

PLANNING DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Development at the Blue Bell Inn (39 High Street), Desford, Leicester, LE9 9JF



Project No. 5166
Date: July 2023

In Support of a Full Planning Application for the Proposed Change of Use from Cafe (Class E) and Residential (Class C3) to Convenience Foodstore (Class E), alongside demolition of existing single-storey element to the rear of 37 High Street / 2A main Street and Store to the Rear of Public House. The Erection of Two-Storey Side Extension to 37 High Street / 2A Main Street, alongside Two-Storey Rear and Single-Storey Rear Extensions. Improvements to Existing Car Park and Associated Landscaping.

CONTENTS

01 Foreword

02 Project Introduction

- 2.1 Site Location
- 2.2 Existing Layout
- 2.3 Site Constraints
- 2.4 Site Opportunities
- 2.5 Application Description

03 Understanding the Context

- 3.1 Local Character
- 3.2 Movement and Access
- 3.3 Heritage

04 Design Development

- 4.1 Design Layout
- 4.2 Massing and Scale
- 4.3 Materiality
- 4.4 Brick Details
- 4.5 Historic England Engagement
- 4.6 Historic England Reflection

05 Proposal

- 5.1 Proposed Site Plan
- 5.2 Proposed Floor Plan
- 5.3 Proposed Elevations
- 5.4 Visuals

06 Conclusion

07 Appendix

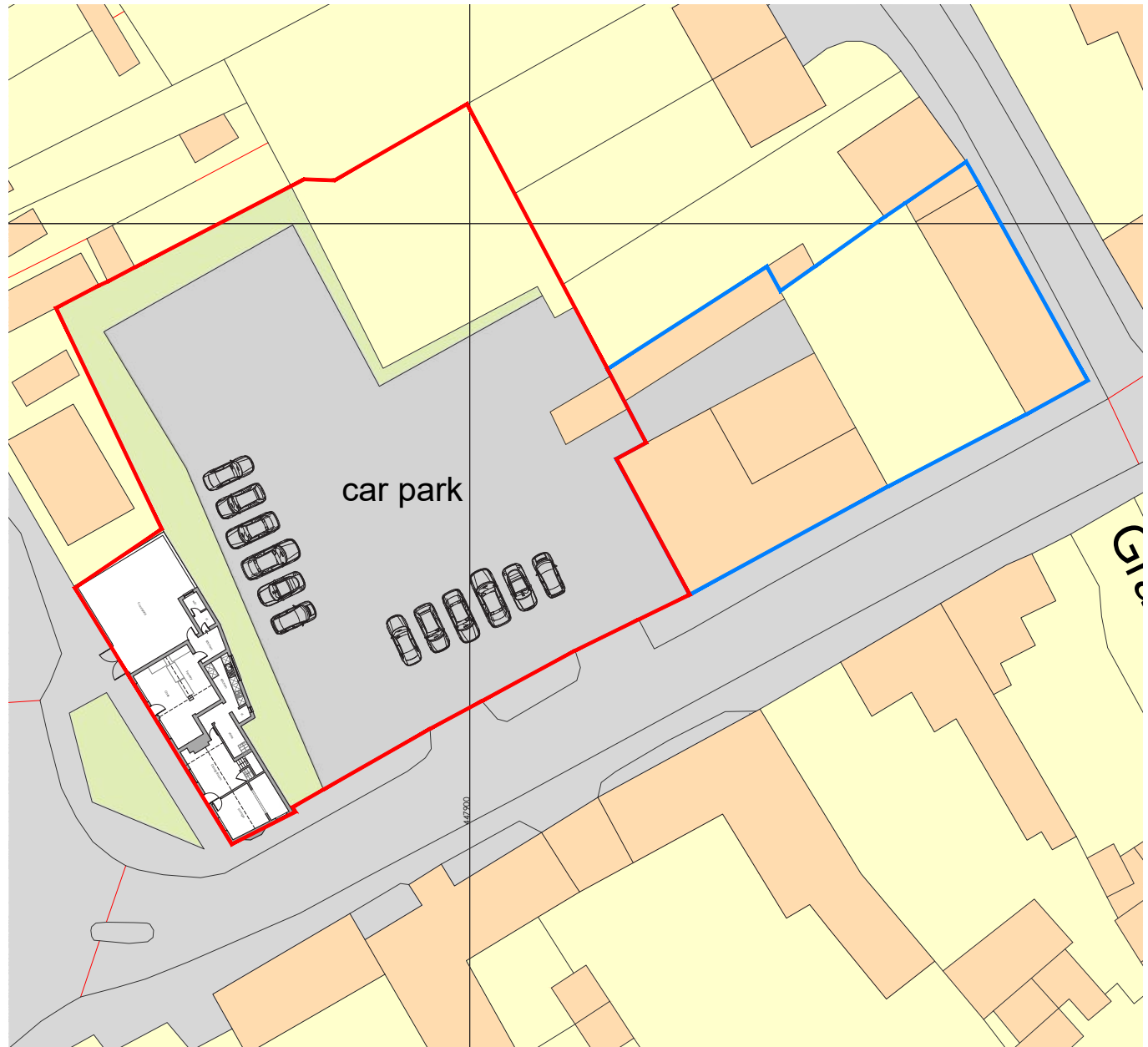
01 FOREWORD

1.1 Development at Land at The Blue Bell Inn (38 High Street) comprising its associated car park, and No's 37 High Street and 2A Main Street

The purpose of this statement is to set out the context for, and to explain the design principles behind, the planning application for the proposed change of use from cafe (class E) and residential (class C3) to convenience foodstore (class E), alongside demolition of the existing single-storey element to the rear of 37 High Street / 2A Main Street and store to the rear of the public house; the erection of a two-storey side extension to 37 High Street / 2A Main Street, alongside two-storey rear and single-storey rear extensions. Additional elements include improvements to the existing car park and associated landscaping.

Accompanying plans & statements have been prepared by Corporate Architecture Ltd and Marrons Planning on behalf of our client.

Currently, the site comprises an existing cafe, a residential dwelling, the Blue Bell Inn Public House and its associated car park.



Site Location Plan



02 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

This section will summarise the location of the development, and the Client's brief.

02 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

2.1 Site Location

The application is located on the corner of Main Street and High Street in the heart of the village of Desford, identified as a Key Rural Centre Standalone within the context of the Council's Development Plan

The site is 10km west of the centre of Leicester, 10km north east of Hinckley, and 2km north of Peckleton.

It is situated within the Desford Conservation Area (designated in January 1981), and there is a Grade II* listed building south of the site.

The buildings on the application site are categorised as 'significant local buildings' within the Desford Conservation Area Appraisal (2010).

For full details of the heritage context for the site, please refer to the accompanying Heritage Statement, prepared by Cogent Heritage



Macro Context



Meso Context



Micro Context

02 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

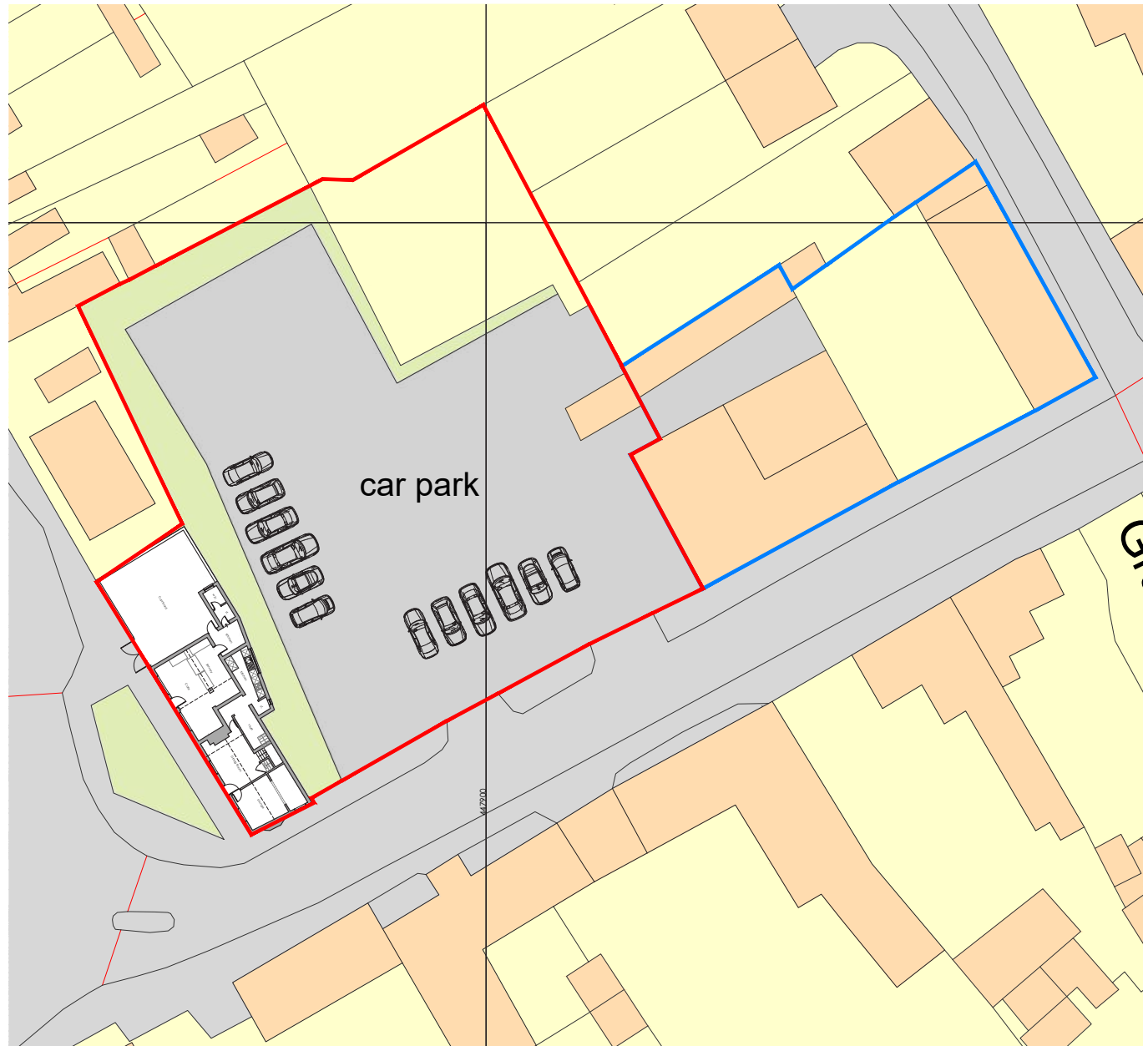
2.2 Existing Layout

The site includes a cafe and dwelling in the building to the west, the Bluebell Lounge & Restaurant building to the east, with a car park in between the two.

The application site lies to the west of The Blue Bell Inn public house, and comprises its car park alongside the pair of semi-detached properties at 37 High Street and 2A Main Street. The site is prominently located, at the core of the village of Desford. Within the Development Plan, Desford is designated as a 'Key Rural Centre relating to Leicester'. The Development Plan seeks to protect services and facilities within these areas, to ensure that the day-to-day needs of residents can be met.

The existing building to the west is to be part of the development. This layout comprises of a cafe with a servery, kitchen, store, and external courtyard on the ground floor to the north of the building, and a residential dwelling to the south of the ground floor with 4 bedrooms on the first floor.

The site is within Flood Zone 1 with a low probability of flooding.



Existing Site Layout

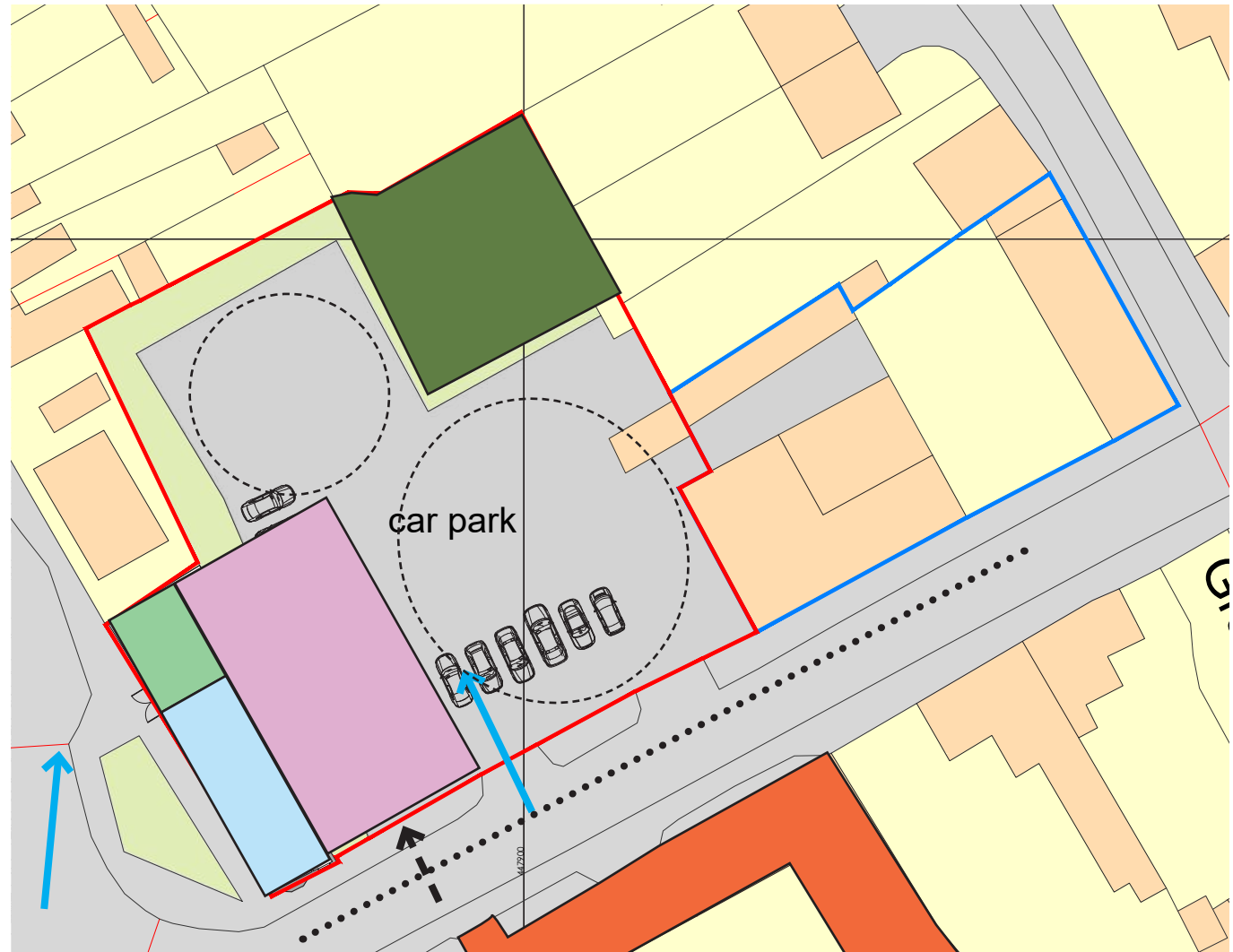
02 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

2.3 Site Constraints

- near listed buildings
- within the Desford Conservation Area
- existing buildings on site
- protected views

2.4 Site Opportunities

- utilise orientation
- improving the existing infrastructure and construction of the property
- enhancing its character
- reflect its history and local heritage
- adjacent to the Neighbourhood Centre
- reinstate a historic sense of enclosure along High Street
- improve the interface with the public realm



Site Constraints and Opportunities Map

Key

- Main Road
- > Set Back
- Protected View
- Improve Infrastructure

- Listed Building
- Existing Building
- Development on Existing Courtyard
- Extension Avoiding the Protected View

- Landscape Opportunities

02 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

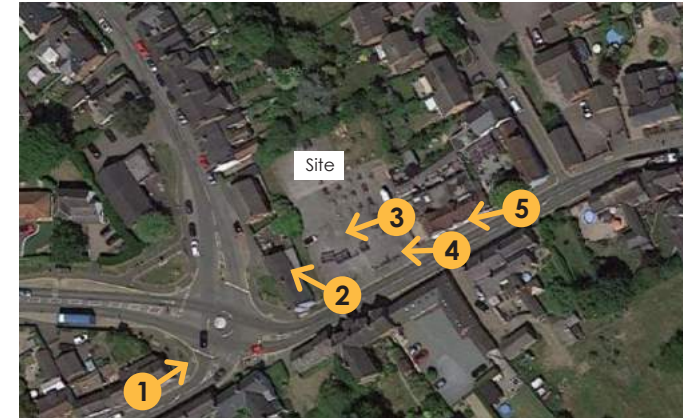
2.5 Application Description

The application seeks approval for the proposed change of use from cafe (class E) and residential (class C3) to convenience foodstore (class E), alongside demolition of the existing single-storey element to the rear of 37 High Street / 2A Main Street and store to the rear of the public house. The proposal also includes the erection of a two-storey side extension to 37 High Street / 2A Main Street, alongside two-storey rear and single-storey rear extensions.

Additional elements include improvements to the existing car park and associated landscaping.



View 1: Looking North-East from High Street



Existing Site Map



View 2: Looking North-West from High Street



View 3: Looking West from the Car Park



View 4: Looking West from High Street



View 5: Looking West from High Street

03 UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

This section will look at the nearby and surrounding character around the site, site analysis, and identifying the use of each area of the development.

03 UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

3.1 Local Character

The village of Desford contains a mix of buildings that vary from detached, semi-detached, and terrace dwellings. The majority of these are pitched roofed. Many of the buildings are single- or two-storey dwellings with some exceptions above this.

There is widespread use of Welsh Street particularly along Main Street and High Street. Other buildings roofs are covered in Swithland slate. There are some buildings that contain clay tiles (Bluebell Inn) and thatch (The Old White Cottage).

Brick is the principle material in the area but there are many buildings that are rendered such as the building on the application site, as well as stone which is restricted to the plinths of buildings with the exception of the listed St Martin's Church.

The brick buildings with historic importance are generally laid in Flemish bond.

Windows and doors tend to be timber framed.



View 1: Looking North-East from High Street towards the Pub



Existing Site Map



View 2: Looking North from Main Street towards Dwellings



View 3: Looking North-East from Manor Road towards Dwellings



View 4: Looking North-East from High Street towards Post Office

03 UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

3.2 Movement and Access

There is pedestrian access into the building via Main Street into the existing cafe, and for the residents; and external access into the courtyard.

Vehicle access onto the site is via High Street B582 into the car park.

There is additional access into the ownership boundary via the Bluebell Inn Lounge & Restaurant located east of the development boundary.



Movement and Access Map

Key

---> Pedestrian Access

—> Vehicle Access



03 UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

3.3 Heritage

The application site is located within the Desford Conservation Area, surrounded by listed buildings, and the building on site is considered a 'Significant Local Building' according to the Desford Conservation Area Appraisal. The appraisal map also illustrates important views that should be protected - please see adjacent image.

According to the Desford Conservation Area Appraisal, the buildings within the Conservation Area fall under one of the three categories:

- simple vernacular buildings
- Victorian feature buildings
- Post Second World War properties.

The building on the application site appears to fall under the 'Victorian feature buildings' category. This is described as:

'These buildings are normally two rooms deep with steeply pitched gabled roofs parallel to the street broken with occasional projecting gables onto the street. Decorative features include dentil eaves courses, polychromatic brickwork, applied gable framing and patched of render. Openings are vertical with segmental arched or flat stone lintels with keystones and projecting brick sills'.

Directly opposite the site is the Grade II* listed building - Old Manor House and Attached Barn and Service Block (ref: 1074078). Full details of the significance and setting of this building are set out within the accompanying Heritage Statement. It was important to relate to this historic architectural asset during the design process, and to not disrupt the character of the village. Taking influence from the heritage will enhance the area and improve the overall design.



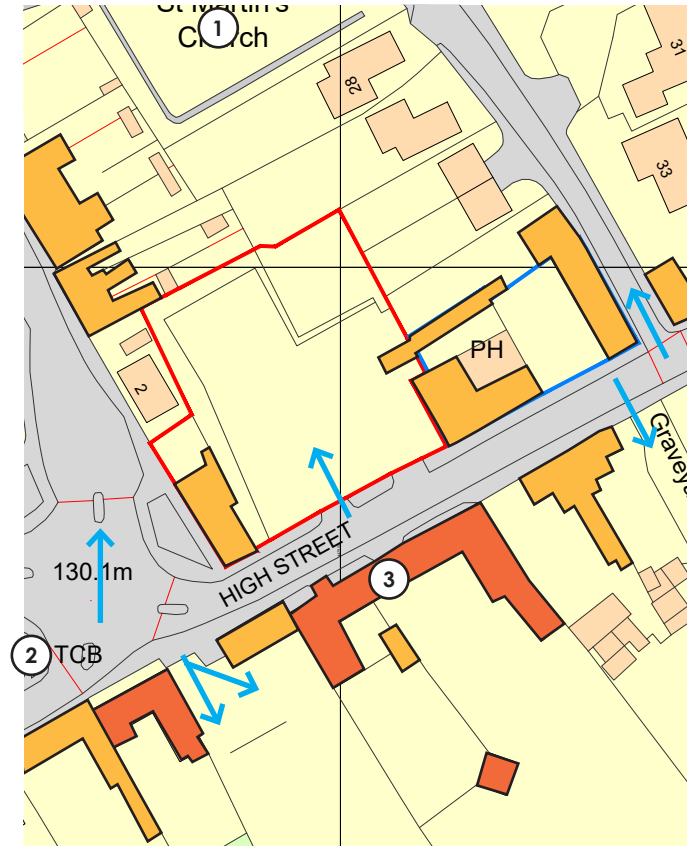
View 1: Church of St Martin - Grade II* (ref: 1361378)



View 2: Desford Post Office - Grade II (ref: 1361381)



View 3: Old Manor Farmhouse - Grade II* (ref: 1074078)



Existing Site Plan Highlighting Listed Buildings and Significant Local Buildings Surrounding the Site

Key

- ① Listed Building Reference
- Listed Building
- Significant Local Building
- ➔ Views to be Protected

04 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

This section will explain the reasoning behind the proposed layout by exploring the needs of the Client. It will also highlight the design development of the external appearance of the proposal illustrating massing, aesthetic decisions and its relationship the existing buildings with accompanying influenced precedents.

04 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Layout

The adjacent diagram illustrates the initial site block plan overlaying the existing site plan.

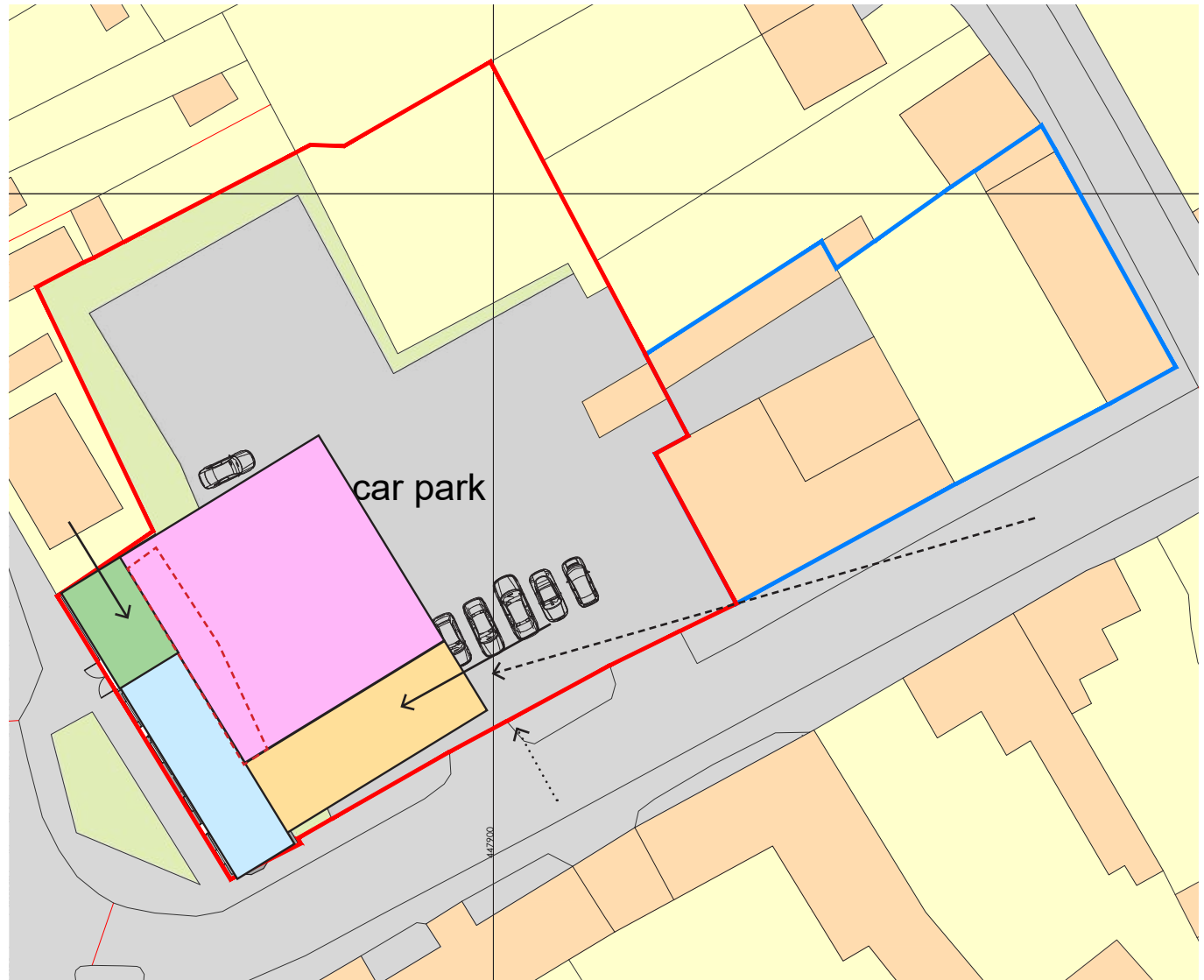
The proposal is to refurbish the existing building in order to retain the principles elevations located on Main Street and High Street; extend the elevation on Main Street to cover the existing courtyard and follow a similar architectural language that of the existing building; a new build element along High with a similar scale, massing, and architectural style to that of the existing building, and the building that once sat where the proposal is; and a new build in the car park to 'square-off' the development to visually appear similar to what is currently there to reduce visual impact along the streetscene.

As per the Desford Conservation Area Appraisal Map, it is important to retain the protected view from High Street towards St Martin's Church therefore the massing must not block this.

The initial block layout looked at the requirements for the store and the most suitable access. The main entrance is proposed on the corner of the car park and High Street. This is in order for users to have access from both the car park and walk in directly from the street. This is in addition in being able to see the entrance from a distance and improve the way-finding aspect for the public.

The decision for the main entrance not to be located on the west side was due to access from both car park and street, as well as reducing visual impact due to protecting the view from Manor Road looking eastwards as per the Desford Conservation Area Appraisal Map. The locally significant building to be retained which brings a sense of continuity between the historic and future use of the site.

This resulted in storage and staff facilities located in the existing building over both floors in order to create an efficient layout for the store.



Initial Site Block Plan

Key

-  Existing Building to be Retained
-  Demolition Area
-  Proposed Single-Storey Development

-  Proposed Development over Existing Sheltered Courtyard
-  Proposed Development following Previous Historic Building

-  Pedestrian Access
-  Wayfinding View
-  Retaining View



04 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.2 Massing and Scale

The massing and scale will relate to its immediate context and reflect the history of the site.

The adjacent images shows a historic photograph along High Street looking South-West. The highlighted red area indicates the existing building.

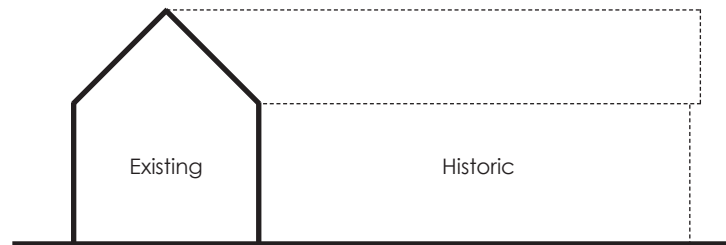
The proposal will take influence from the attached neighbouring building (attached and right of the red area). The new build element along High Street will follow this massing, scale, and architectural style to reflect on its history. The height will be below the existing building as per the adjacent image to illustrate architectural hierarchy between the old and new.

The courtyard infill will be reduced in scale compared to the existing to highlight the architectural hierarchy along the street as well as reducing visual impact.

The car park development will be as low as possible - again to illustrate the architectural hierarchy and reduce visual impact. A flat roof would show this and enhance the principal elevations.



Historic Photo Along High Street Highlighting the Existing Building on the Site



Existing Massing Compared to Historic Massing

04 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.3 Materiality

The Desford Photographic Appraisal and Management Plan both state the existing block wall on the site is an unattractive feature and needs replacing with a traditional brick wall. The proposal will be brick to address the comments within this document, the Local Plan, and Historic England.

The Desford Conservation Area Management Plan Long Term Strategy states that any new development should use natural materials, and use slate as traditional roofing.

It also states that open areas should be retained.

The Photographic Appraisal also states the existing Co-op stores fascias are visually dominant and original features have been lost.

Following pre-application engagement with Historic England, the most suitable outcome is to remove the block wall, and replace with a proposal made from brick with a slate pitched roof. This would also reflect its history as the previous building was made from brick.

There are many examples in the area where brick buildings adjoin ones with render. A brick extension would be suitable for this site.

The following pages will look at the variety of brick details and uses in Desford.

Examples in Desford of brick and rendered buildings:

- Grade II Listed Desford Post Office (adjoining building)
- Grade II Listed Ivy House (side gable)
- Grade II Listed 2, Newbold Road
- Grade II Listed 10, Newbold Road
- 40/42 and 44 High Street



Flemish Brick Bond, Stone and Slate



Flemish Brick Bond, Timber, Thatched Roof and Render



Brick, Render, Slate, Timber, and Stone

04 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.4 Brick Details

Throughout Desford, there are different uses of brick - whether that is the type of bonding, banding, pattern, lintel and sill design, and recessed brick detail.

The main type of brick bonding in the area appears to be Flemish.

A combination of these features make up the character of Desford within the Conservation Area. By carefully choosing the appropriate levels of brick detailing and design, the proposals will help enhance the Conservation Area and Desford Neighbourhood Centre as a whole.

Adjacent are images of surrounding buildings that contain different brick features.



Recessed Brick Detail - Old Manor House



Brick Banding, Eaves Detail and Recessed Brick Details



Brick Lintel and Sill Details



Brick Arch Detail and Brick Variation

04 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.5 Historic England Engagement

We have been liaising with Historic England during the design process in order to produce a scheme that is feasible for the applicant as well as being suitable for the Conservation Area, respecting and reflecting the heritage of Desford.

The initial proposal following the design development stages previously were issued to Historic England. The comments received included:

- the scale, design and materials of the proposed extensions would not make them overly prominent in the setting of the Old Manor House
- the Old Manor House to remain the dominant building in the street scene
- no issue with the development in this location given the historic precedent as demonstrated in the Heritage Statement
- proposal would re-instate the historic sense of enclosure along High Street
- welcomes the replicated steep pitches as per the existing
- the flat roof hidden behind a small mono-pitch is not prevalent in the conservation area
- blind openings would be more successful if they were active openings
- additional detailing and brick patterns/bonding to break up massing and create a more active elevation
- North-East elevation first floor windows not in keeping with the host building or Conservation Area
- the construction in red brick, and re-rendered in white is considered appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The 3D views adjacent were provided for the pre-application proposals.



3D View Looking North-West from High Street



3D View Looking West from the Car Park



3D View Looking North-East from High Street



3D Aerial View

04 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.6 Historic England Reflection

We began to review the proposal and started to create alternative schemes to reflect the comments made from Historic England.

The main change involved the mono-pitch roof that hides the flat roof as seen from the car park. This mono-pitch roof was originally influenced by 1&3 Church Lane dwelling side extension that sits opposite the parish church.

As the rear extension massing slightly differs to the surrounding area due to the nature of a supermarket, it can become difficult to roof. There is danger in over complicating the roof styles and not fit in with the local character as well as increasing unnecessary financial costs to the applicant.

The initial proposal created a flat roof that was able to span and allow the necessary programme to be functional inside and create a simplistic drainage solution.

A mono-pitch roof was added to hide the flat roof and to visually connect and relate to the surrounding character of Desford as seen from the road. Due to its location, the flat roof would not be read by the listed building across the road either due to the proposed extension fronting along High Street.

The adjacent images explore the varying roof designs of the proposal along with the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

We believe the flat roof with mono-pitch around is the best option for the building, character of the area, and the feasibility for the applicant in reducing any complications.

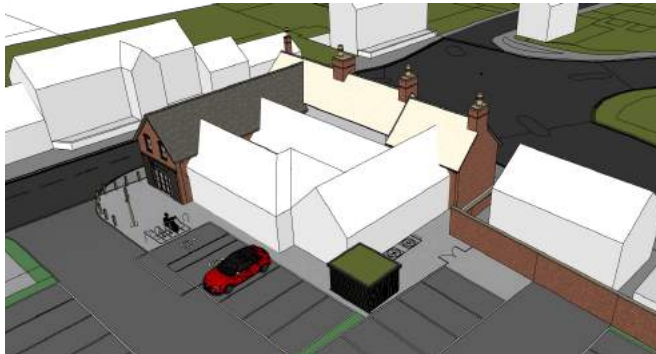


Option 1 - 3 Gables: Aerial (left) and Street View (right)



Advantages:
- follows local character

Disadvantages:
- increased drainage issues
- disrupting existing roof further
- blocks existing building more



Option 2 - 3 Varying Roofs: Aerial (left) and Street View (right)



Advantages:
- follows local character

Disadvantages:
- increased drainage issues
- blocks existing building more



Option 3 - 2 Gables: Aerial (left) and Street View (right)



Advantages:
- follows local character

Disadvantages:
- increased drainage issues
- block existing building more

04 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.6 Historic England Reflection

Historic England mentioned the blind openings being more successful if they were active openings, as well as advising additional brick detailing and patterns.

We have explored different options of the elevation that faces High Street to address these comments.

Option 1 retains the number of blind openings as the initial design but have been amended to arches to suit the local area. The middle opening remains the same to break up the massing. False gates are introduced to blend in the with surrounding character.

Option 2 reduces the number of blind openings and increase the size. The barn doors that are proposed on the main entrance to the store are used to illustrate continuity.

Option 3 is similar to Option 1 with the arched blind openings which are the same size as the openings on the North East elevation. Brick lintels are added with more diamond brick patterns.

All the options above look at brick detailing such as the banding on the facade, along the eaves, and a Flemish brick bond.

The scheme is a positive and appropriate response to the comments raised by Historic England which reflects the local character of the village and respects the historic architecture.

The design represents an appropriate response to the key comments raised by Historic England.



Option 1



Option 2



Option 3

05 PROPOSAL

This section will illustrate the design proposals, comparing the proposed elevations to the existing, and how the design has changed in response to feedback.

05 PROPOSAL

5.1 Proposed Site Plan

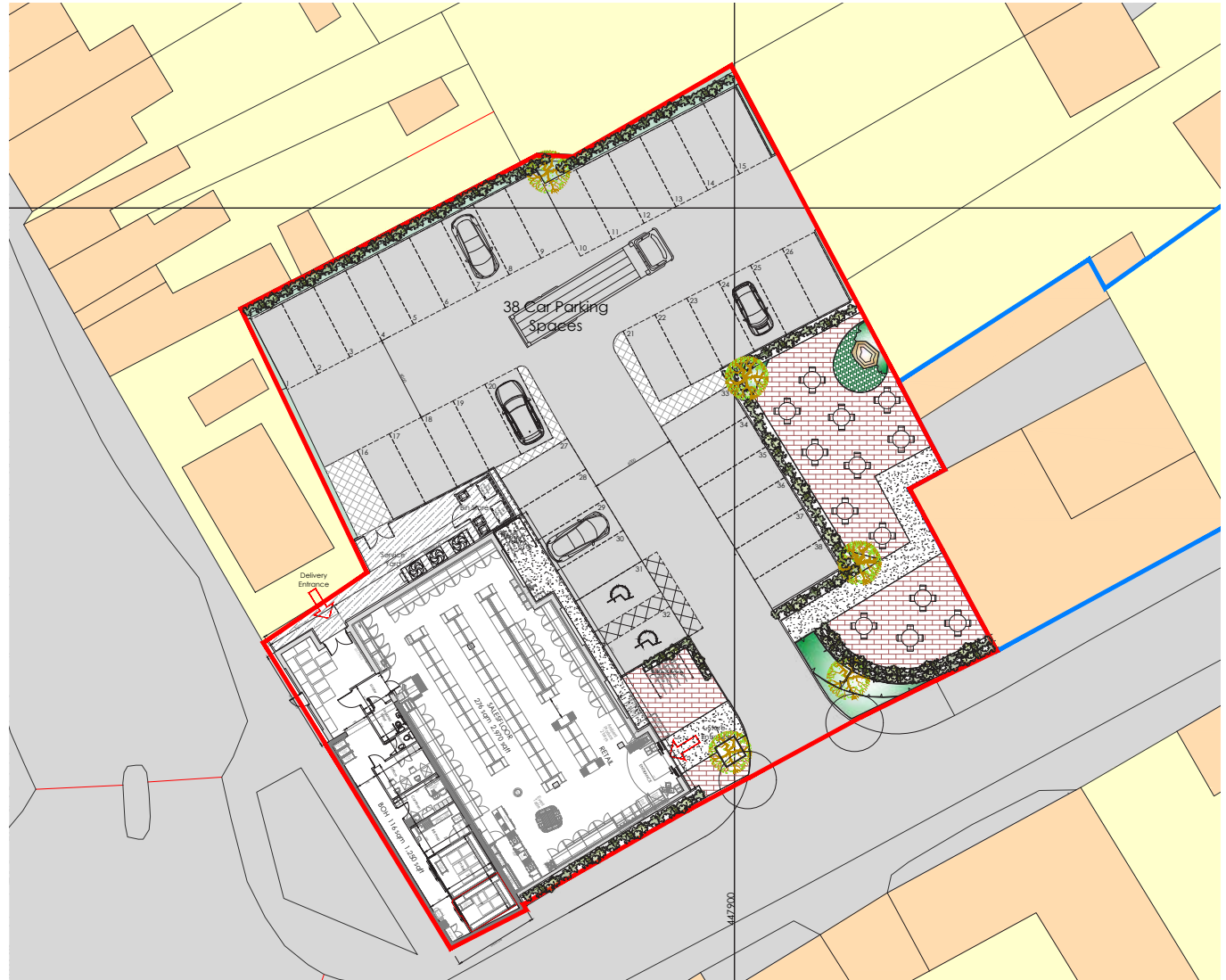
The proposed site plan includes an extension to the north-west of the existing building where there is an existing courtyard and faces Main Street; an extension to the north-east that faces High Street; and the store new build element that follows a similar form to local buildings with a similar use.

The taller elements are the existing building and 'extensions' that are considered the principal elevations along Main Street and High Street.

There are 38 car parking spaces in total.

The car park contains a play area and beer garden for the Blue Bell Inn which creates a more visually aesthetic environment for the streetscene due to the reduce hard landscaping yet additional amenity space.

The area retains the protected view as per the Conservation Area Appraisal and abiding with the Management Plan Long Term Strategy where open areas are to be retained.



Proposed Site Plan

05 PROPOSAL

5.2 Proposed Floor Plan

The main entrance of the store is located on the corner of the car park and High Street. This is in order for users to have access from both the car park and walk in from the street as well as being able to see the entrance from a distance.

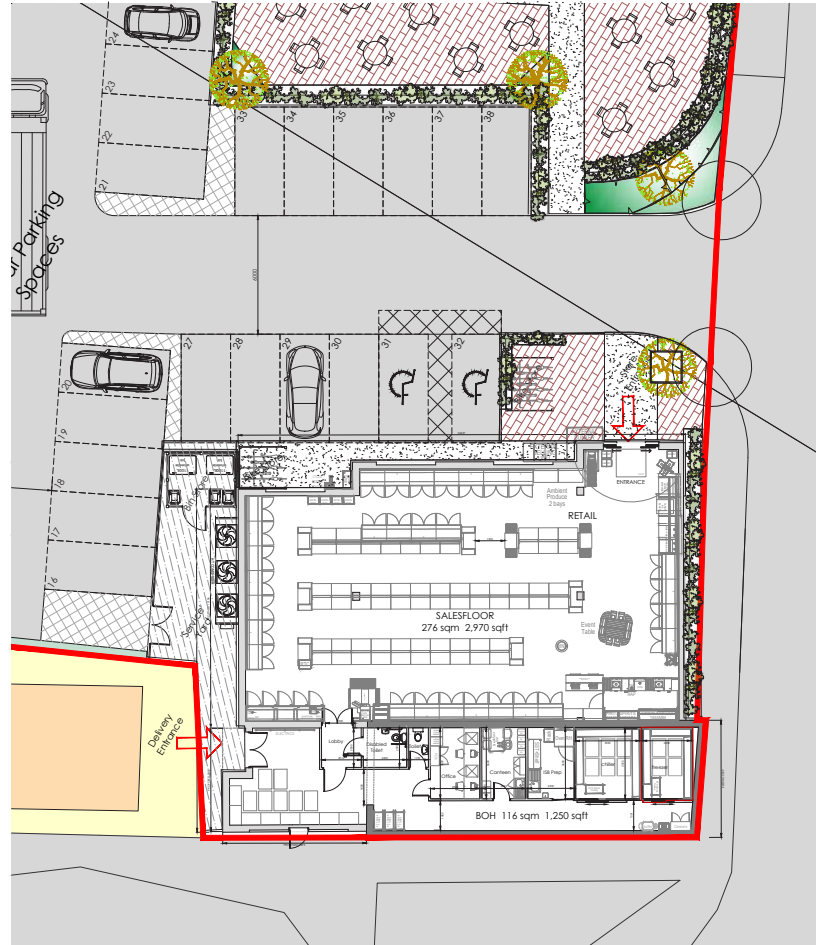
The layout is efficient in maximising the potential for the store which centralises the existing Co-operative stores, thus a major public benefit, as well as increasing the field-of-view from High Street in order to retain the protected view.

The internal layout is influenced by the existing building and retains many of its current features.

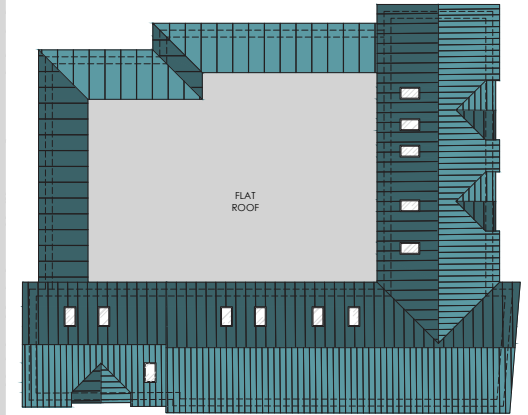
The staff facilities and storage are located in the existing building and courtyard extension. This is due to the limitations of the existing building and reducing structural impact.

This also provides distinct uses across the proposal which helps reduces additional alterations if there are any future changes.

The service yard, bin store, and delivery entrance are hidden from both Main Street and High Street to retain aesthetically-pleasing views to the public. The service yard, plant and machinery are also located away from any site boundaries, ensuring existing residential amenity is protected.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Roof Plan



Proposed First Plan

05 PROPOSAL

5.3 Proposed Elevations

“In a deviation from the external appearance of the previous pre-application scheme, in response to the comments raised by Historic England, the proposed store will have an appearance of a traditional Victorian building, reflecting the history of the site whilst being tailored to the needs of the project. This is through the careful choice of materials - brick and slate - as well as creating an appropriate mass that does not disrupt any key views.

The external appearance of the building has been carefully considered and strong architectural design principles implemented to produce a project of character and presence which it is believed can only enhance the local and wider area of Desford.

The new window additions reflect the existing windows in terms of size and style. The will be positioned at the same height as the existing for continuity. Dormers were introduced due to the drop in eaves level for the proposed to show architectural hierarchy between the historic existing and the proposal. These are also identified through the different use of material - render and brick.

With the inclusion of detailing such as the Flemish bonding, brick banding, and bricked-in features, the building demonstrates strong character, elements of which are evident in the local vernacular style of principal buildings within the Conservation Area.

Other additional features include the barn ties and barn doors to reflect the history of the street and using influenced from elements found on the surrounding buildings such as the adjacent Bluebell Inn building.

The elevation design has been amended to reflect the comments received from Historic England such as the first floor window fenestration, additional brick detailing, and create a more active frontage.



Proposed South West Elevation



Proposed North East Elevation



Proposed South East Elevation

05 PROPOSAL

5.4 Visuals

The adjacent images are 3D views of the proposal in context.



3D View of the Driveway to the Main Entrance Looking South-East



3D View of the Rear Garden Looking North-West



3D View of the Front Entrance Looking East

06 CONCLUSION

06 CONCLUSION

This application seeks approval for the development of a store new building and refurbishment. The design of the building is considered to be of considerable architectural merit and complimentary to that of the surrounding area.

The style of the development is considered primarily vernacular, and is of a high standard with the use of traditional materials and complimentary landscaping to allow it to sit comfortably within its surroundings.

The proposed scheme offers an opportunity to deliver a high quality and sensitively designed development, which has carefully considered its context and setting. The development would not detrimentally intrude or disrupt the aesthetics of the local area, rather enhance the approach along High Street.

The proposal is considered to present sustainable development as it is within an existing developed site and has the opportunity to provide support for the local economy.

A primary principle behind the development is the desire to ensure that the building will prove adaptable to future requirements with regards to social, economic and environmental needs. Therefore, the proposal has been designed to provide flexibility to changing needs whilst balancing this with architectural character.

Considering improvement to the overall appearance of the building appearance, layout and clearly advantageous sustainable principles it is reasonable to suggest the minor increase in overall built footprint over the existing property does not present significant harm. The increase in area and volume has been interwoven into the existing site without appearing overly apparent in its rural context.



3D View of the Driveway to the Main Entrance Looking South-East

Careful and considerate design results in the proposal improving the character and use of the site and its surroundings for the present and future generations to come.

The proposal accords with all other local and national planning policies, as demonstrated herein and as such, we feel this should be approved without delay.

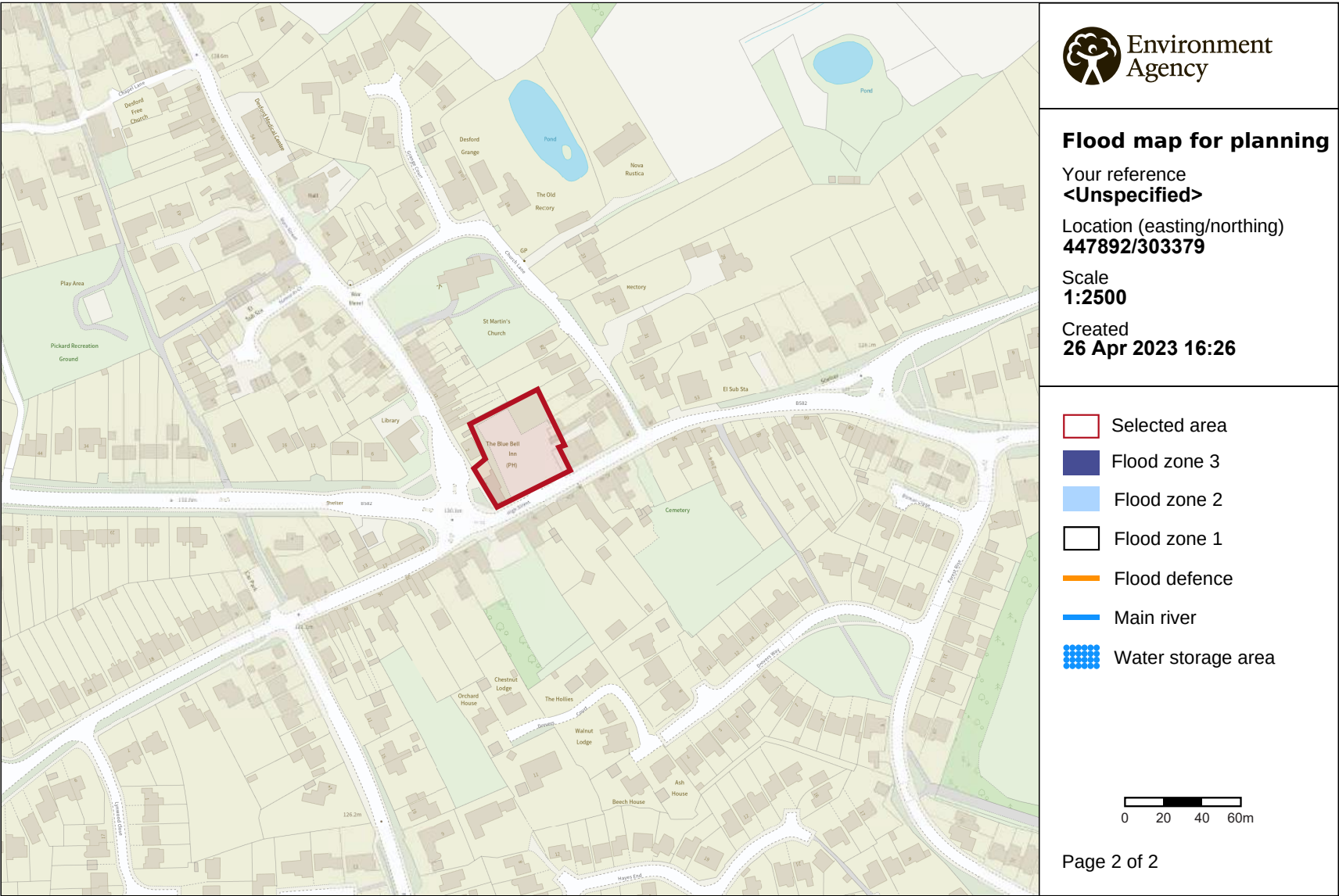
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July 2023

07 APPENDIX

This section will contain external resources used for any analysis, design influence and other information that accompanies this application.

All existing, proposed and other drawings will be submitted alongside this document.

Environment Agency Flood Risk Map



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Desford Conservation Area Map

