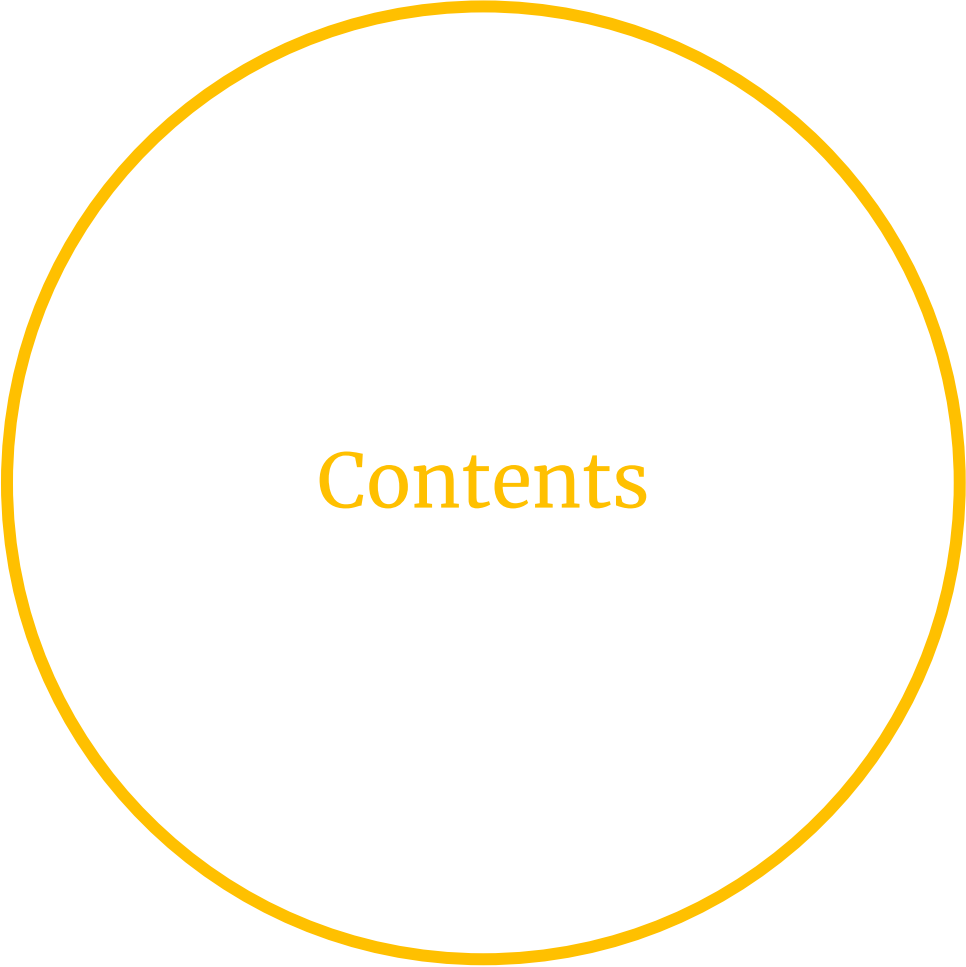


Planning, Design & Access Statement



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1. Introduction



Image 1: Aerial Image

Introduction

This Design & Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the redevelopment of the land at Hall Farm. The site will be redeveloped for luxury car sales, with a specialism in Electric Vehicles.

The primary purpose of this DAS is to provide a clear and comprehensive explanation of the design principles, considerations, and strategies behind a proposed development. The main purposes of a Design and Access Statement are as follows:

- **Demonstrate Compliance:** The DAS serves as a means to demonstrate how the proposed development aligns with local planning policies, regulations, and guidelines.
- **Explain Design Rationale:** It explains the design rationale and the principles that have influenced the development, including architectural, landscape, and urban design aspects.
- **Address Access Issues:** The "Access" component of the statement focuses on how the development provides access for all, including individuals with disabilities. It outlines how the project ensures accessibility and addresses any potential barriers.
- **Justify Departures From Policy:** If the proposed development departs from local planning policies or regulations, the DAS can provide a justification for these departures.
- **Streamline The Planning Process:** A clear and comprehensive DAS can streamline the planning process by reducing the need for additional information requests and clarifications, leading to more efficient decision-making.

In summary, the Design and Access Statement plays a crucial role in the planning and approval process for development projects. It helps ensure that proposed developments are in harmony with local planning policies, regulations, and community needs while promoting good design and accessibility principles.

Planning History

Planning approval exists to increase and intensify the use of the site by virtue of approval under 'Class Q' of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. An application was submitted to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council under reference 22/00281/P3CQ which took effect on 22nd July 2022. It confirms the following development: 'Change of use of agricultural building to a single residential dwelling house'.

Consequently, this approved development can be implemented until 22nd July 2025 (three years from the date of the decision being issued by the Council).



2. Site Analysis & Context

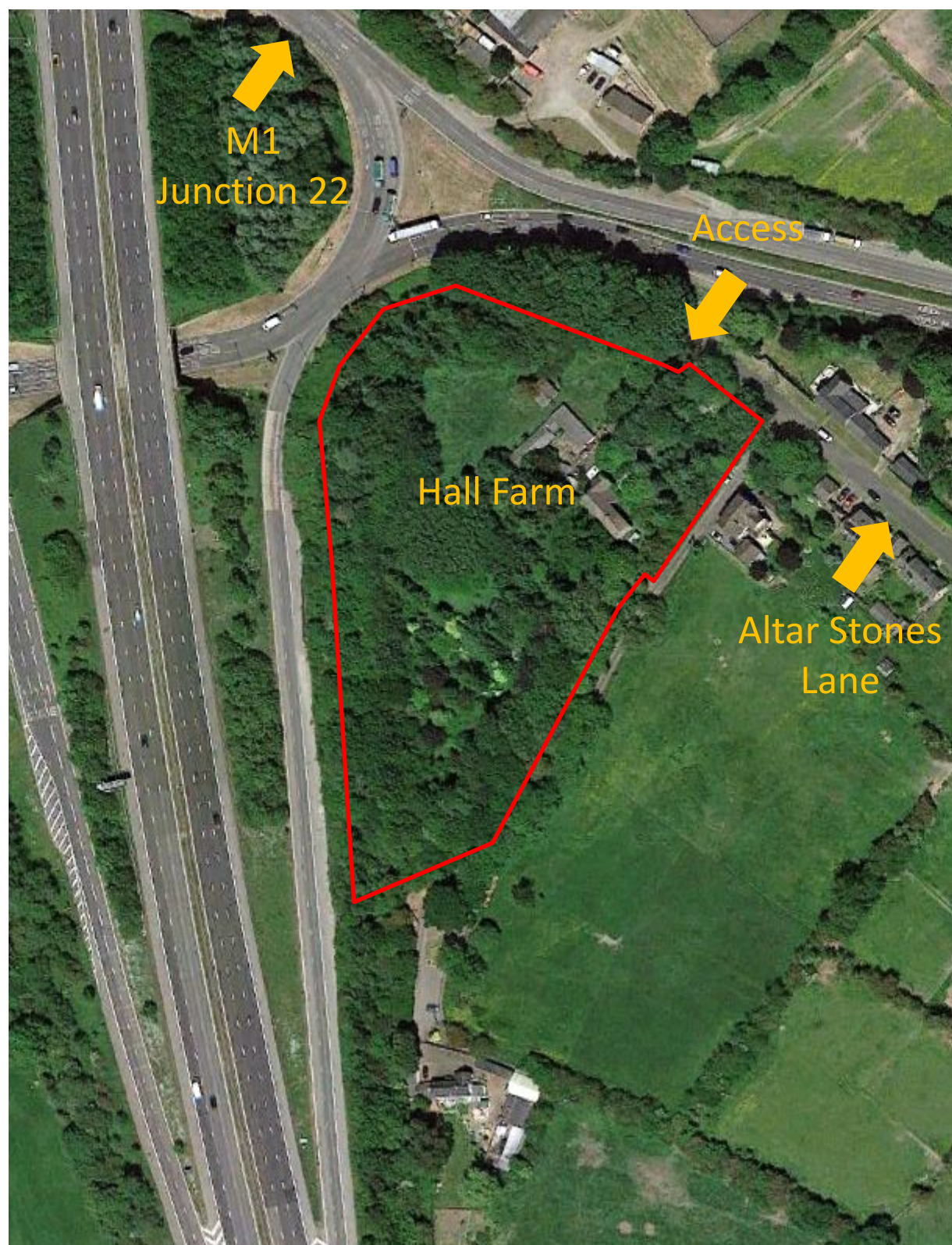


Image 1: Aerial Image

Site Analysis & Context

General Background & Access

Hall Farm is situated to the east of junction 22 of the M1 within in the Leicestershire parish of Markfield. Markfield is located around 7.5 miles west of Leicester city centre. The application site does not lie within either the Markfield Conservation Area or Urban Character Area. has historically been used for a combination of residential and agricultural purposes. However, the small holding has been vacant for some time and is now overgrown with vegetation. The site is well screened from public view due to the dense natural screening and change in levels from Altar Stones Lane.

Site & Topography

The site occupies an area of land bordering the M1 and M50, with access from Altar Stones Lane. The site is 14,211m² (1.42 Hectares) with a tapered shape, being wider adjacent to the M50 and tapering along its boundary with the M1. The site generally falls around 5m from the main access in the north towards the south in the direction of the boundary to the M1. Generally the ground rises along the perimeter boundary towards Altar Stones Lane.

Trees & Arboriculture

A significant feature of the site is its extensive and dense vegetation, particularly to the boundaries. An Arboricultural Survey was undertaken by Outline Trees in July 2023 to assess the trees, hedges and major shrub groups on and within influencing distance of the site. From this, a schedule of trees and tree constraints plan has been developed and is provided with this application. The site is generally populated throughout with a mixture of native trees and dense vegetation with pockets of open grassland. A number of trees have been identified to be in fair condition which have been labelled and categorised on the existing site plan. A copy of the report is submitted with the application.

Landscaping & Visual Appraisal

Felstone Consulting Limited were commissioned to carry out a landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) of the proposed redevelopment of Hall Farm site. The report provides the landscaping and visual context of the existing site. This is described as "Farmstead Buildings, Trees and Woodland". The application site does not form part of any national valued landscape designation, however is located within the National Forest and within Charnwood Forest. The woodland and trees on site form part of the distinctive character of the area. However, the small farmstead buildings on site are not considered to be rare. The perceptual aspects of wildness and tranquillity are influenced by the adjacent M1 and A50. The site is not considered to be valued landscape, for the purposes of NPFF.



Image 2: Aerial view of site



Image 3: Existing farmhouse

Existing Buildings

The existing site comprises a mixture of single and two storey buildings used as a small holding. There are four existing buildings on the site, these are a two story detached dwelling and associated single storey agricultural sheds and stables. These have very limited architectural and historic merit. The dwelling is finished in stone with concrete profile roof tiles. The outbuildings vary in construction and external finishes. They appear to have been extended at various points throughout their use. Materials include stone, red brick and concrete blockwork, and metal profile sheeting roofs. Overall the site could be described as sprawling and has clearly been developed over an extended period with no consideration to continuity of design, form or materials.

Flood Risk

Michael Evans & Associates were commissioned to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment. A copy of this report is submitted with the application and should be read in conjunction with this D&A.

The site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1 of the Environment Agency's Main River Flood Map, and within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 of the SFRA mapping for ordinary watercourses.

Ecology, Biodiversity & Habitat

Rachel Hacking Ecology were commissioned to undertake a comprehensive site Ecological Appraisal. A copy of this report is submitted with the application and should be read in conjunction with this D&A.

The extended phase 1 habitats survey and roosting bat surveys have provided sufficient information to fully determine the ecological impacts of the proposed development, other than impacts on reptiles. Reptile surveys will be carried out during September 2023 and reported in a separate document.



Image 4: View from the East at Altar Stones Lane of site boundary



Image 5: Primary existing entrance from Altar Stones Lane

Boundary Treatment

Site boundaries generally consist of a mixture of trees and hedges. There are small sections of stone walls to the north east corner which follow the road around to the vehicular access gate on Altar Stones Lane. The site is well screened on all elevations, including from Altar Stones Lane and the properties to it. The existing boundary treatments are marked on the existing site plan submitted with the application.

The Surrounding Area & Historic Buildings

The village of Markfield is situated around half a mile south east from the application site. Markfield has a number of listed properties, the closest to the application site being 0.7 miles away, in the centre of the village. This is the Grade II listed Church of St Michael. Markfield Conservation Area runs along Main Street and finishes south towards St Michaels. The application site is not located within or adjacent to any conservation areas.

The surrounding area to the east of the M1 is generally rural in nature with a mixture of architectural styles. To the east are two semi-detached rendered properties, to the south east along Altar Stones Lane are a number of detached stone and rendered properties and a timber stable block. The M1 and M50 are a significant feature of the area, especially for the application site which sits at the busy junctions, although set back a little. The traffic generates a significant background noise level which can be heard at Hall Farm and within the local area.

Highways & Site Access

Vectio Consulting have been appointed to undertake a Transport Assessment. A copy of this report is submitted with the application.

The site has two existing vehicle access points from Altar Stones Lane, the main access on the northern boundary and the secondary access on the eastern boundary. The site has good connections to the M50 and A1 via Altar Stones Lane. Altar Stones Lane connects onto Whitwich Road which connects via a slip road to the M50.



4. Scheme Proposals



Image 6: 3D view of Building A



Image 7: 3D view of Building A

Scheme Proposals & Access

The application proposes the construction of a purpose designed site for luxury car sales. The applicant, Hillmoren Ltd, currently operates from a small site on the A511 approximately 1 mile from the application site. The existing site is constrained by the adjacent fuel garage and therefore has limited potential for expansion and does not meet the applicants design of a high quality experience.

The proposal is for a range of new buildings which will allow this successful local luxury car sales company to expand, creating additional employment.

Hillmoren are not a typical car sales company. They specialise in high value luxury cars and have developed a niche for sales of electric vehicles, in particular Tesla. They are not a main dealer or franchise, but a private company. Sales are primarily through their specialist website, with many sales being completed online. Visitors to the site are limited and for the new site would be by appointment only.

Hillmoren wish to remain in the local area, retaining and growing their local staff base. They have been looking for suitable sites for a period of time and feel Hall Farm, by virtue of its private location and good transport links, will provide the exclusive setting which matches their brand and products.

Amount

The site has been identified specifically to allow for expansion of the existing successful business. The application proposes the demolition of the existing farmhouse and range of single storey barns and outbuildings.

Two new buildings are proposed. Building A is to be used for storage, display and photography/marketing of the prestigious cars, along with associated offices for sales, finance, admin, web development etc. Building B would be used for vehicle visual appraisal, wash down, soft preparation including paintless dent removal, paint correction with machine polisher or clay bar, interior trim repairs (i.e leather connollisation) and valeting. Mechanical and bodyshop repairs are done elsewhere at contractors premises and not on site.

Externally there will be parking for cars in stock and awaiting preparation or collection, along with staff parking.



Image 8: 3D render of Building A

Appearance, Scale & Materials

The application proposes two new buildings on the Hall Farm site. The applicant operates a very successful luxury car sales company. It is important the proposal aligns with the branding and image of the company, yet respects and enhances the rural surroundings.

The new buildings have been designed with barn-inspired architecture using natural materials for the main body of the buildings. Both buildings are traditional barn styles with rectangular footprints, gables and central ridges. Building B is more simplistic, being a simple rectangular form and is subservient to the Building A. This shows the hierarchy of the site. Building A is larger and formed in a horseshoe shape, creating a simple courtyard feel, typical of agricultural style. Building A has a linking lower height structure so as to not to conflict with the eaves of the main 'wings'.

Strong prominent gables are a significant feature to both buildings, as are the 1.5 storey eaves heights, reflecting agricultural use where larger vehicles may have needed to enter from the side. The elevated eaves and pitched roof line allows for areas of mezzanine floor internally, specifically to Building A. This allows the footprints to be more compact and helps limit development on the site.

The company branding and sales of luxury cars is an important element of the scheme and reflected in the modern insertions into the architecture. The visible gables and selected punched openings are banded by feature cladding and recessed feature panels. This emphasises the modern use of the site, but also reinforces the importance of the gables. The architecture aims to blend the agricultural aesthetics with a modern use. The architecture is modern-rural, utilising high quality materials.



Diagram 1: Extract of proposed site plan

Layout

The site and building layouts are heavily influenced by the site constraints and use. An important factor was to create a site with a rural aesthetic layout, whilst recognising how the business would operate. This is achieved through forming Building A in a courtyard arrangement, which will be prominent on entry to the site, and positioning Building B deeper into the site, further from the entrance and rotating so the gable presents to the entrance.

Other factors which heavily influence the design are:

- Trees - Careful consideration of the position of important trees which are to be retained and bring character and maturity to the site.
- Ground levels - Working with the site levels to reduce the need for significant changes in level and maintaining the natural topography where possible.
- Biodiversity - Retaining and enhancing the existing ponds, providing areas for additional biodiversity.
- Highways - Orientating the site such that the vehicular entrance is to the north from the primary road.

Landscaping & Visual Impact

Reference should be made to the Felstone Consulting Visual Impact Study submitted with the application.

The overall design approach is to retain and enhance the site's wooded character, with positive management of individual trees (including some clearance and thinning to accommodate the development and improve habitat condition). The site is well screened from public view points. The development is deemed to have a neutral impact on the local area from visual impact perspective.

We propose to integrate the proposed replacement buildings and vehicle parking areas into their existing landscape context, to create a pleasant working environment and destination for customers, and improve biodiversity interest.

Ecology & Biodiversity

The Ecological Appraisal demonstrates the proposals will result in a 17% biodiversity net gain, a significant figure of improvement that far exceeds both the current net gain requirement for biodiversity and forthcoming requirements.



Image 9: 3D render of proposed development from Altar Stones Lane

Drainage & Flood Risk

The proposed built development footprint is located within Flood Zone 1. The vulnerability class of the proposed development is 'less vulnerable'. Table 3 of the Technical Guidance indicates that sites classified as 'less vulnerable' are suitable within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 and the site is therefore determined to be suitable for the development proposed.

An outline surface water drainage strategy is within the report, and should be used as a basis for the detailed drainage design for the site. Surface water flow from the development will be restricted to the industry recommended minimum rate of 5l/s, with surface water attenuation provided up to the 1 in 100 year + climate change event.

The report concludes that the site is suitable for the type of development proposed.

Sustainability

The new buildings will be designed to meet and exceed the requirements of the latest Building Regulations, using high levels of insulation in the floors, walls and roofs. We have undertaken a preliminary thermal model (SBEM) calculation. This demonstrates the buildings will pass the Building Regulations Part L requirement with a small area of Photovoltaic panels on Building B.

The client is very sustainability minded and we therefore propose to install additional PV panels to Building A to provide power to the site and also to support the requirement for electrical vehicle charging. The majority of vehicles sold will be electric vehicles so the additional PV will be utilised for car charging.

The buildings are designed around the principle of fabric first, having high levels of insulation in the floors, walls and roofs. The heating system will use an Air Source Heat Pump, a low carbon system. Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery will ensure excellent internal air quality, reducing the need to open windows and recovering a significant percentage of heat which would normally be lost to the outside.

During the detailed design stage it is proposed to investigate the use of grey water recycling. Water can be collected from the roofs, stored underground and used for the flushing of WC and washing of cars.



Diagram 1: Extract of proposed site plan

Private Vehicles & Bicycles

The access for both private vehicles and bicycles will not be altered as part of this development. Access will be via the primary entrance off Altar Stones Lane to the north of the site. Reference should be made to the supporting Transport Statement.

Service Vehicles & Fire Service

Provision for access to the site for service vehicles and the fire services have been designed into the proposals. All access for vehicles will be via the primary entrance off Altar Stones Lane to the north of the site. Delivery and collection of cars will be via a small flatbed truck carrying a single car, or cars will be driven in and out of the site. No multi car transporters are used.

Bins will be collected using a private collection service and there is space on site for delivery and service vehicles to enter and exit the site in a forward gear. Reference should be made to the supporting Transport Statement.

Pedestrians & Cycles

Access to the site for pedestrians and cyclists will remain unchanged, utilising the primary entrance off Altar Stones Lane to the north of the site. Reference should be made to the supporting Transport Statement. Onsite secure and covered cycle parking will be provided adjacent to Building A.

Wheelchair Users

The proposed buildings provide fully accessible entrances with sloped approaches as necessary. Accessible WCs are provided to both buildings for staff and visitors.

Disabled parking for visitors is provided close to the entrance to meet Part M of the Building Regulations.



5. National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (NPPF)

This chapter seeks to summarise the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) focussing on our client's site address in Markfield. The NPPF sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England and how these should be applied.

Planning law and the NPPF (Paragraph. 47) requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales (13 weeks for this application) unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

Chapter 2 – Achieving sustainable development

The Government set out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plans as the starting point for decision-making.

Non-strategic policies should be used by Local Planning Authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods, or types of development. Neighbourhood Planning provides communities the power to develop a vision for their area and can shape, direct and help deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan.

Once a Neighbourhood Plan (such as the Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan) has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedent over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area where they are in conflict, unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

When making decisions the Government detail that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Our client and their professional design team have approached the Council prior to this submission to discuss the proposal in detail. The responses from the Council to this proposal have been of a positive nature and have given confidence to our client to progress this development project further.

Chapter 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

The Government are clear that Planning Policies and decision should create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity.

In making decisions Local Planning Authorities should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. For our client the site address has been chosen for their business needs of accessibility to National Highways, East Midlands and Birmingham International Airport, and National Rail connections (Leicester, Loughborough and East Midlands Parkway for example) to enable the ease of access for staff and visiting clients.

In addition, the NPPF is clear that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas through well-designed new buildings. To accommodate these sites planning decisions should recognise that sites, such as our clients, may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits opportunities to make a location more sustainable.

Our client's proposal seeks the sustainable growth and expansion of a family-owned business that has current premises in Markfield. The development proposal will be purpose-built to accommodate the needs of the business operation and has been carefully designed proposing two well-designed new buildings and associated works. Our client's design team has ensured that the development is sensitive to its surroundings, it will not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits opportunities to make the location more sustainable through utilising land that is well related to an existing settlement and provides our client with fantastic connections to the National Highway Network, International Airports, and National Rail Connections.

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages, which has happened here, so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed; opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued; and patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.

The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth with significant development focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.

Significantly, development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land

The Government set out that the planning system should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, such as employment, while safeguarding and improving the environment.

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

The Government’s position on design is that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. They consider that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creating better places in which to live and work and helping to make development acceptable to communities.

Developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain appropriate amounts of mixed of developments and to support local facilities and transport networks; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenities for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience

Trees are identified as making an important contribution to the character and quality of environments and can help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning decisions should ensure that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees into developments.

Our client’s development is considered to function well and adds to the overall quality of the immediate area. The buildings proposed are of good architecture, layout and propose appropriate and effective landscaping. Additionally, as part of this development proposal certain trees will need to be removed. However, our client seeks to take the opportunity to replenish the existing woodland with new tree planting of native species and is working in collaboration with an Arboricultural consultant to maximise the sites potential for the natural environment.

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

The Government expects the planning system to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

New development should reduce greenhouse gas emissions, through its location, orientation and design.

The design of this development has carefully considered the energy efficiency of the buildings through their orientation and positioning. In addition, our client, seeks to limit their reliance on fossil fuels and therefore creation of greenhouse gas emissions through proposing high levels of Photovoltaic Panels and compliance with the most up-to-date building regulations. This is aligned with their business model of selling new electric low carbon emission vehicles.

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

The Government seek planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services; minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Our client’s development proposal demonstrates that a 17% biodiversity net gain will be delivered as part of this development proposal. A significant figure of improvement to the natural environment and far exceeds both the current net gain requirement for biodiversity in England (0.01% as set out in caselaw) and forthcoming requirements, as reported in draft legislation.

Conclusions

The NPPF sets out The Government's planning policies for England and details how these should be applied. Planning law requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account and is a material consideration in making planning decisions. The purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development that consists of three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways –

- 1) an economic objective requires that development proposals assist in building a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
- 2) a social objective that requires well-designed, beautiful and safe places; and
- 3) an environmental objective that requires the protection and enhancement of our natural environment through making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, minimising waste and pollution and mitigation and adapting to climate change, including a move to a low carbon economy.

This development proposal readily demonstrates all three objectives. It will support the growth and expansion of a family owned, highly successful, local business that require new premises to ensure they continue to provide a luxury, high end product and service. Additionally, they will be creating new employment for the local area and contributing directly to the local economy.

In addition, the two buildings proposed are well-designed, beautiful and demonstrate high quality architecture and design including landscape architecture that creates natural benefits. Furthermore, this proposed development will accommodate a growing business and will provide the platform for continued growth and expansion.

Finally, through utilising land that accommodates existing built form our client also proposes to significantly improve local biodiversity, far exceeding the requirement set out in case law and far exceeds the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain target predicted to be adopted in November 2023. This is significant and will ensure that the development, in addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, will not cause detriment to the natural environment.

Consequently, with reference to the policies of the NPPF we consider that our client demonstrates a sustainable development. Therefore, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the NPPF we consider that this proposal should be approved without delay to ensure that our client can fulfil their ambitions for business growth and expansion.



5. Local & Neighbourhood Planning Policy

Local Development Plan

Planning law requires that planning applications must be determined by the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For this site address which is located within the administrative area of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, the Development Plan currently includes:

- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009)
- Site Allocation and Development Management Policies DPD (2016)
- Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2021)
- The Good Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2020)

Within Section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 it sets out that should conflicts arise between planning policies the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document. This is replicated within paragraph 30 of the NPPF which details that “Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains takes precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently”

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009)

The Core Strategy sets out the different land use policies for meeting the community’s economic, environmental and social needs for the future. It provides the over-arching strategy and long term vision for Hinckley and Bosworth up to 2026, with other Plan documents implementing the strategy and vision contained within the Core Strategy.

The policies of significance to this development proposal are detailed and summarised opposite.

Policy 21: National Forest

Proposals that contribute to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy, such as increasing woodland cover and enhancing biodiversity will be supported provided that: the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriately related to its setting within the Forest; respects the character and appearance of the wider countryside; and does not adversely affect the existing facilities and working landscape of either the forest or the wider countryside.

Developments are required to provide on-site or nearby landscaping that involves woodland planting and the creation and management of other appropriate habitats.

It is demonstrated by our client’s proposal that the buildings are sympathetic to the National Forest through their architecture associated with agricultural style barns. Furthermore, we are demonstrating a clear improvement to biodiversity as part of this development (a 17% Biodiversity Net Gain that includes Woodland planting and habitat creation).

Policy 24: Sustainable Design and Technology

The Council require all developments to meet specific requirements dependent on the location and type of development proposed. Our client’s proposal is not specifically located in an identified location. However, our client is proposing a development that goes above and beyond their statutory requirements.

The design, orientation and proposed materials have been assessed by Sustainability Consultants (Focus Consultants) to ensure that the buildings are energy efficient and will limit greenhouse gas emissions. Our client is proud to demonstrate to the Council that Building A satisfies SBEM guidelines without the need for Photovoltaic Panels and Building B with just 30sq.m of Photovoltaic Panel. But once more, our client, due to their own personal responsibilities has instructed their design team to over allocate on the proposed Photovoltaic Panels to ensure they can operate their business and the two buildings energy efficiently reducing their own carbon footprint.

Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009) Conclusions

With reference to the identified policies of the Council’s Core Strategy (2009) we are confident that our client’s development proposal satisfies Planning Policies 7 and 24 and can be viewed favourably.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD (2016)

The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016) allocates land to deliver the development requirements outlined in the Council’s Core Strategy. In addition, it also includes development management policies which apply across the borough and which will be used when determining planning applications.

However, as detailed earlier, “Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains takes precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently” (NPPF, 2023; para. 30).

Therefore, the policies identified below are those not considered to be in conflict with the Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan and subsequently, form part of this planning applications decision-making.

- Policy DM1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy DM2 Delivering Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development
- Policy DM4 Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation
- Policy DM18 Vehicular Parking Standards

Policy DM1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The Council, aligned with the NPPF set out that when considering development proposals, they will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The policy sets out that the Council will always work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Applications that accord with development plan policies will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy DM2 - Delivering Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development

The Council, detail their commitment to reducing its environmental impact through carbon reduction measures and through the support of appropriately designed low carbon developments. Planning applications for the development that seeks to reduce carbon are supported so long as all reasonable steps have been taken to avoid adverse impacts.

Our client has provided his design team with a clear instruction to maximise design features that minimise carbon use. Consequently, the design of the development has carefully considered the orientation and positioning of the two buildings proposed and will utilise renewable energy technologies throughout. To ensure that both buildings are energy efficient and that the business operations conducted on the site have a limited carbon footprint. Significantly, our client’s business operations deal in greener technologies and will require design features such as EV charging points to enable their business to operate effectively.

Consequently, it is demonstrated that our client will exceed statutory requirements as part of this development proposal, ensuring the development is sustainable and contributes to the efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Policy DM4 - Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation

The Council have recognised that a core principle of National Planning Policy is to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Therefore, to protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape, development will only be considered sustainable where:

- c) It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and / or diversification of rural businesses.

Our client operates a successful, family business that currently occupies a small business unit within the defined boundaries of Markfield. However, due to their success and luxury product that they provide, the current premises have become not fit for purpose. Consequently, our client's development proposal seeks planning permission to enable 'Hillmoren' the opportunity to grow and expand their business operations. The expansion will create job growth and will contribute significantly to the local economy. Therefore, whilst we acknowledge that the development is proposed within the countryside, we consider it to satisfy sub-section c) and can be considered sustainable development in the countryside.

Policy DM18 - Vehicular Parking Standards

The Council are clear that all new development will be required to provide an appropriate level of parking provision including provision for disabled vehicle users. This requirement is demonstrated satisfactorily as part of the development proposal and is in accordance with the most up-to-date Leicestershire Highways Design Guidance documents. This is because our client commissioned the services of Vectio Consulting Ltd. Their report to support this application is submitted and details no grounds for this development to be refused on highway grounds.

Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD (2016) Conclusions

The above policies are those identified to not be in conflict with the Markfield Neighbourhood Plan (2021) and therefore, are considered to form part of the development proposals decision-making.

The proposal demonstrates that it is sustainable development in accordance with National Planning Policy; proposes a development that will exceed statutory requirements for renewable energy to enable a low carbon development; proposes economic development to enable business growth and job creation; satisfactory parking and highway considerations; and proposes an employment use on land that accommodates existing built form.

Consequently, our client's proposal satisfies the strategic policies of the Council's' Core Strategy (2009) and demonstrates compliance with the non-strategic policies of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016) and should be, in accordance with Policy DM1, approved without delay.

Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

The Markfield Neighbourhood Area comprises the whole of Markfield Parish which is located on the edge of the Borough bordering both Charnwood Borough and North West Leicestershire District. The Parish lies within both the National Forest and Charnwood Forest and is bisected by the M1 and the A50 / A511.

The Neighbourhood Plan is now part of the development plan for the Hinckley and Bosworth area following its adoption in 2021. The policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan will form the basis of decisions along with the local plan and other material considerations such as National Planning Policy.

As detailed earlier, the policies that are identified as being in conflict with the non-strategic policies of the Council’s Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (2016) document will take precedence during the decision-making process. Therefore, we have identified the following policies that will form part of the decision-making exercise for this development proposal: -

Policy M1	Countryside
Policy M2	Landscape Character
Policy M3	Green Infrastructure
Policy M4	Ecology and Biodiversity
Policy M5	Trees
Policy M7	Renewable Energy
Policy M8	Electric Vehicle Charge Points
Policy M10	Design
Policy M24	Business Expansion



Policy M1 – Countryside

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that the countryside will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character, beauty, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and to ensure it may be enjoyed by all. Development is only support in the countryside if it is in accordance with National Planning Policies; or strategic planning policies or allocations; or other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.

We have identified earlier that this development proposal is considered to accord with National and Local Planning Policies. Therefore, we are of the view that the development satisfies this policy of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy M2 – Landscape Character

Our client’s site is located within the designated “Thringstone / Markfield Quarries and Settlement” (Area 6) landscape area which is detailed as having an undulating landform but also includes several large quarries that have altered the natural landform over time. Aside the quarrying activities the remaining land form is gently undulating. Other land uses are small areas of mixed arable and pastoral farmland, small heathlands, and woodlands. Woodland is mixed with some pine plantations and some mixed broadleaf and pine. There are also areas of new plantation and grasslands associated with the quarrying restoration as well as The National Forest Tender Scheme.

Development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting, retaining and, where possible, enhancing the distinctive qualities of the landscape character area which it would affect. Our client, to support their planning application have commissioned the works of a qualified Landscape Architect, Arboricultural consultant, and Ecologist.

We have already demonstrated within this document and those submitted in support, that the development proposal will provide a biodiversity net gain but additionally, the commissioned Landscape Architect has undertaken a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The qualified Landscape Architect concluded that -

“The landscape framework strategy seeks to retain and enhance the wooded character of the site, whilst integrating the development into its existing landscape context.

The proposals would be visually attractive with good architecture (natural and muted materials and colours of the charred timber and dark cladded walls and anthracite roof), layout (positioned away from the site entrance gateways) and appropriate and effective landscaping (with retention and enhancement of woodland habitats, and additional planting), which is sympathetic to the local Charnwood Forest character.

The overall landscape effects upon the intrinsic value, beauty and character of the countryside at this location would be neutral. The proposal would fit with the existing well-wooded farmstead character, accessed via an established road corridor and immediately adjacent to the busy Junction 22 of the M1 and A50. Thus, the character and qualities of the wider landscape would be conserved.

The existing woodland, hedgerows, mature trees, and stone walls would be retained and enhanced as far as possible, although some clearance and thinning to accommodate the development would be necessary, which would be used for the improvement of the condition of the woodland habitat.

The proposals would be located and designed so as not to harm the important long views from the publicly accessible locations at Billa Barra Hill, Hill Hole, and Altar Stones as identified on the Map of Views within the Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2039.

Views from other nearby receptors, such as local residents and road users would also be limited, due to the retention of the perimeter vegetation and building design.

The proposed buildings and vehicle parking areas would create a pleasant working environment and destination for customers.”

Consequently, with reference to Policy M2 we consider the proposed development to satisfy this policy of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy M3 – Green Infrastructure

To be supported by Policy M3 development proposals must demonstrate how they avoid significant harm to the key features of the Green Infrastructure network identified within the Neighbourhood Plan.

With reference to the Neighbourhood Plan the Green Infrastructure areas identified are outside the defined boundaries of the site address. However, they are immediately adjacent. Therefore, careful consideration has taken place to ensure significant harm is avoided. We are confident that the development proposal does not cause harm to the identified areas and will, through the landscape framework strategy and proposed landscaping, provide opportunities to enhance the areas adjacent to the site address.

Policy M4 – Ecology and Biodiversity and Policy M5 – Trees

To be supported by policies M4 and M5, development proposals that cannot avoid harm to biodiversity or will result in unavoidable loss of trees and hedgerows must include adequate mitigation and replacement.

The development will initially create an element of harm due to the increased footprints of proposed buildings and requirement for hardstanding to accommodate business needs. Trees, therefore, are proposed to be removed to accommodate the development. However, as detailed in the accompanying reports the proposed landscaping framework strategy worked upon by the commissioned Landscape Architect, Arboriculture Consultant, and Ecologist ensures that harm to be created by the development will be replaced and improved including new habitat creation, woodland management and planting, and native species planting.

Consequently, we can demonstrate that this proposal will deliver a 17% Biodiversity Net Gain and will provide increased tree planting, of native species for the betterment of the local environment.

Policy M7 – Renewable Energy and Policy M8 – Electric Vehicle Charge Points

The Neighbourhood Plan is in clear support for mitigating and adapting to climate change. Consequently, Policy M7 sets out that support is given to ‘ground mounted Photovoltaic Panels’. Whilst our client does not propose ‘ground mounted PV’ the development proposal has incorporated their desire to be carbon neutral and therefore, proposes PV panels to be installed on the roof slopes of both buildings. Additionally, through a combination of the current business operations and desire of our client for a low carbon future the provision of electric vehicle charging points is demonstrated.

Therefore, we are confident that our client’s proposal satisfies the policies M7 and M8 of the Neighbourhood Plan and will contribute positively to the Parish reducing their carbon reliance and requirements.

Policy M10 – Design

The neighbourhood plan sets out that all development should contribute positively to the creation of well-designed buildings and spaces. Through good design the character of Markfield will be maintained and enhanced.

To be supported by the Neighbourhood Plan development proposals must be sympathetic to local character and history. Development must also; be in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings; have a safe and suitable access; integrate into its surroundings; not cause detriment to existing residential amenity; ensure vehicular and cycle parking provision is integrated; and provides for external waste and recycling provision.

All aspects required of within the design policy, and in accordance with the design SPD, have been carefully designed into this development proposal. Supporting information addresses specifics but we conclude that the design is of good architecture and that it demonstrates compliance with National, Local and Neighbourhood design policies and guidance.

Policy M24 – Business Expansion

To support local business and employment within the Parish the Neighbourhood Plan allows for the expansion of existing businesses in suitable locations. Our client currently occupies a small business unit within the settlement boundaries of Markfield. Therefore, an existing business of the Parish.

Due to business growth and success this family owned business now seeks new, purpose-built accommodation to continue to deliver their luxury, high quality products and services that they are renowned for. We feel that this development proposal gains support from Policy M24 of the Neighbourhood Plan because it will: deliver local employment opportunities; comprise well designed buildings of a size and quality to cater for the identified needs of ‘Hillmoren’; and helps meet modern business requirements including a reduction in carbon reliance.

Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2021) Conclusions

During this applications decision-making the identified policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will take precedence due to the age of the adopted plan. These non-strategic policies aim to ensure that the Parish remains an attractive and desirable place to live meeting the needs for all, ensuring the community enjoys a good quality of life and feels valued and connected to each other. Furthermore, the plan aims to enhance and protect heritage assets, wildlife, and the landscape in an environment where homes, businesses and facilities meet the needs of a contemporary rural community.

We have demonstrated that upon review of these non-strategic policies our client’s development proposal is supported by the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan as it will not cause detriment to the countryside or Landscape Character; avoids harm to existing green infrastructure and proposed enhancement and improvement of ecology, biodiversity, and trees; promotes the use of renewable energy and greener technologies; is well-designed and utilises land that accommodates existing built form successfully to enable a local, family owned business the opportunity to expand.

5. Conclusions

Conclusions

- The proposal is to develop Hall Farm to support a thriving and expanding business wishing to remain within the parish of Markfield. This will support the local economy through significant increases in employment from both the construction and operation of the site, and increased revenue through business rates.
- The new site will enable Hillmoren to expand in the sustainable, and rapidly growing sector of electric vehicles.
- Hillmoren is a high profile luxury car sales company. The site will be developed to be low impact by virtue of the nature of the business model, being mostly internet sales and through the design of the buildings and site.
- The designs have been developed to be in keeping with the surrounding buildings and materials. Buildings will be agricultural in form and massing, reflecting the rural setting, but with modern elements which emphasise the high quality nature of the business.
- The proposals and supporting reports demonstrate the site will have minimal impact on the local highways.
- The site layout has been carefully set out with buildings positioned to avoid overlooking or overbearing on any neighbouring properties.
- Supporting reports demonstrate the proposals will not be subject to increased flood risk on the site or in other areas.
- A 17% net increase in biodiversity is to be achieved through the redevelopment of this site. A significant figure of improvement that far exceeds both the current net gain requirement for biodiversity and forthcoming requirements.
- Access to the site and buildings will meet or exceed the UK Building Regulations.
- Through thermal modelling the application has determined the proposed buildings will meet the criteria for energy efficiency within the UK Building Regulations, only requiring a small area of Photovoltaic (PV) panels to the roof of Building B. The applicant intends to go much further, with plans for PV panels proposed to the entirety of suitable roofs on Building A and B. The panels would generate electricity for both building use and EV charging. Additionally the applicant will look at the use of rainwater harvesting for use in toilet flushing and vehicle washdown.
- Finally, following a review and consideration of National, Local and Neighbourhood Planning Policy it is our view that the redevelopment of the site address, is acceptable in planning terms and therefore, in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD (2016) and Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, this application should be approved planning permission without delay.

Notes & Qualifications

- 1) Presentation output scale is A3.
- 2) Drawings shown are not to scale

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