Heritage Impact Assessment

58, MAIN STREET, DESFORD, LEICESTERSHIRE.

Proposed extensions & alterations, with replacement garage **October 2026**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared in support of the planning application for the extensions and alterations to an existing dwelling, together with a replacement garage, including accommodation works.

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

- Plans and drawings prepared by N & JC Design Limited
- Application forms

1.3 This statement provides a historic assessment of the property and locality, considers the significance of the site and analyses the proposals.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The site accommodates a 1980's two-storey chalet style building, set back from the main highway via a shared private driveway with no 56, Main Street, the application property has low eaves and contemporary styled windows and doors. The site is set within the recognised Conservation Area of the village of Desford but is of a more modern design than many of the feature and notable listed buildings which are of character in this area.

2.2 To the south of the site sits No 56, Main Street, also 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 The site is bordered on three sides by a mixture of notable local older buildings as identified on the Conservation Area map and more recently built modern dwellings along Little Lane to the north. The site borders a field to the east which is used infrequently for grazing of sheep and horses.

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 to the east. 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 rear boundary of the site.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The proposal comprises of alterations to the rear dormer at first floor level, with minor internal alterations and a single storey extension to the rear of the dwelling, with revisions to the existing retaining structures to accommodate the proposed vaulted ceiling open plan rear extension. An existing garage is to be demolished, and a replacement garage built 3 metres forward of the existing garage position to provide improved space for the proposal to work in a balanced manner on the site.

3.2 The proposed extension sits to the rear of the main footprint and visual frame of the existing dwelling, with no harmful 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 Pine tree, in very close proximity to the existing dwelling, is proposed to be removed to facilitate space for the proposals, with only minor works to the under croft of overhanging branches of trees in No 56, Main Street garden, which allows for the garage location to be adjusted.

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.

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 development 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 dwelling and boundary tree planting in adjacent properties.

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:

Ground Floor: Includes an entrance hall, lounge with a classic bay sash window, an open-plan kitchen and dining area featuring a central island, a utility room, an attached shower room, and an elegant orangery equipped with underfloor heating.

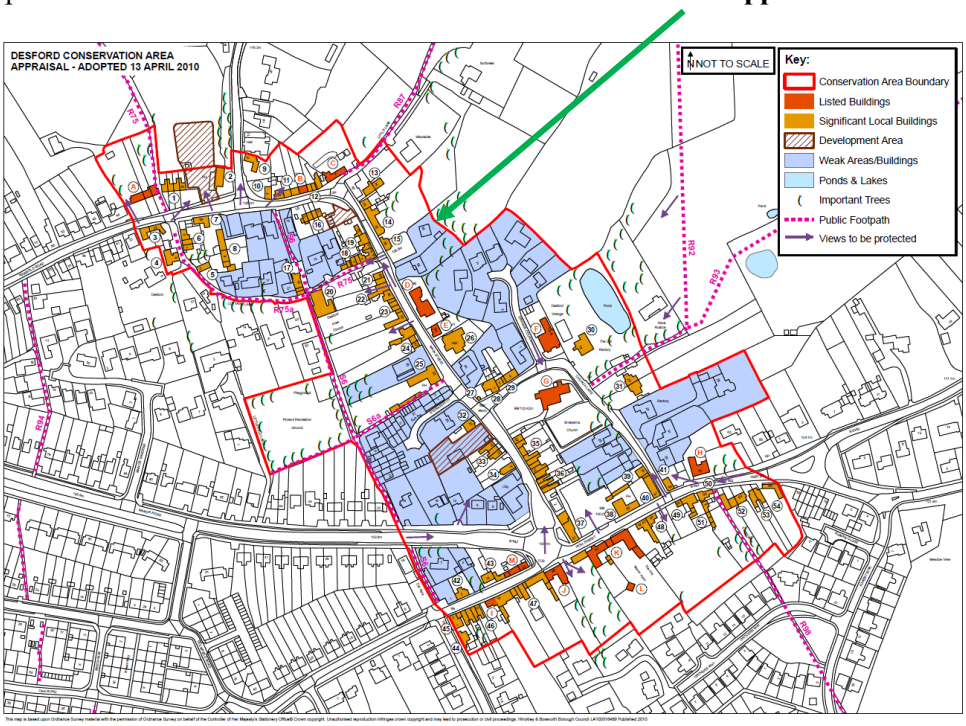
- **First Floor:** Contains three bedrooms fitted with built-in wardrobes alongside a family bathroom boasting a traditional roll-top bath.
- **Second Floor:** Accessible via a unique spiral staircase, this level opens up into a spectacular master bedroom suite housed within a turreted section of the building, complete with a private seating area and en-suite facilities.
- **Exterior:** The grounds include a gravelled fore garden, a private walled garden to the rear, a separate family/garden room, and a side driveway for parking.

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 property and are also screened by mature tree planting.

As a result, there would be no direct intervisibility between the development and the listed buildings, which is no different to the existing situation. The application site forms part of the setting of the Conservation Area, but no harm arises from the proposals as the windows being used are set well away in terms of distance and have been carefully located to avoid 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 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.

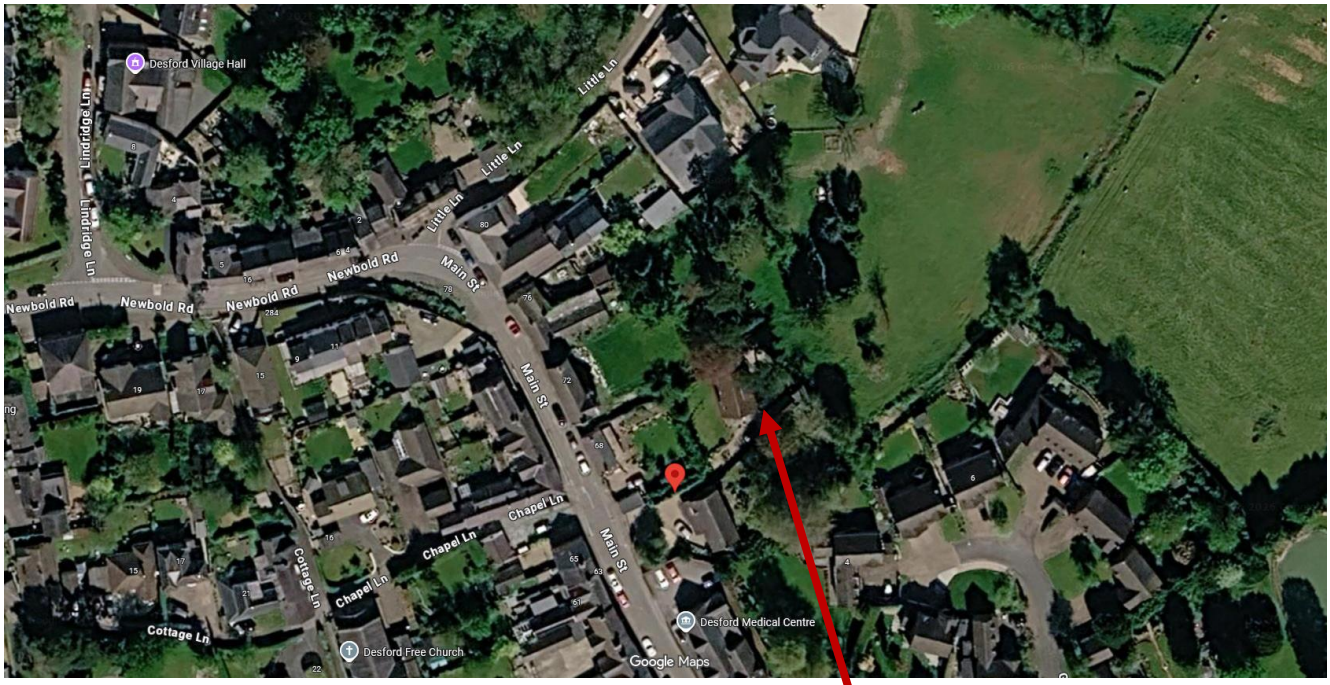
5.6 There is variety in the built form in Desford itself, where there is both linear arrangement of streets and development in depth. The application site presents a more informal, in depth, layout but provides part of the pleasant mix of public and private realm environments. The application property has clearly been built at a later time than the Main Street, but the contemporary, Architect designed, bespoke styling compliments the notable much older properties which front Main Street. This, together with several open spaces close by, ensures a vibrant village centre variety and experience.

5.7 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 application site building is a design with brick façade, with a timbered cheeked French dormer set in a concrete tiled covered gabled roof. It is of a particular design which is to be enhanced with complimentary, vernacular and contemporary materials. It is a characterful property but set well back from the streetscene and public view.

5.8 As a result of local street arrangement, there is a medium density of development locally which is familiar to a rural village centre, with mixed property ages and uses spread across the vicinity.

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

5.10 The proposal seeks permission for the extension and alterations to the rear of the property at ground level and limitedly at first floor level. The replacement garage is set at a lower ground level on the slope of the graded grounds. As a result, the massing and architectural appearance would be enhanced by the additions, and visual impact would not be unduly prominent or dominant. As such, the overall use of the site is unchanged, with the proposals covering less than 50% of the existing garden area.



PROPOSAL SITE & BUILDING

(AERIAL PLAN FROM GOOGLE MAPS – ALL COPYRIGHTS RESERVED)

5.11 From the street adjacent to the existing access, the development will only be glimpsed from footpath level via a narrow walled and gated entrance, so the proposals are not that apparent from the public realm in any case. The windows serving the new extensions are either well screened or are set at an oblique angle, so will present a consistent theme in conjunction with the existing side elevation windows which are closer to Main Street. The rear extensions are secluded, and the rear outlook does not offer unacceptable or harmful impact to neighbours rear gardens to the south and east, as they are set well in excess of the distances required in local supplementary design guidance criteria.

5.12 The proposed ground floor extension is of a contemporary design, complimentary to the bespoke existing dwelling, utilising pitched roof french dormers and rooflights, to provide light and usable interior spaces. The building envelope would provide an appropriate mix of materials including stone and brick façade, lead rolled sheet and recycled concrete tile roofing materials, so there will be positive visual external enhancement. The existing windows will be spray coated as part of the property refurbishment, to blend with the new works. This would preserve the cohesive form of development with the existing rhythm of fenestration and rich mix of materials in the streetscene.

5.13 Therefore, in terms of the siting of the property, the proposals would not be out of keeping with the pattern and form of built development within the village centre of Desford. There is a mixture of buildings in this part of the village with no single defining style. The proposed extensions blend seamlessly into the context and setting, being at lower level than the street, with the massing positively limited through the use of low eaves, dormer windows and the existing roof spaces.

5.14 The proposal would result in an unchanged access route with the addition of appropriate turning and enhanced parking spaces.

5.15 The replacement garage provides for a Manual For Streets compliant garage, enabling the parking of a vehicle within the garage and allowing for cycle and garden equipment storage, better than the current garage provides.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The proposal comprises extensions to parts of an existing building, for an established use, set within the existing site. It provides improved living spaces, garaging facilities and enhanced vehicle movements and parking. Together with adjusted structural retaining walls, similar to the existing, the development will form a cohesive, bespoke designed enhanced property, alongside minor accommodation works. The existing building is of architectural merit, and changes have been appropriately limited to retain the character of the property, whilst providing improved accommodation for the applicants. The building occupies a secluded location set well away from the roadside though remains a modest asset in the setting of the Conservation Area. However, with care taken to improve the rear façade, by the use of good design and characterful materials, the setting and context will be improved as a result, causing a positive impact within the Conservation Area, with no undue harm or impact arising from the proposals.

6.2. The Conservation Area setting would therefore benefit positively from the proposed development.

6.3 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.

6.5 Overall, the proposals are deemed to 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.

6.6 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.

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