposals also include associated parking and landscaping, plus alterations and improvements to the existing site access.

4.2 The proposed convenience store will be operated by Tesco as an 'Express' store. This type of store sells convenience goods and serves the local neighbourhood, rather than catering for the wider locality as a main shopping destination. It will stock fresh produce and a range of convenience goods that should allow residents of Barwell to fulfil their day to day shopping needs without having to travel by car to Earl Shilton where there is a larger supermarket. The Tesco Express is aimed to serve local residents who will walk or cycle to the store.

4.3 The proposed apartments are aimed to provide starter homes for young couples in the village. The ground floor units may also be suited to elderly persons looking to downsize in a quality environment close to shops and services.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 This section deals with the framework of national, strategic and local planning policy. It also sets out how these proposals fall in line with the aims and objectives of this policy.

National Planning Policy.

5.2 Planning Policy Statement 6 – Planning for Town Centres (PPS6) March 2005 provides the Governments response to the planning of retail development and the importance of town centres. The aims and objectives of PPS6 as it relates to this proposal are to steer retail development towards town centres or secondary retail centres where they can be accessed by a range of transport modes other than by private car. In addition, the guidance seeks to maintain and strengthen the vitality and viability of town and retail centres and to ensure an efficient, competitive and diverse range of shopping opportunities. Of particular relevance to this application is the definition found in Annexe A of the guidance of a "Local Centre". It defines a "Local Centre" as including:-

> *"A range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. In rural areas, large villages may perform the role of a local centre".*

5.3 The collection of shops and services found in Barwell village centre fall within this definition of a local centre. This status of the area has been recognised by the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan where the site is defined on the Proposals Map as a Policy Retail 7 shopping area.

Strategic Policy.

5.4 Strategic Planning Policy can be found in the Leicestershire,Leicester & Rutland Structure Plan 1996-2016. The policies are a continuation of the guidance in PPG6 and have similar aims and objectives. The role of local shopping need in rural areas is set out in Central Areas & Shopping Policy 5, which is set out below.

> *Central Areas & Shopping Policy 5 - Shopping and other facilities in rural areas*
>
> *Proposals for new shops, services and other facilities needed to meet local needs or for recreation and tourism in*

rural centres and villages will be approved subject to the development being of a scale, size, form and character appropriate to the settlement.

Proposals for farm shops and/or shops ancillary to rural petrol stations will only be permitted where the development:

(a) Is of an appropriate scale, size, form and character;

(b) Will not have an adverse effect on the viability of nearby shops; and

(c) Will not have an unacceptable adverse impact in terms of traffic generated, access or parking arrangements.

Conditions will be imposed to ensure that such shops do not sell goods which are unrelated to the reasonable needs of the communities and users which they are intended to serve.

Local Planning Policy.

5.5 The Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan was adopted in 2000 and covers the period to 2010. The Local Plan contains a number of policies relevant to new development in local retail centres and conservation areas.

5.6 Policy BE1 sets out general design requirements for all new development, ensuring that the scale, layout, density, mass and design of new development complements or enhances the surroundings. Development should also be compatible with its surroundings in terms of land use and physical impact upon neighbouring development. Residential developments should have a satisfactory level of amenity, landscaping and garden space and should provide a strong common link between proposed buildings and spaces and the character of their surroundings. This policy also requires that proposals are accessible to people with disabilities, the elderly and those with young children.

5.7 Policy BE7 states the design requirements that are specific to conservation areas. In particular, proposals should preserve or enhance the Conservation Area and the important characteristics are scale, proportions, street pattern and building materials.

5.8 Policy BE8 presumes against allowing the demolition of buildings in a conservation area, but recognises that there are circumstances where this should be allowed. These circumstances include where the loss of the building will not harm the Conservation Area and the proposals for its replacement would preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

5.9 Policy BE9 emphasises the importance of shop fronts to a Conservation Area streetscape. Shop fronts of attractive or historic design can introduce significant visual interest and vibrancy to the Conservation Area streetscape. The detailing of such shop fronts is very important.

5.10 Policy BE10 recognises the harmful effect that shop security measures can have on the appearance of a Conservation Area. Such visual harm arises with developments such as roller shutter grilles, which are of solid, inappropriate materials and which are often housed within bulky boxing fitted to the outside of a building. This and other shop security measures can appear cluttered and can detract from the architectural symmetry of a building.

5.11 Policy BE11 sets out that new advertisements should be traditionally styled and carefully detailed, recognising that the quality of advertisements identifying a retail use can have a significant impact upon the character of a Conservation Area.

5.12 Policy T5 confirms that Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council is considering development in terms of maximum guidelines, which are negotiable, as per the most recent policy approach in PPG13 – Transport. The relevant parking standards are set out in Appendix D to the Plan and, for this scale of retail proposal, the guideline is a maximum of 1 space per 30 square metres with provision for loading and unloading. For apartments with communal parking, Appendix D states a guideline of 2 spaces per 3 dwellings, although informal advice from Council officers indicates that this is a typographical error and the guideline is in fact 3 spaces per 2 dwellings. It is also recognised in the text to Appendix D that, in centrally located areas with good access to regular public transport, a reduced level of parking provision may be appropriate.

5.13 Policy Retail 7 identifies the application site as being within a 'local shopping centre' which is an appropriate area for retail development, subject to criteria safeguarding the residential environment. It also requires that the intensification of use of an access does not harm highway safety and that the proposal does not put undue pressure on street parking facilities and servicing areas.

5.14 Policy RE5 sets out that unallocated residential development is appropriate within the boundaries of a rural settlement, subject to other siting, design and layout policies, which have been identified above.

5.15 The Council's determination of this planning application, as directed by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 should be in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.0 Key Planning Considerations

6.1 The Land Use - The site is considered to be in a prime location to provide convenience shopping within an existing community, making a positive contribution to sustainable living in the village. The principle of retail development on the site is supported by national and local policy and the provision of a new convenience store in this location can only enhance the vitality and viability of the village retail core and improve the retailing choice for the local community. Also, given the long established commercial use of the site, it is considered that it is appropriate that this should be continued. However, the one major change would be that a convenience store would attract considerably more visitors travelling by foot or cycle.

6.2 The site is well within the main built up area of the village and it does not comprise an open space of any value to visual amenity. It is therefore appropriate for residential development in terms of Local Plan Policy RE5. The pattern of development in the surrounding area is such that the retail centre of the village is focused along the High Street and other main street frontages and, immediately behind that, there are close-knit residential areas. Whilst this is a historic street pattern, it is actually very sustainable, meaning that there is a strong catchment area for the shops in the retail centre and also that people can access shops and services without resorting to use of the car. The proposed development continues this pattern of development and makes best use of the land, whilst ensuring an adequate level of residential amenity through its layout. It is therefore considered to be an appropriate land use which is compatible with the proposed retail use and other uses in the surroundings.

6.3 The existing manufacturing land use and history of vehicle repairs is likely to have given rise to contamination of the site which will have to be mediated before the site is suitable for residential development. A Ground Conditions Assessment will be carried out and it is accepted that this is likely to be conditional to a planning approval.

6.4 Retail Impact – PPG6 also retail proposals which exceed 2500m² to, amongst other things, demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact on the viability or vitality of a nearby town or retail centre. Being of a floorspace of 372m² (gross) the proposal is considerably below the 2500m² threshold, as such there is no requirement to provide such data. However, it should be acknowledged that this proposal will due to its size, location and type, not have a negative impact on the role and function Barwell's or any neighbouring settlement's retail centre.

6.5 In terms of impact on the local centre within which it is proposed, the impact will be positive, by way of adding to the range of goods available and providing greater choice whilst stimulating competition. The introduction of the convenience store will greatly increase the likelihood of shoppers making linked trips to the specialist shops in the vicinity of the site. These linked trips will stimulate trade in neighbouring shops and reduce the number of car movements in the area.

6.6 Conservation Issues – A detailed Conservation Area Appriaisal is submitted in conjunction with this statement. On the basis of this assessment, it is concluded that Barwell Conservation Area is mainly characterised by the form and proportions of its buildings and its strong street pattern. It lacks in visual quality in terms of the unsympathetic alterations and additions and removal of original architectural features that have been carried out to most of the buildings prior to its designation as a Conservation Area. The existing building on the frontage of the application site may at one time have had a character which would have made a significant contribution to the Conservation Area. However, it has now been so extensively altered that it does not make a contribution that warrants its preservation.

6.7 The potential to convert the existing frontage building to a retail store has been investigated, however it is considered unviable for the following reasons:

- The building would have to be extensively modified and extended in order to provide a safe vehicular access into the site;
- The building is not large enough to accommodate a viable scale of convenience store, it would have to be significantly extended and altered;
- Significant alterations would be required in order to return the architectural integrity of the building to match the architectural quality that would be provided by a replacement building;
- It would be more difficult to sensitively accommodate operational requirements, such as heating and ventilation equipment, than in a new purpose built building.

6.8 The above considerations lead us to the conclusion that to attempt to convert the existing building to a retail store would so significantly alter it that it would not retain its original form and its original character would not be recreated. The resulting building would appear as a new development and it would not appear as sympathetic to the Conservation Area as a new building could.

6.9 The proposals subject of this application are considered to significantly enhance the environment of the Conservation Area with a development of high design quality. The proposal is considered to **preserve** the scale, form and street pattern of the conservation area. It also **enhances** the conservation area by introducing a well designed building with sympathetic materials, architectural detailing and fenestration design to a streetscape which is otherwise lacking in such features. The proposed building pays homage to the building that would have existed originally on site, picking up on its positive characteristics. It is highly sensitive to the streetscape, avoiding large expanses of glazing along the frontage and incorporating interesting ways of housing shop signage within architectural recesses. The proposals are therefore considered to fully comply with Policies BE7, BE8, BE9, BE10 and BE11 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan

6.10 **Design** – As described above, the proposal has been carefully designed to a high standard in view of its location in a conservation area. This statement is also accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, which sets out how the proposal complies with the other criterion of Policy BE1 which concern accessibility. The proposals place great emphasis upon making a place for pedestrians.

6.11 A new area of public realm is created to the entrance to the store, enclosed by high quality and visually interesting architecture. The space will be marked by high quality paving and features such as a rumble strip and pedestrian crossing will be incorporated to maintain pedestrian safety. Appropriate disabled persons parking is provided and provision for cycle parking is made exceeding required standards. The proposal is therefore considered to comply fully with Policy BE1 of the Local Plan in terms of design and access.

6.12 **Local Amenity** – Given the heavy nature of the existing use towards the rear of the site, it is likely that the residents of neighbouring dwellings are presently caused some noise disturbance by heavy vehicle movements and the manufacturing activities carried out. The present use of the site will also attract a lot of customers by car, due to the heavy nature of the goods sold, and the open storage on the site detracts from the residential character of the surroundings. The proposed residential use of the rear of the site will provide a considerable enhancement to the residential amenity and character of the area. The proposed convenience store and the activity associated with it is carefully confined to the front of the site and away from the neighbouring residential property to the south. The proposed apartments are laid out so as not to cause a loss of privacy to any neighbouring dwellings and their bulk and form is positioned so as not to cause an overbearing or overshadowing effect. The apartments are also provided with both private and communal outdoor amenity space and their setting would be attractively landscaped. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy BE1 in terms of impact upon local amenity.

6.13 Access & Parking – The proposals have been fully audited in a Transport Assessment which accompanies the planning application. This demonstrates that the proposals would not jeopardise highway safety and that they do in fact offer enhancements to highway safety, including new traffic calming measures adjacent to the school. The proposal includes adequate car parking provided in a safe and workable layout, dimensioned in accordance with the Council's standards. The number of spaces is explained and justified in the Design & Access Statement accompanying the application. Operationally, a convenience store of this size and nature would, based on experience elsewhere, require a level of off-street parking which is consistent with that proposed. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy T5 of the Local Plan.

6.14 Developer Contributions – Pre-application negotiations have been undertaken with the County Council and the Primary Healthcare Trust in order to establish the developer contributions that are required in connection with the development. These are as follows:

- Civic Amenities - £598.00
- Health - £8,162.00
- Libraries - £500.00
- Off Site Open Space - £17,374.00

6.15 Other Matters – It is acknowledged that, due to the manufacturing and vehicle-related uses that have been carried out on the site, the ground is very likely to be contaminated. The applicant agrees that a requirement for a Ground Conditions & Contamination Study would be made subject of a condition to any planning approval. The applicant undertakes to appropriately address any contamination that should be identified in order to create a safe residential and retailing environment.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 In summary, it is concluded that the proposal has the following planning merits:-

- It provides a convenience retail facility within an existing local shopping centre, which will meet the day to day shopping needs of the local community, many of whom will be within walking distance. This will enhance the retail role of the local shopping centre and will not undermine that of any other centres.

- The proposals will contribute to the regeneration of Barwell by raising standards for design quality and adding attractiveness and vitality to the local shopping centre.

- The loss of buildings on the site will not detrimentally affect the character and appearance of the conservation area and the proposed buildings are of a high design quality, which will enhance the conservation area and raise the profile of design detail in the area in general.

- A new area of public realm is provided, which will significantly enhance Barwell's Conservation Area.

- Residential amenity will improve over the present situation as a result of this proposal, with the creation of a well designed place to live amongst the existing residential area.

- The proposal is accessible, in a sustainable location, designed with the pedestrian in mind and it would not have an adverse impact upon highway safety.

- The proposal would provide employment for local people working in flexible shifts.

- Fully complying with the planning policies of the Development Plan.

7.2 On the basis of the above and the wider issues set out in this report, we would respectfully request that the proposals are granted planning permission.

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