



Hinckley Town Centre

New build residential

Design & Access Statement

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Preamble

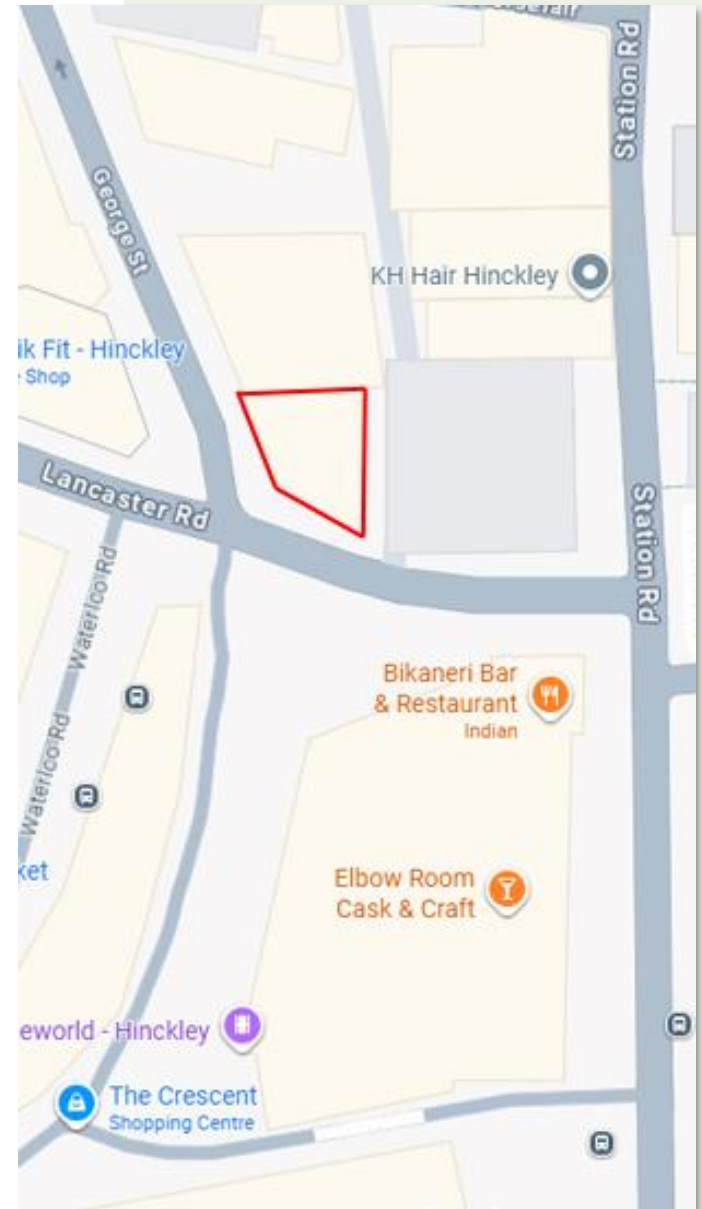
This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Hayward Architects to accompany the submission for Full Planning approval for a new build residential development on the site of the old sorting office vehicle store on the corner of George Street and Lancaster Road, Hinckley Town Centre.

This statement is additional material which describes how the proposed development responds to its setting, as is relevant to the planning process as described in the *National Design Guide* and is to be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

Please note that the applicant has appointed qualified and experienced architects to undertake the design of this development.

If the planning service should feel that the proposal is not compliant with national or local planning policies, please provide details of the specific policy and explain how this policy is being breached.

This will enable the design team to co-ordinate a full and appropriate response which accommodates all the factors which inform good design, alongside those which are pertinent to the planning system.



Project Description

This application relates to the fourth part of a wider development, which seeks to bring a cluster of historic buildings in Hinckley town centre back into everyday use and consequently secure their long-term future and maintenance.

The site is naturally divided into 4 distinct parts with different historic uses and very different architectural styles. These are to be developed under 4 separate planning applications and with a phased approach.

This application is for Part 4 – The old vehicle store

The former post office building (Parts 1+2) was constructed in Hinckley town centre in 1902 and designed by the Architect for Provincial Post Office: William Thomas Oldrieve.

A sorting office was added to the side in the mid twentieth century (Part 3). The single storey vehicle store / ancillary building was built in 1939. The post office counter ceased trading in 2015 with the sorting office continuing until 2023. The buildings have been vacant ever since. The entire site has been purchased in full by the applicant (Investment Street Ltd). Planning has been approved for parts 1 & 2 (refs. 26-00043-FUL and 26-00045-FUL) and submitted for part 3 (ref. 26/00593/FUL).

Part 1



Part 2



Part 3



Part 4



Part 4

Part four of the development is the element of the old sorting office facing Lancaster Road. This was previously used as storage and parking for post office vehicles. The building is a single storey brick with concrete heads and sills and a flat roof. It has large windows and a roller shutter door for vehicles. This proposal is for the demolition of the existing building and a new build, 3 storey residential block comprising of 20 single ensuite bedrooms with a shared living / kitchen area at ground floor.

The site sits directly adjacent to the Hinckley Town Centre conservation area but is not within it. The nearby post office is classed as an important local building however; the adjacent sorting office and vehicle store itself have little architectural merit.

The adjacent sorting office is subject to a current planning application for change of use from sui generis to Class E (planning ref. 26/00593/FUL).



Proposal

Context

Although the building forms part of the parcel of buildings originally owned by the Post Office it is physically separate from the original sorting office and post office divided by the jitty linking Lancaster Road to The Horsefair. The jitty marks the conservation area boundary with this site siting outside the conservation area.

The building directly adjoins North Wiltshire Carpets to the north and sits across the Road from Kwik Fit to the west, The Crescent retail development is located to the south, across Lancaster Road.

There are a variety of different building heights along Lancaster Road. The tall 3 storey High Cross building on the corner with Regent Street is the highest point with the 4 storey old cinema building opposite and the 3 storey post office building also forming strong node points in the street scene. Whilst the library and Salvation Army buildings are 2 storey they are not much taller than the single storey Kwik Fit building and vehicle store building on the application site. The buildings along George Street are mostly two storey and gable fronted in a mixture of brick and render. Most of the nearby buildings completely fill the site with no space between the back of pavement and building frontage.

Lancaster Road and George Street have a mixture of different architectural styles with buildings dating from the 1930's to the present day. The Crescent being the most recent development in 2015.

The old vehicle store dates from 1939 and is a large single storey flat roofed building of a utilitarian style with large windows and limited architectural detailing.

Built Form

This proposal is to demolish the existing building and replace it with a 3 storey purpose built residential block. The proposed building is taller than the existing building with the roof lining through with the adjacent sorting office, thus giving it more presence on the street scene.

The frontage of the new building is set back from the site boundary, creating space for planting and providing a buffer zone between the pavement and the residential areas for privacy. Adding planting on this corner will enliven the street scene and compliment the street trees in The Crescent.

As a result, this proposal offers a tangible benefit to Built Form



Existing street view



Proposed street view

Movement

This proposal does not offer any new or changed movement networks, it does however sit on an already active pedestrian route between the historic retail area of Castle Street and the newer shopping centre at The Crescent.

Nature

By stepping the building frontage back there is the opportunity for native planting in front of the building providing a small oasis of green in the town centre.

Public Spaces

This proposal does not offer any new or changed public spaces. It does however sit immediately adjacent to a well used public thoroughfare.

Uses

The use class will remain Sui Generis however the actual use of the site will change from storage to residential.

Need

HBBC's **Housing Needs study (April 2024)** shows an identified need for homes for single person occupancy in the region.

Mainstream developers are reluctant to provide one-bedroom properties, particularly for private sale or rent. This leaves a shortage of suitable accommodation for younger people.

This planning application offers single occupant accommodation in the form of private bedrooms and shared communal facilities. These include a dedicated laundry plus a common lounge, kitchen and dining room where occupants can

General Needs

- 1-bedroom: 25%
- 2-bedroom: 35%
- 3-bedroom: 30%
- 4+-bedroom: 10%

Housing for Older People

- 1-bedroom: 40%
- 2+-bedroom: 60%

Housing Needs Study April 2024,

socialise. This method of communal living doesn't suit everyone, but for those it does appeal to, it can be an essential lifeline to avoid isolation and improve emotional wellbeing and mental health. It can also form a stepping stone for people who are new to the area and want to get to know the town and meet people before committing to purchasing a property.

The building will remain in the ownership of the applicant (Investment St Ltd) who will act as the landlord. Investment Street are an established developer and manager of a luxury HMO brand with multiple properties already occupied in the midlands.

The business model offers high quality accommodation and larger rooms for single people, all with private en-suites.

Couples, children and pets are not allowed. The rooms are all furnished with aesthetics in mind to appeal to a younger demographic.

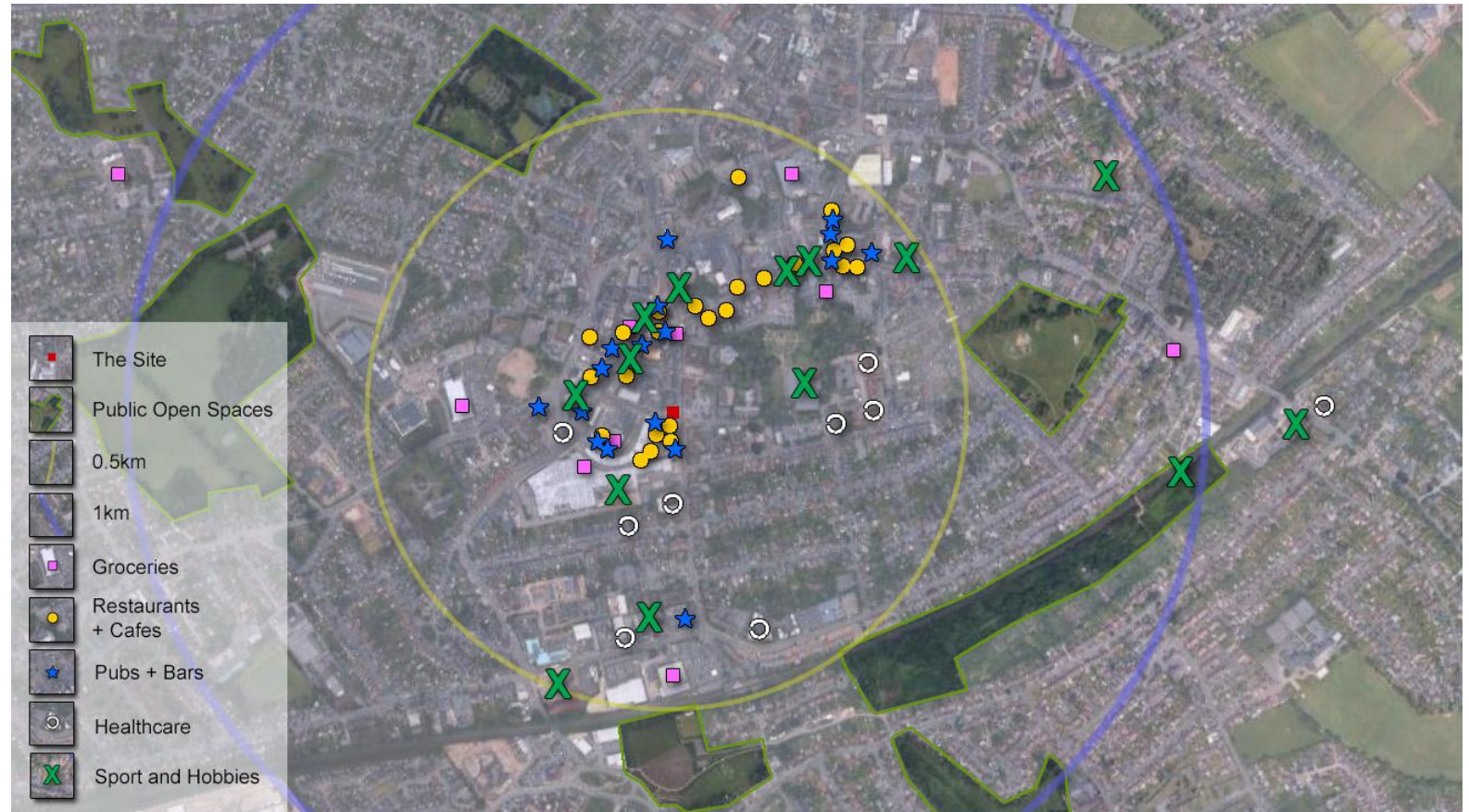
Homes and Buildings

The proposal will create a 20 bed spaces in a town centre location. The site is well located for residents to access a huge range of amenities on foot, within easy walking distance. This makes it a sustainable location and suitable for single occupier accommodation. This also negates the need for car ownership

The internal layout incorporates space for secure, covered cycle storage.
A dedicated bin store will be located off the street and easily accessed by local authority refuse collection services.



Typical Room with Investment Street



Resources

We investigated the possibility of reusing and extending the existing building. However, this was not considered feasible due to the existing structure and internal layout including the existing level changes. The new building will be built to a high standard and comply with all current regulations thus providing an energy efficient residential building within walking distance of local amenities and transport hubs.

Access

The main entrance sits on the corner of Lancaster Road and George Street. Part M compliant level access for disabled users will be provided at the main entrance with level access to the shared common room and ground floor WC in accordance with Part M4(1) – Visitable dwellings. Access to the bedrooms will be via a general access stair in accordance with Parts K and M4(1) of the building regulations.

Rear access for the bicycle store, bin store and plant room will be via the jitty.

The site is in a town centre location, within walking distance of all the town centre amenities, with a taxi rank outside. It is directly opposite the bus station and an 8 minute walk from the train station. For residents or visitors with cars there are public car parks available at St Mary's Road (less than 100m away) and Trinity Lane (approx. 170m away). Additional parking is available at Sainsbury's, the leisure centre and Church Walk, all within 400m of the site. There is also short term on street parking available on George Street and Regent Street.

Summary

- This proposal is for the development of a new residential block in a town centre location
- It is the fourth part of a broader application incorporating the entirety of the old post office site
- The site is adjacent to the Hinckley Town Centre conservation area
- The proposed new development will bring use and activity to a currently vacant site and provide a residence for 20 people.
- Stepping the building back from the site boundary provides an opportunity for planting and biodiversity in the town centre.



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