

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

New timber pergola with part triple polycarbonate flat roof and part tiled pitched roof 12.13m long x 4.86m deep & new metal pergola structure with louvred roof 6.05m long x 3.05m wide and associated works including new external surfaces, timber planter boxes, retaining wall with fencing and bin store.

AT

THE BLUE BELL INN

39 High Street, Desford, Leicestershire, LE9 9JF

INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application submitted for new external works to existing external drinking area at the Blue Bell Inn public House in Desford.

The proposed works include new timber pergola with part triple polycarbonate flat roof and part tiled pitched roof 12.13m long x 4.86m deep and new metal pergola structure with louvred roof 6.05m long x 3.05m wide and associated works including new external surfaces, timber planter boxes, retaining wall with fencing and bin store.

This document has been prepared to accompany the application which also has drawing numbers 1680-(P)-01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06 and 07.

Everards of Leicestershire owns and operates the public house, which is located within the Desford conservation area and is designated a 'significant local building'.

The proposals are described in this Statement, which is proportionate to the scheme under consideration.

This document has itemized all the proposed works and together with the application drawings provides adequate information to determine the application.

THE SITE

The Blue Bell Inn is located on High Street in the heart of the village of Desford.

Desford is a village and civil parish in the Hinckley and Bosworth district of England, 7 miles west of the centre of Leicester and around 7 miles north-east of Hinckley.

Situated on a hill approximately 400 feet above sea level, the parish includes the hamlets of Botcheston and Newtown Unthank and a scattered settlement at Lindridge. The population at the 2021 census had increased to 4,592.

Desford is in the Domesday Book of 1086 but the name itself is older than that meaning Deor's Ford suggesting an Anglo-Saxon origin. Another suggestion is that it means 'ford frequented with wild animals'.

Over the years Desford has possessed several inns and pubs including The Blacksmiths Arms, The Blue Bell, The Bulls Head, The Red Lion, The Lancaster, The Roebuck, The Wheel and the White Horse. Of these the only ones surviving as public

houses are the Lancaster near to the site of the old station and the Blue Bell Inn in the centre of the village.

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

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

The site is 2193 square metres in total with the public house premises occupying approximately 217 square metres. There is a cellar and outbuilding to the north of the site of 52m² and a two-storey letting bedroom building to the east of the site being around 80m² footprint.

Between the public house building and the letting bedroom building there is an existing external drinking area of 167m² and a small external drinking area to the west of the building facing the car park that is 55m².

The remainder of the site is majority an un-marked car park accessed from High Street that could occupy around 45nr parking spaces.

SIGNIFICANT LOCAL BUILDING

The Borough of Desford conservation area appraisal document states that the Blue Bell Inn is a significant local building.

The Old Bluebell Inn: This timber framed structure has retained its original window openings on the street frontage although a new third gable has been added replacing the earlier eyebrow dormer. The rubble stone building has also been recently rendered and a bay window added to the south-east elevation. The car park was the site of a row of thatched cottages which were demolished in the early 20th century.

The Desford Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan Photographic Record of Desford Conservation Area states *The Bluebell pub is an attractive property on High Street that has changed very little from its original form when first built.*

It also relates to the block wall fronting the Bluebell Pub Car Park is an unattractive feature that needs replacing with a traditional brick wall.

The Blue Bell in has a render façade to the full extent with tiled pitched roof. The main gable end and dormers facing onto High Street have painted timber spandrel panels.

The rear flat roof area is a mid to late C20 addition with a tiled pitched roof entrance canopy on 4nr timber posts to each side with a timber spandrel gable end.

There are 6nr existing timber posts to the external drinking area supporting suspended festoon lighting and a low-level timber fence surrounds the existing external drinking area form the car park.

The north of the site boasts many trees and hedgerows forming the boundary with other properties which also forms a protected view looking from High Street north through the existing car park towards the trees and hedgerows.

Site constraints are

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

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

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

RECENT PLANNING CONSENT

An application was submitted in 2023 for the following.

23/00711/FUL - Change of use from cafe (Class E(b)) and residential (Class C3) to convenience foodstore (Class E(a)). Construction of single storey side extension, two-storey and single storey rear extensions (following the demolition of existing single-storey element to rear of 37 High Street / 2A Main Street and store to rear of public house) with associated car parking, landscaping and other works.

The proposed application was permitted to form a new retail store to part of the car park area of the Blue Bell Inn.

The planning application dealt with the proposed shared car parking area of 37nr parking spaces including 3nr disabled parking spaces, landscaping details and created a designated area for external drinking area to the Blue Bell Inn public house.

Application drawing number 1268-(P)-01 shows the site location plan with red boundary line along with existing site block plan in its current form together with a site block plan showing the new retail building and proposed parking and amended vehicle ingress / egress from High Street.

Part of the car park site will be leased to the owners of the retail outlet with the 37nr parking spaces shared between the two businesses.

The removal of the existing grassed area within the site was granted under the planning application from 2023 to be replaced with hard surfacing for car parking spaces. Landscaping was proposed as part of the planning application and details have been shown on application drawing number 1268-(P)-07.

The planning approval provided an area for external drinking at the Blue Bell Inn and it's this area to where the new application relates.

PROPOSED WORKS

The proposed works to which this application relate are to develop the area designated for external drinking to form 2nr covered areas in pergola structures.

The layout of the area will remain as planning approval 23/00711/FUL with the perimeter of the area having native hedgerows within gravels strip areas providing a landscape buffer between the external drinking area and car park.

The existing bay window will be removed and replaced with new fully glazed double French doors to provide access from the public house into the external drinking area.

Timber Pergola

A new timber pergola with a part triple polycarbonate flat roof and part tiled pitched roof 12.13m long x 4.86m deep is proposed to west elevation of the Blue Bell Inn which will cover around 59m² of area.

Timber posts will be set within the ground with a series of timber beams forming the main timber pergola structure to support the flat and pitched roof structure.

Part of the pitched roof will be tied into the existing wall with part having a tiled timber structure upstand built off the existing flat roof.

Railway timber sleeper planting units will sit between each post forming a consistent cill level for new fully glazed timber framed screens to act as a weather shield from High Street and the car park area.

To the north side of the pergola, full height fully glazed screens are proposed with a glazed sliding door unit.

The planter units will have soil and a series of plants added and allow discharge of rainwater from the roof for sustainable drainage.

Details of the proposed timber pergola are as shown on drawing number 1268-(P)-06.

Metal Pergola

The existing single garage is being removed with the raised plinth area to have a new metal pergola structure with louvred roof 6.05m long x 3.05m wide.

The metal pergola will have a louvred wall to the car park side and timber planter boxes on the side where the step down from the raised plinth is located.

New low level timber gates will link the timber and metal pergola with a clear space for access to the service yard to the rear of the public house building.

Details of the proposed metal pergola are as shown on drawing number 1268-(P)-05.

Festoon Lighting

Both the timber and metal pergolas will have suspended festoon lighting as detailed on application drawing number 1268-(P)-05.

Fixed Seating

The new timber pergola will have new exterior timber fixed seating along the elevation onto High Street as detailed on application drawing number 1268-(P)-05.

External Surfaces.

Planning approval 23/00711/FUL included for a mixture of brick paving and stone resin surfaces forming the new external drinking area.

These surfaces are proposed within this scheme with stone resin to both the timber and metal pergolas along with pedestrian access from the car park, granite sets forming the access to the rear services yard and brick paving to the remaining areas, all as detailed on application drawing number 1268-(P)-03.

Retaining Wall and Bin Store

Alongside the new metal pergola where the external levels change by around 400-500mm, and new retaining wall will be constructed with render finish and a close boarded timber fence over to reach and overall height of 2m above the higher external ground level.

The wall and fence will act as a division between the new metal pergola and the new bin store proposed using 2m high close boarded timber fencing and gates.

Details of the new wall and fencing are as application drawing number 1268-(P)-05 and layout drawing 1268-(P)-03.

All details as existing and proposed and included on application drawing numbers 1268-(P)-01 – 07 inc.



Existing external drinking to have new timber pergola – view from car park looking towards High Street showing existing bay window to be removed.



Existing external drinking to have new timber pergola – view from car park looking towards rear service yard access with existing garage being replaced with metal pergola



Existing tiled pitched roof entrance canopy to be replicated within the new timber pergola structure as detailed on drawing 1268-(P)-06

DESIGN EVALUATION

Use – No change of use is involved. The premises operate as a public house and cafe, with external areas used for customer seating and car park areas, and this use will continue.

Amount – the new proposed timber and metal pergolas will cover around 77m² of covered area with unheated space taking up an area designated as external drinking associated with the Blue Bell Inn as part of planning approval ref 23/00711/FUL.

Layout – The layout of the existing premises and outside areas to the east of the site are unaffected by the proposed works. The new external drinking area to the west of the site will remain as planning approval 23/00711/FUL with the new pergolas formed within this area. The overall site layout will be as drawing number 1268-(P)-01 with the new proposed retail building and associated car parking and new access from High Street.

Scale – No changes are proposed to the scale, massing or height of the existing building.

Landscaping – The proposed alterations do not involve the loss of, or impact upon, the proposed trees, hedgerows and planting as planning approval ref 23/00711/FUL.

Appearance – The external appearance of the building will change to the west elevation where the new timber pergola is proposed. The timber frame structure will be formed with posts and railway sleeper planter boxes and fully glazed units between the part flat roof and part pitched roof provides a mainly pitched roof appearance matching the roof tiles to the main host building.

The timber structure and planter units, along with the trees and native hedgerows as approved under planning application ref 23/00711/FUL will provide a unique visual appearance sympathetic to the host building and surround areas.

Access – The external access into the building and around the site will not change.

There are no features of any architectural significance on which the proposed scheme would have any impact.

Pedestrian access will remain as it currently provides and will not change because of this application.

There is no impact in respect of flooding created by this application.

HERITAGE IMPACT

The Blue Bell Inn House is not a listed building. The site falls within Desford Conservation Area and is designated and 'significant local building'.

There are several listed buildings located in the vicinity of the site, with a Grade II* listed building on the opposite side of High Street.

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II*

List Entry Number: 1074078

Date first listed: 22-Oct-1952

Date of most recent amendment: 28-Feb-1991

List Entry Name: OLD MANOR HOUSE AND ATTACHED BARN AND SERVICE BLOCK.

Farmhouse and attached barn. Early C17, altered C19. Red brick in English bond, sandstone ashlar quoins and dressings, Swithland slate roof having raised stone coped gables and 2 square ridge stacks with strapwork decorations. Timber frame. T - plan. 2 storey plus attics irregular 4 bay front having chamfered plinth and 3 main coped gables with kneelers The second bay from the right is narrower and comprises a 2 storey projecting porch, also gabled, The lower part is in ashlar with a four centred arched doorway, The porch covers a plain planked door and is flanked by single 3 light windows with beyond to the left a further 2 light window. At first floor level the porch is jettied out on all three sides on timber joists with shaped ends, it is built of brick with ashlar quoins, It contains a 2 light timber sliding sash and is flanked by single 3 light windows and a further similar window to the left. The windows are stone mullioned with square leaded casements and have rectangular ashlar surrounds. In the gables are blocked 2 light oak mullioned windows. To the rear is a projecting service wing also with some contemporary windows. To the left is an attached brick barn with a C17 timber framed wall of square panels. To the right, forward of the house is an attached early C18 service block in Flemish bond with burnt headers and an asbestos roof. Interior not inspected but reputed to retain C17 staircase with splat balusters and some panelling.

JUSTIFICATION

The site operates as both a public house and café outlet.

The public house has a main interior layout for customer use along with the existing external drinking area to the east of the site.

The existing external drinking area to the car park along with the existing grass area also provided additional areas for customer external drinking.

Under planning approval ref 23/00711/FUL the grass area has been removed to create additional space for parking with a new layout proposed for external use under this application.

The proposed business use is to utilize the new timber pergola covered area as designated for café customers so that's these customers can be separated from the public house customers.

The significant local building description of the Blue Bell Inn states `the timber frame structure` and confirms that all the original windows onto High Street have been retained.

The proposed works to the west of the building will not have an impact on the existing windows to High Street and the existing bay window being removed is a mid-to-late C20 modern addition to the building.

IMPACT STATEMENT

The site is currently used as a public house serving the local area.

Village pubs in general are a part of the fabric of life within their village and can play a pivotal role in the village community. For many, the village pub is about bringing people together and are an icon of British life. But unfortunately, too many are closing their doors for good. – current figures showing almost 30nr per week.

Desford historically boasted 8nr public houses and the village is now down to the Blue Bell Inn and The Lancaster.

These figures are increasing following covid and with the current cost of living uncertainty pub businesses must compete for business.

Pubs can adapt and cater for changing lifestyles whilst remaining at the heart of the community but like any small business they need support, investment and protection.

The proposed new pergolas will offer additional covered floor area for additional covers to increase capacity and provide more space for customers.

The improvement of the existing external drinking areas will benefit the business without having any impact on any heritage assets, listed building or impacting on the conservation setting including the protected view.

BIODIVERSITY

The works are associated in an area of existing hard standing. New trees, hedgerows and planting areas proposed as part of the overall scheme related to planning approval ref 23/00711/FUL.

SUSTAINABILITY

The proposed external works will include and benefit from several sustainable improvements such as:

- Locally sourced materials
- Minimizing waste material with recycling
- Energy efficient festoon lighting

PARKING

At present the site has around 45nr un-marked parking spaces all to the west of the site accessed from High Street.

As part of planning approval ref 23/00711/FUL, a new layout has been permitted with new access from High Street to provide 37nr parking spaces for shared use between the public house and retail store.

OWNERSHIP

All site boundaries will be clearly defined.

Everard's of Leicestershire have an agreed lease on part of the existing car park to be developed into a new retail outlet with new shared parking all as planning approval ref 23/00711/FUL

LAYOUT

The general layout of the existing building, external areas and site remains unaltered.

ACCESS

Access to and from the building is via the main front entrance doors with level access provided to the side of the car park which will remain unaltered.

An additional door access to and from the building will be provided by the removal of the existing bay window providing new glazed French doors.

Vehicle access to and from the site will be altered to a single ingress / egress and planning approval ref 23/00711/FUL.

CONCLUSION

All the items for this application have a positive design approach for the local area which enhances the business of the public house, which maintains the historical use of the building.

Everything can be removed and restored to an open external drinking area that exists today, paving or grass later.

There is no impact on the significant local building or the Grade II* listed building opposite.

This is a positive and sensitive approach.

The proposed changes fully respect these features and will cause no harm to any of the surrounding building's architectural or historic character.

For this vital community asset in Desford to remain and to be able to support itself, modern intervention is required to meet up-to-date standards, in this instance an improved external drinking areas offering family facilities and a new comfortable external drinking area.

Once a village pub has gone it is difficult to bring them back, and this is already the case in Desford who have now lost several public houses and community assets.

We therefore request that this application be supported.