Heritage Impact Assessment & Planning Statement

58, MAIN STREET, DESFORD, LEICESTERSHIRE.

Proposed extension to existing garden …….……..……..…….. November 2026

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment & Planning statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the extension of an existing dwelling garden, including minor levelling and accommodation works.

1.2 This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying documents which include:

- General arrangement drawing prepared by N & JC Design Limited
- Application forms and Site Survey drawings

1.3 This statement provides a historic assessment of the property and locality, considers the significance of the site and analyses the proposals with due regard to the Councils Planning Policy and adopted Local Plan.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The site is used as limited grazing land, it is set well back from the highway to the rear of the host dwelling via a shared private driveway with no 56, Main Street. The application site sits adjacent to the recognised Conservation Area of the village of Desford and is part of an open field, used occasionally for sheep and horse grazing only.

2.2 To the south of the site sits No 56, Main Street, a modern property, which lies between the application site and the listed former Desford School, which now serves as the local medical practice. This in turn sits adjacent to a dwelling, No 50 Main Street, which is known as the Old Schoolhouse.

2.3 To the north is the extended rear garden of No 72, Main Street, the owners of which are selling the land parcel to the applicants. The site is bordered on three sides by dwelling gardens in Grange Court and Main Street. To the east, there is a wider field which is to be retained for the existing use. The site is secluded and does not represent good quality farmland for arable use, it is on a gradient or slope leading down from the existing rear garden boundary fence of no 58, with views out over fields and hedges to the east.

2.4 The site sits much lower than its Main Street shared access point, with the land grading down towards the lower paddock and field below. The existing dwelling sits on a plateau, with existing retaining structures providing generally level platform gardens to both the front and rear of the property, with garaging set at a lower level. There are graded free draining path and driveways down towards the boundary of that site, which will be connected directly to the application site.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The proposal garden extension comprises of roughly hewn grass and limited ground cover scrub planting. There is one small dead tree on the northwestern corner, which is to be removed.

3.2 The proposed garden extension sits to the rear of the main garden of the existing dwelling and is proposed to be fenced in with a rural post and rail, stock proof timber fence, a newly planted native species hedgerow and the internal face to have a traditional rural metal fence painted black. To the boundary of no 72, a 1.8m high close board fence is proposed to screen between the two properties and provide a backdrop for new wildflower planting.

3.2 There is no harmful visual impact being caused to neighbouring properties. Care and attention has been paid to ensure no unacceptable harm is caused to the character of the setting or to the amenity of adjacent and properties nearby.

3.3 One existing Scots Pine tree, on the elevated plateau adjacent to the host dwelling overhangs the site limitedly, but there are existing retaining structures between the trees trunk and the application site, which ensure no roots are likely to have penetrated the application site area. At the western he upper level of the proposal site, regrading works have been kept to a minimum and the proposals only seek to dress the existing surfaces with appropriate lawns and wildflower planting at existing grade levels.

4.0 Legislation

4.1 Section 12 of the NPPF seeks to achieve well-designed places. It states the creation of high-quality development is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and creates better places in which to live. Planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate landscaping. Proposals should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and setting and should establish or maintain a strong sense of place using streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit. It also states permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

4.2 Section 16 states heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. Paragraph 194 states in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Paragraph 197 states local planning authorities should consider the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to a viable use consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.3 Paragraph 199 states when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; this is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

4.4 Paragraph 200 states any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

4.5 Paragraph 201 states where a proposal would lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.

4.4 Paragraph 202 states where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

4.5 Paragraph 207 states not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

4.6 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses**.**

4.7 The Local Planning Authority is required to ensure that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at Section 72.

4.8 The Council has published the Desford Conservation Area appraisal and assessment which outlines the areas characterful buildings and streets, which incorporate a varied design style and architectural language. The proposal only seeks to implement minor grading works and fencing provisions similar to other properties close-by.

5.0 Heritage Assets

5.1 The Historic Environment Records, Historic England listed building list, Pevsner and the Desford Conservation Area Appraisal have been sourced to inform the heritage assets relevant to this application.

5.2 The HER revealed two listed buildings in close proximity to the site on Main Street. No 50 Main Street, The Old Schoolhouse and the at No 54, the former Desford School. The notable Desford Free Church is also close by but is a reasonable distance from the application site and is therefore unaffected by the development. Feature dwellings line both sides of Main Street, though outlook towards the proposal from the front and rear of properties to the east side is limited, due to a high stone wall which sits to the north of the existing dwelling and boundary tree planting in adjacent properties. Trees identified on the Conservation Area map below are not on the actual site but in the confines of the adjacent dwelling gardens, so not as indicated on the key or legend.

Key and Notable Buildings

- **Church of St Martin (Grade II)***: The architectural centrepiece of the church and environs zone, representing the village's deep medieval roots.
- **The Old Manor House (32 High Street, Grade II)*:** Built c. 1600–1640 as Manor Farmhouse, this striking brick and stone-dressed building features an L-shaped plan, four front gales, a two-storey projecting stone-quoined porch, and an original 17th-century staircase.
- **The Grange (Church Lane)**: An 18th-century timber-framed historic residence located close to the church grounds.
- **Old Hall Farm (High Street)**: Historic 17th-century brick structure linked with the Old Manor House era, featuring an attached timber-framed barn and an 18th-century dovecote in the yard.

- **Former bank premises / Blue Bell Inn / Coop Community Store**: Incorporates an original timber-framed structure approximately 350 years old (late 17th century), carefully integrated and restored during modern community development.
- **The Red Lion Public House (Lindridge Lane / Newbold Road)**: A prominent historical landmark at the junction, featuring a central gable dated 1911 (subsequently converted to residential use).
- **Main Street Terraces (Nos. 4–22 / Edwardian Cottages Nos. 10–16)**: A cohesive row of traditional and Edwardian-era terraced cottages retaining uniform styling, decorative front canopies, and arched brick and tile lintels.
- **Desford Free Church (Chapel Lane)**: Built in 1866 as a non-conformist chapel, adding to the architectural variety of the conservation area's lanes.

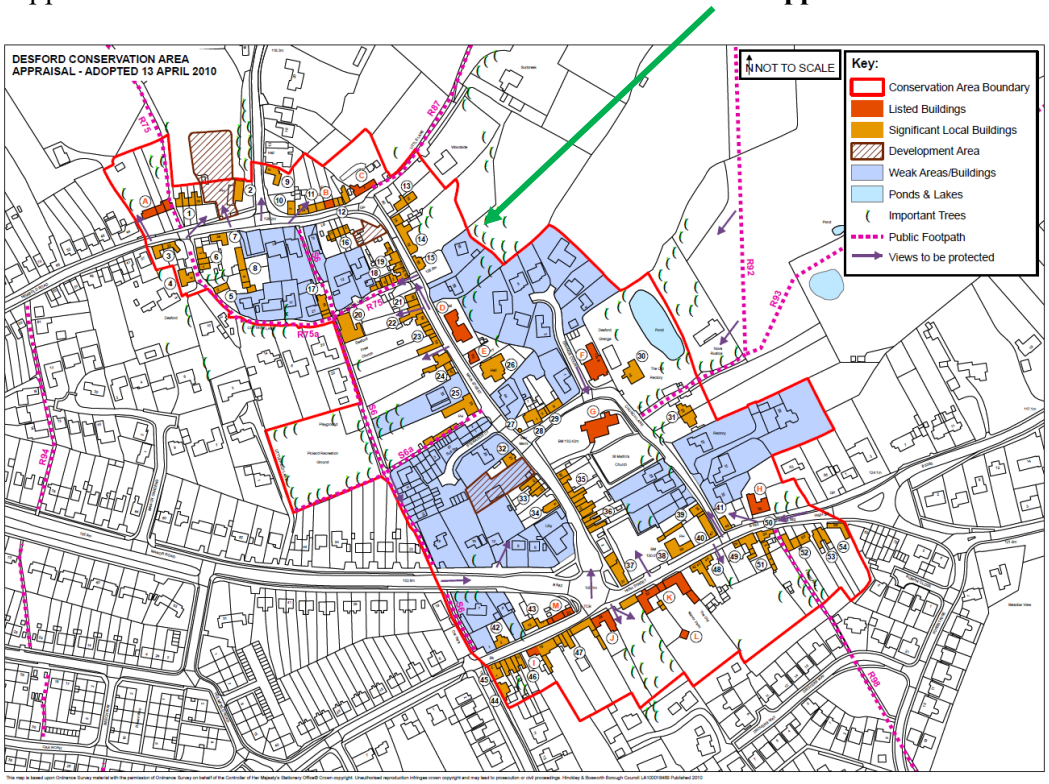
"**The Old School House**" **(Grade II listed)** refers to 50, Main Street, Desford, a prominent and historic local residential property. This property is a beautifully preserved 1860s detached former schoolhouse that has been converted into a private residential home. It features distinctive architectural highlights layout over three distinct levels:

54 Main Street: The Desford School Building

Directly adjacent to the residential schoolhouse sits 54 Main Street, which is historically documented as the Desford School which now serves as the local medical centre. It is frequently confused with the adjacent former school building at 50, Main Street, further from the proposal site.

- **History:** This red-brick structure was built slightly later, in 1876, featuring blue brick work, ashlar dressings, and decorative terracotta ridge tiles along its slate roof.

5.3 The application site is within the Desford Conservation Area. - **Application site**



Desford Conservation Area from Council Appraisal document - All copyrights reserved

5.4 Impact of the proposals on local listed buildings, particularly the two listed buildings along Main Street, is to be regarded as being minimal to none. The proposed works are set back from the public realm and views of the development from those buildings is oblique and somewhat limited. Their rear windows have restricted view of the application site and are also screened by mature tree planting.

As a result, there would be no direct intervisibility between the garden extension and the listed buildings, which is no different to the existing situation with the field view. The application site sits adjacent to the Conservation Area, but no harm arises from the proposals as the landscaping elements are set well away in terms of distance and have been carefully arranged to avoid visual impact on neighbours. There is no recognisable harmful impact, the scheme complies with the relevant guidance and Act as set out above.

5.5 The Conservation Area boundary is widely drawn to include the majority of the built-up northeastern part of the village to incorporate a wide variety of buildings which form the heritage assets of Desford. The garden extension does not require the Conservation Area boundary to be extended as the current confines do not incorporate the extended rear garden of No 72, so the proposed scheme is precisely the same in use and characterful of the setting.

5.6 The village centre is generally on a flat level across the Main Street and High Street to the south, but the arrangement of streets and buildings gives a strong sense of enclosure. This part of the village centre has a formal yet mixed character to its architecture but is relatively close to open fields. Recent developments in Little Lane and Barns Way have extended gardens which present similar aesthetics and arrangements, so the precedent of new garden spaces is well established on the edges of the village and beyond, where the new sites were less-well visually contained.

5.7 There is variety in the built form in Desford itself, where there is both linear arrangement of streets and development in depth. The application site extends the more informal, in depth, layout principles and provides a the pleasant mix of public and private realm environments. This, together with several open spaces close by, ensures a vibrant village centre variety and experience.

5.8 The village demonstrates a variety of building styles and materials. There is predominantly red brick with slate or concrete roof tiles. The majority of the buildings on Main Street have been built close to the highway ensuring the strong sense of enclosure. The existing dwelling No 58 Main Street is a modern characterful property but set well back from the streetscene and public view. The owners seek to enhance the property by the provision of an additional landscaped green space, filled with grass and wildflower meadow planting, with no residential paraphernalia or buildings set within the new garden area.

5.9 The aerial photograph below demonstrates the extent to which development sits on the edge of village core development. Although the application site is set outside the Desford Conservation Area, the depth of development is a well-established characteristic of the designation which is repeated within several parts of the village. This includes recently built two storey contemporary housing developments to the northeast of the application site on Little Lane.

5.10 From the street adjacent to the existing access, the site will only be glimpsed from footpath level via a narrow walled and gated entrance, so the proposals are not apparent from the public realm in any case. The garden extension is generally secluded, though the new boundary fences and hedgerow will be visible from the rear gardens of the closest two properties on Grange Court at a distance of 28 metres or so from their rear elevations. The outlook to the application site does not offer unacceptable or harmful visual impact or poorer quality relationships to those rear gardens to the south and east, as they are set well in excess of the distances required in local supplementary design guidance criteria.



PROPOSAL SITE

(AERIAL PLAN FROM GOOGLE MAPS – ALL COPYRIGHTS RESERVED)

5.11 The proposed fencing materials and landscape planting is not dissimilar to what they currently view towards, so the proposals will preserve the cohesive form and local character and rural appearance of the area.

5.12 Therefore, in terms of the siting of the garden extension, the proposals would not be out of keeping with the pattern and form of built development around the village of Desford. The proposed garden extension blends seamlessly into the context and setting, being at lower level than the main street, with appropriate and realistic biodiversity benefits.

Planning statement

6.1 In Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, open countryside sits outside defined settlement boundaries and is protected against inappropriate or encroaching development while the borough transitions from the Local Plan 2006 to 2026 to the emerging Local Plan Review 2024 to 2045.

Current Local Plan Status (2024–2045 Review)

- Adopted Framework: The Local Plan 2006 to 2026 (including the Core Strategy and Site Allocations & Development Management Policies DPD) provides the current statutory baseline alongside made Neighbourhood Plans.
- Emerging Plan Progress: The Local Plan Review 2024 to 2045 completed Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation in August–September 2026 ahead of submission for independent examination, with adoption anticipated in late 2027.
- Settlement Boundaries: The council reviewed settlement boundaries through the Settlement Boundary Review Topic Paper to distinguish built-up settlements from surrounding countryside.

Open Countryside Policy & Guidance

- Countryside Protection:- Land outside defined settlement boundaries and unallocated rural hamlets or countryside pockets—is treated as open countryside where development is strictly controlled to prevent urban sprawl, encroachment, and harm to rural character.
- Site Assessment & Discounting: Under the Interim Site Selection and Discount Paper 2026, sites in open countryside / rural hamlets subject to countryside policy (such as Policy PS23 in the emerging plan) are screened and discounted at early sifts unless justified as an allocation.
- Design, Landscape & Local Context :- Development proposals affecting rural or edge-of-settlement land are assessed against the Good Design Guide, the Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment, and parish-level Neighbourhood Plans including that around Desford.

Key Planning Rules & Recent Updates

- Inside vs. Outside the Boundary. Development proposals within the defined Settlement Boundary are generally supported in principle provided they respect village character and comply with the Good Design Guide SPD. Land outside the boundary is classified as open countryside, where building is strictly controlled.
- Boundary Revisions & Growth. Because Desford is designated as a Key Rural Centre, both the emerging Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan (2024–2045) and the Desford Neighbourhood Plan Review have updated the boundary to accommodate new housing allocations—including major proposed expansions to the south and east of the village, such as land near Bosworth Academy and south of Desford.
- **National policy – Good Design Guide**
- **The National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. At its core is the message that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The NPPF establishes that good design is a critical element of sustainability with the ultimate goal of making places better for people.
- It highlights that good design should be considered in all types of development to foster inclusivity, create a sense of place, develop safe and accessible environments, and respond to local character and history.
- Behind this is the need to foster innovation by ensuring design codes and policies provide clear guidance without being overly prescriptive. The NPPF was revised in 2019, reinforcing the role of design, together with supporting the production of visual tools and preapplication discussions to support the delivery of design quality.
- The National Design Guide introduces ten characteristics which work together to create its physical character, nurture and sustain a sense of community and they work positively to address environmental issues affecting climate. These ten characteristics are: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources, and lifespan. These ten characteristic are reflected throughout The Good Design Guide as well as the Local Plan.

- Building for Life 12 (2015) sets out measurable criteria for creating well-designed places that people value, becoming an industry benchmark for effective place making in residential settings. Its recommendations focus on achieving sustainability, inclusivity, functionality, and place-based character, utilising 12 questions around three themes:
- 'Integrating into the neighbourhood'
- 'Creating a place'
- 'Street and home'

6.2 Both the NPPF and the Councils Good Design Guide promote the need for good design, they do not seek to resist changes that will mitigate the improved experience of existing properties and the opportunity to improve the experience of a site and setting. The proposal site does not markedly change the use of the land but definitely will provide and improved context and setting for the existing dwelling and its current and future occupants. With a modest approach to the size scale and design of the garden space, together with the use of recognised and acceptable boundary treatments already evident in the village and surroundings, the change to the use of a small area of largely disused field space, the proposal creates a positive impact and one that is well considered, providing approved amenity values for this edge of village setting.

6.3 The Councils Local Plan, Good Design Guide and Supplementary guidance, together with National Guidance for such proposals have been observed and carefully weighed in producing the scheme for approval.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The proposal comprises extension to an existing properties garden space, for an established local use, set adjacent to the existing dwelling site, outside of the local Conservation Area. It provides improved amenity space for an existing property. When considering recent developments which have extended the highly sustainable village environs, this proposal is a somewhat 'quieter' solution which retains a rural flavour and character. The site occupies a secluded, well contained location set well away from main Street, offering minor or only limited visual change and impact to the setting of the Conservation Area. By the use of good design and characterful materials, the setting and context will be improved as a result, causing a positive impact, with no undue harm or impact arising from the proposals.

7.2 The proposed development would be within the footprint of the existing site whilst retaining a suitable amount of private garden amenity space and therefore would maintain the character of the Conservation Area. The size, scale, massing and new and retained materials are suitable for the site, resulting in the enhancement of a modern dwelling whilst making best use of this brownfield site, in a proven sustainable rural village location. The proposed development would not be unduly dominant or prominent and would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the Desford Conservation Area.

7.3 Overall, the proposals make a positive impact on the setting of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, it has been identified that there would be no harmful impact on the setting of listed buildings in the locality.

7.4 For the reasons set out above, the proposals are deemed to meet local and national planning policies and guidance, would meet the tests set in the Act and with no harm identified, it is respectfully requested that permission be granted.