



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Petrol Filling Station Development at:
*Whitehorse Service Station, Clothall Road, Baldock,
 SG7 6PD*

Prepared by MS4 Architects LLP on behalf of JP&S Servicess Ltd

Issue P1: 05.06.202

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This Design & Access statement has been prepared by MS4 Architects on behalf of JP&S Servicess Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'the applicant') to accompany a full suite of plans & specialist consultant reports, which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

1.2 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Pre-application planning advice has been sought from North Herts Council (thereafter referred to as 'NHC') to retain the petrol filling station use on the site with a new build development (ref: 25/00758/PRE).

The principle of development has been accepted given it's current lawful use as a petrol filling station.

Application Site: Deans Yard, South Road, Baldock, SG7 6BZ
Local Authority: North Herts Council
Grid Ref = TL25113356

Please refer to applicant's minutes & pre-advice letter - Appendix A.

In officer's advise in conclusion was:

"Overall, the principle of development is considered acceptable in this instance given the lawful use of the site as a petrol service station. Whilst the proposed development would be an improvement on the existing buildings on site".

Alex Howard (Senior Planning Officer)

1.3 APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

"Demolition of existing buildings and for the erection of a new shop, forecourt canopy, car and jet wash, car and cycle parking, EV vehicle charging points, hard and soft landscaping, bin stores and associated development thereto' at Whitehorse Service Station, Clothall Road and land to rear of 53 South Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire".

1.4 THE APPLICATION

This is a detailed application and it is the applicants intention to provide sufficient information at planning stage to reduce the number of planning conditions.

The overall objective of the scheme is to deliver a high quality design that meets the local communities needs and the Council's policy objectives to provide diverse employment opportunities while contributing positively to the local character.

The applicant is willing to enter into the necessary legal agreements & to make the financial contributions required to deliver these proposals.

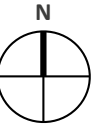
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ASSESSMENT

An Assessment of the site and the surrounding
design considerations and opportunities

2 ASSESSMENT

2.1 TOWN CONTEXT



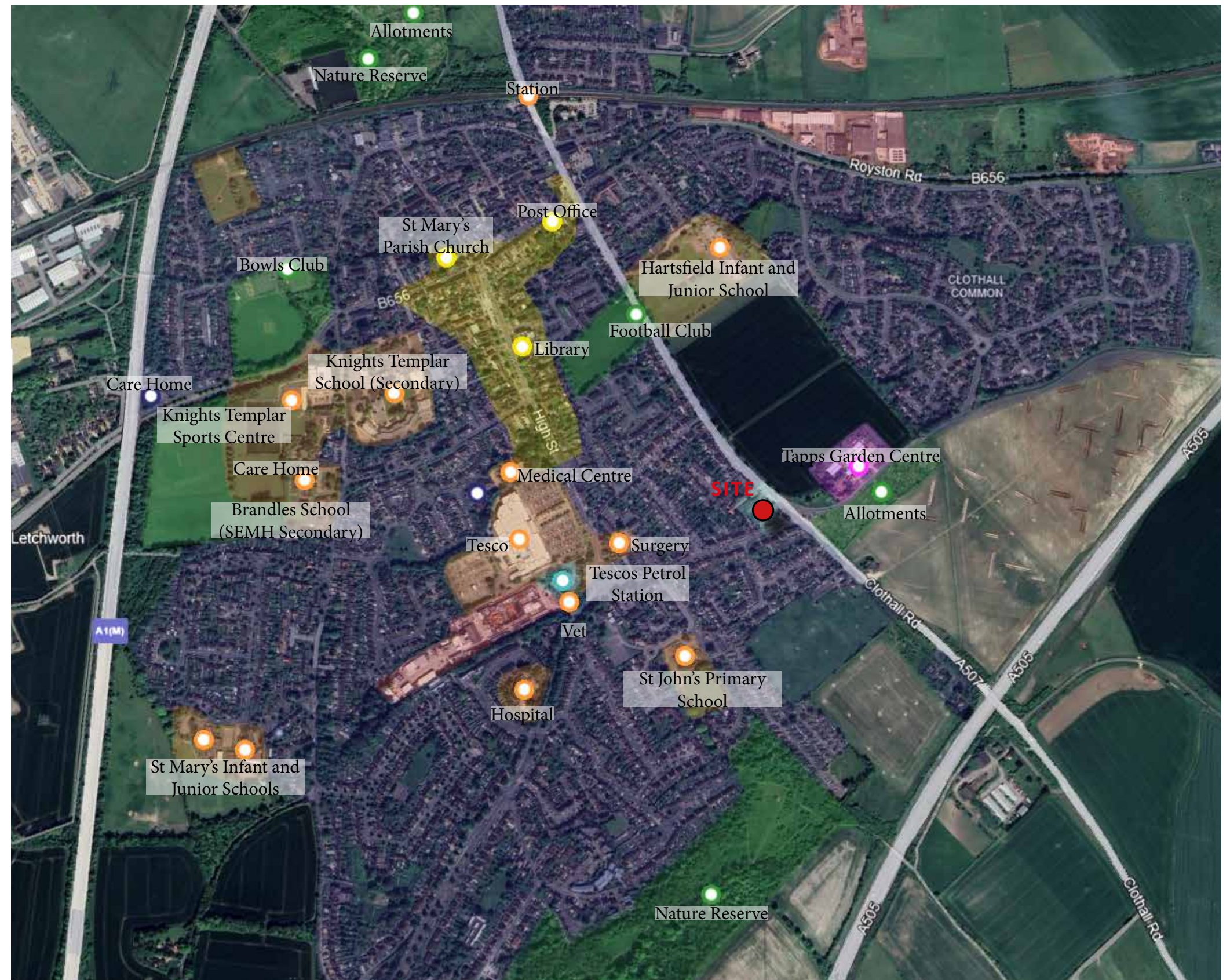
Baldock is a Market Town in North Hertfordshire with a rich archaeological heritage from continuous occupation since prehistoric times.

The town lies approximately 33 miles north of London, and 14 miles north of Hertford.

Facilities within the town are mostly concentrated towards the town centre, and include both primary and secondary school provision, several pubs and eateries, a post office and a library, a Garden centre, a Vet, a medical centre, surgery and small hospital. There are also four Dentist practices within the town centre.

The Town has a large Supermarket with connected petrol station. The next closest Petrol stations are the BP garage in Letchworth to the west, and the Baldock services off the A1(M), 3km north of the town centre.

-  Residential
-  Community Facilities
-  Green Spaces
-  Industrial
-  Town Centre
-  Other Retail
-  Petrol Stations



2 ASSESSMENT

2.2 SITE LOCATION & SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The application site is located on the edge of a predominantly residential zone to the town of Baldock, on the corner of South Road and Clothall Road (A507), a major thoroughfare passing through the town.

The site currently accommodates:

- An abandoned petrol/service station (PFS)
- Car service garage.
- The outbuilding store to no.53.

The site is physically bound by The Hen & Chickens pub to the South, R&D marine light industrial to the West & residential flats (no.53) to the East. Clothall Road and South Road lie to the North & East respectively.

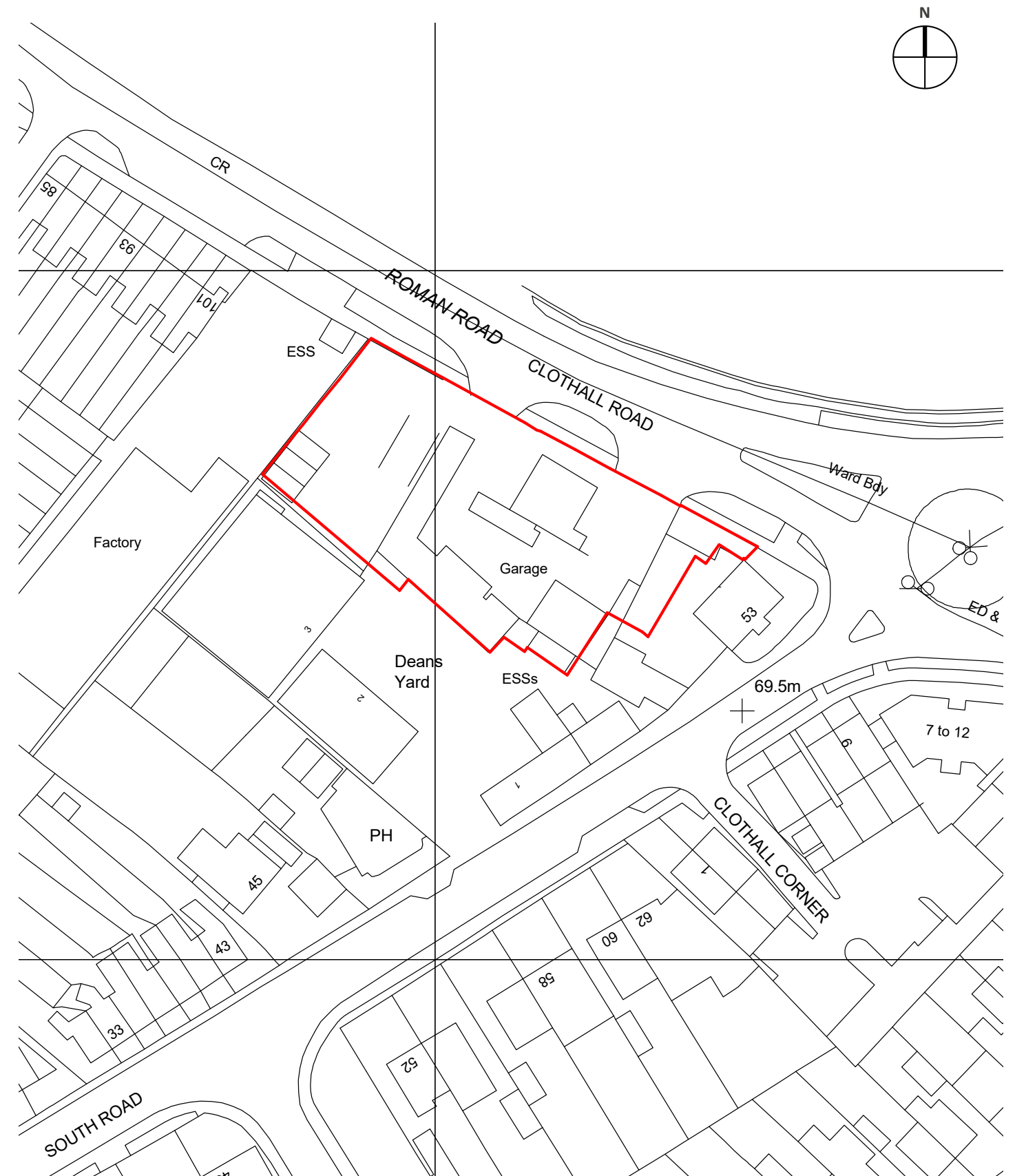
There are no established trees or hedges on the site of any significance.

The total application site area is 1629 m² (0.16ha)

The sites are within area of Clothall Common archaeological interest area.



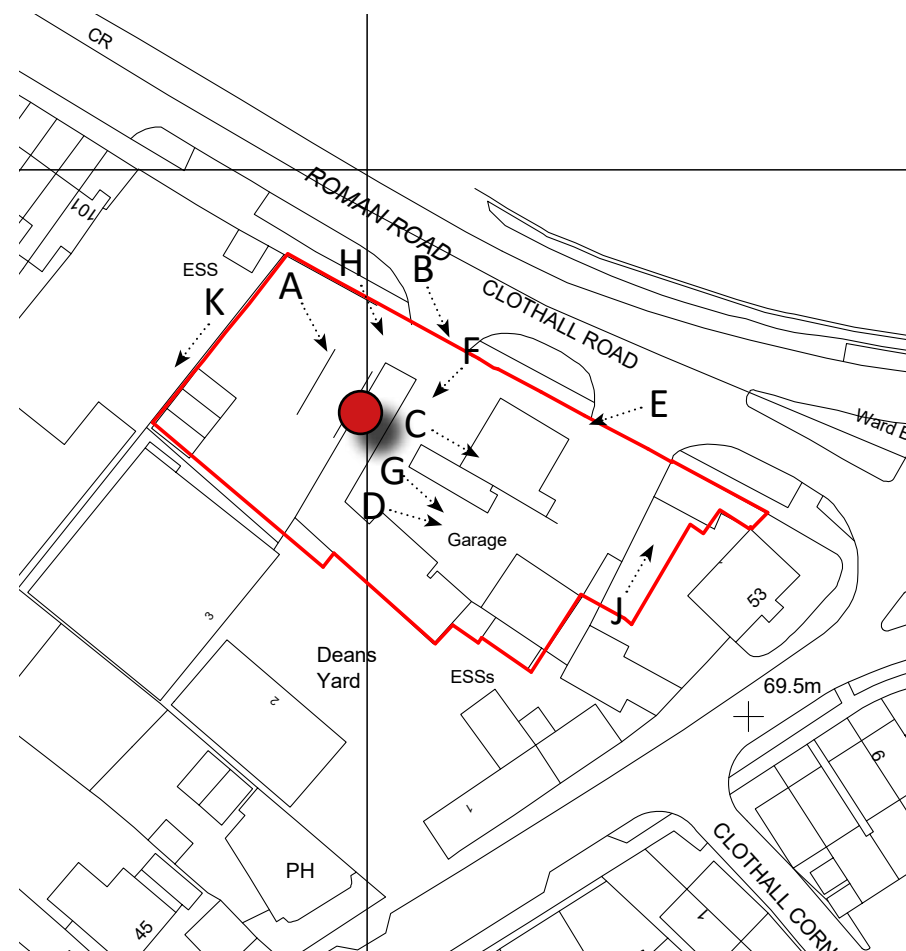
Aerial view referenced courtesy of Google Maps



"Ordnance Survey MasterMap Data purchased under 12 month license from Stanfords (OS Partner license 100035409) 08/07/2024, Order license reference CC-00021003

2 ASSESSMENT

2.3 EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



2 ASSESSMENT

2.3 EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



2 ASSESSMENT

2.4 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The application host property has had the following planning application made which are both relevant, albeit, historic:

Site 1

1. Application reference: 78/01380/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 13 Oct 1978)
"Erection of a block of 3 lock up garages"
2. Application reference: 78/00404/1A (Consent Granted 28 Apr 1978)
"Erection of internally illuminated pole sign and non illuminated motifs"
3. Application reference: 86/01511/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 13 Nov 1986)
"Erection of detached workshop building."
4. Application reference: 86/00001/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 01 Jul 1986)
"Erection of single storey extension to sales building and installation of underground storage tank."
5. Application reference: 90/00030/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 13 Jan 1990)
"Extension to existing canopy covering petrol pumps."
6. Application reference: 93/00482/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 19 Jul 1993)
"Refurbishment and alterations to building, including removal of cladding, insertion of roller shutter doors, new windows and door."

Site 2

1. Application reference: 78/01572/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 03 Nov 1978)
"Retention of prefabricated office on a permanent basis"
2. Application reference: 93/00482/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 19 Jul 1993)
"Refurbishment and alterations to building, including removal of cladding, insertion of roller shutter doors, new windows and door."
3. Application reference: 22/03131/FP (Conditional Permission Granted 12 Feb 2023)
"Continued use of workshop as a car dealership with 12 car parking spaces."
Connected to this application, the following Comment was submitted 18 Jan 2023:
The address of the application is South Road, Baldock. This is a residential road that has a lack of parking for residents. This existing business consistently occupies parking spaces on the road over and above the licences

allocation. This causes problems for residents. South Road carries a large volume of HGV traffic. This existing licensee receives regular deliveries of vehicles by car transporter that have to be unloaded in the road as there is no provision off road. This causes extreme congestion and delays on South Road leading to danger for pedestrians as they are forced into the road.

Site 3

1. Application reference: 11/02086/1EC (No Objection 24 Aug 2011)
"Installation of equipment cabinet"

The neighbouring properties have had the following planning applications which are relevant:

Hen & Chickens Public House

1. Application reference: 87/01805/1 (Refused 21 Jan 1988)
"Erection of single storey front and rear extensions"
2. Application reference: 88/00357/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 23 Mar 1988)
"Erection of single storey rear extension."

R & D Marine, Clothall Road

1. Application reference: 78/00345/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 26 May 1978)
"Erection of single storey factory extension and alterations to existing offices and toilets"
2. Application reference: 76/00242/1 (Refused 10 Jun 1976)
"Change of use of storage building to light engineering shop"
3. Application reference: 77/01055/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 29 Sep 1977)
"Use of storage building for the manufacture of light engineering products for the marine industry"
4. Application reference: 81/00472/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 08 May 1981)
"Erection of two storey extension for store and offices."
5. Application reference: 84/00809/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 28 Jun 1984)
"Erection of single storey rear extension"
6. Application reference: 86/00740/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 24 Jun 1986)
"Erection of two storey front extension to existing factory."
7. Application reference: 00/00543/1 (Granted 20 Jun 2000)
"Two storey and single storey extensions to factory building"

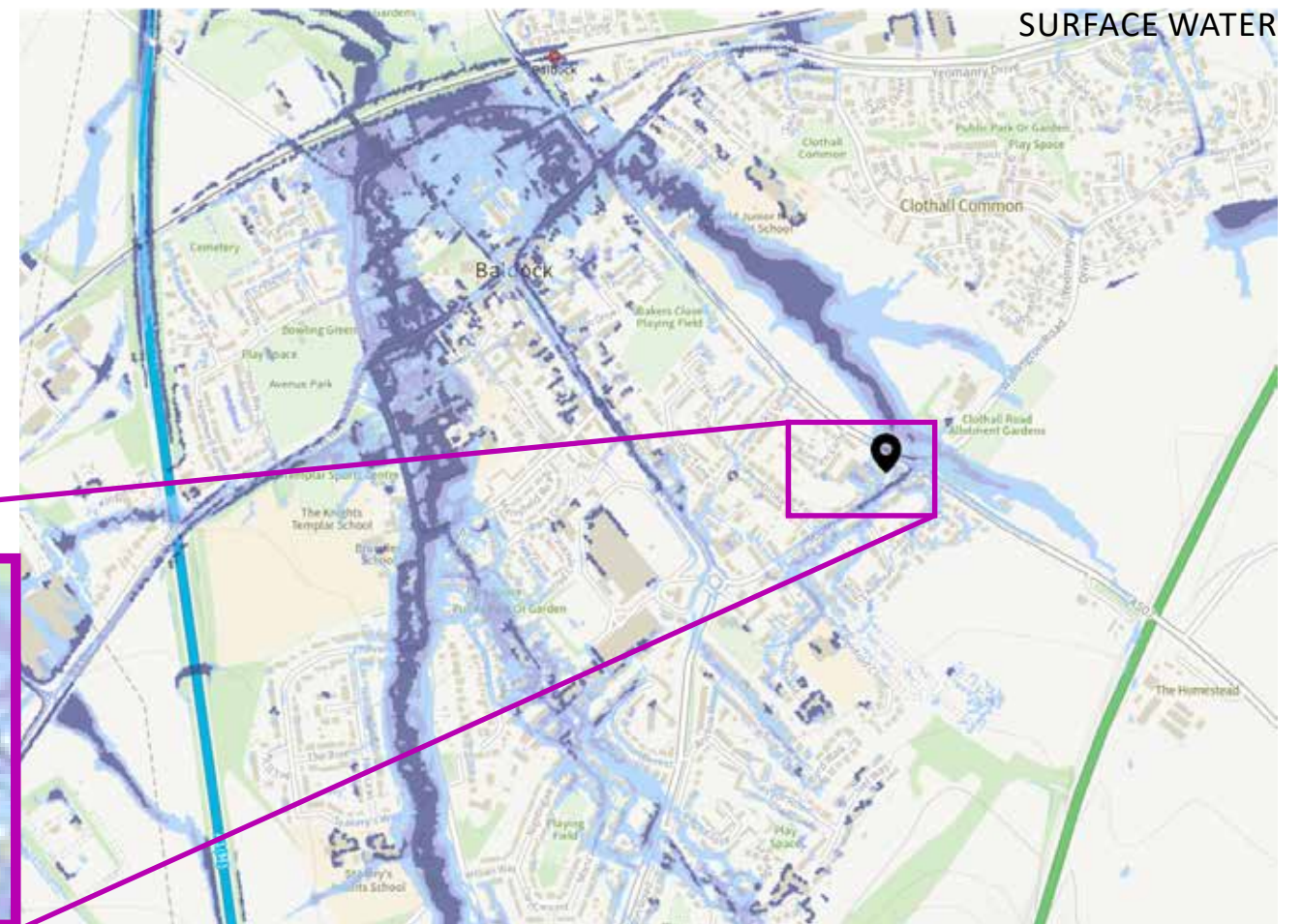
Chothall Corner Development

1. Application reference: 74/00363/1 (Allowed by appeal 21 Jun 1974)
"Erection of 18 No. 18' Frontage terraced dwellings with integral garages. 20 No. 16' Frontage terraced dwellings. 10 No. 1 Bedroom flats, 30 No. Garages in courts."
2. Application reference: 75/00694/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 13 Jun 1975)
"Two storey rear extension."
3. Application reference: 78/00446/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 29 Jul 1978)
"Erection of single storey building for light engineering workshop"
4. Application reference: 90/00748/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 16 Jul 1990)
"Detached dwelling (outline all matters reserved)"
5. Application reference: 93/00137/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 26 Mar 1993)
"Detached dwelling (renewal of outline permission)"
6. Application reference: 08/00076/1 (Refused 16 Apr 2008)
"Residential development comprising 6 x 2 bedroom apartments and 8 x 3 bedroom houses, 27 associated car parking spaces and ancillary works following demolition of 2 existing dwelling houses."
7. Application reference: 09/00479/1 (Refused 22 Jun 2009)
"Residential development comprising 6 x 2 bedroom apartments and 8 x 3 bedroom houses, 22 associated car parking spaces and ancillary works."
8. Application reference: 09/01869/1 (Conditional Permission Granted 21 Jan 2010)
"Residential development comprising 2 x 1 bedroom apartments, 4 x 2 bedroom apartments and 8 x 3 bedroom houses, 22 associated car parking spaces and ancillary works."
9. Application reference: 10/00138/1DOC (Approval of Details 25 Feb 2010)
"Condition 3 - Materials (Building); Condition 5 - Materials (Hard Landscaping); Condition 6 - Archaeology; Condition 7 - Construction Phasing and Environmental Programme and Condition 9 - Details of Access"

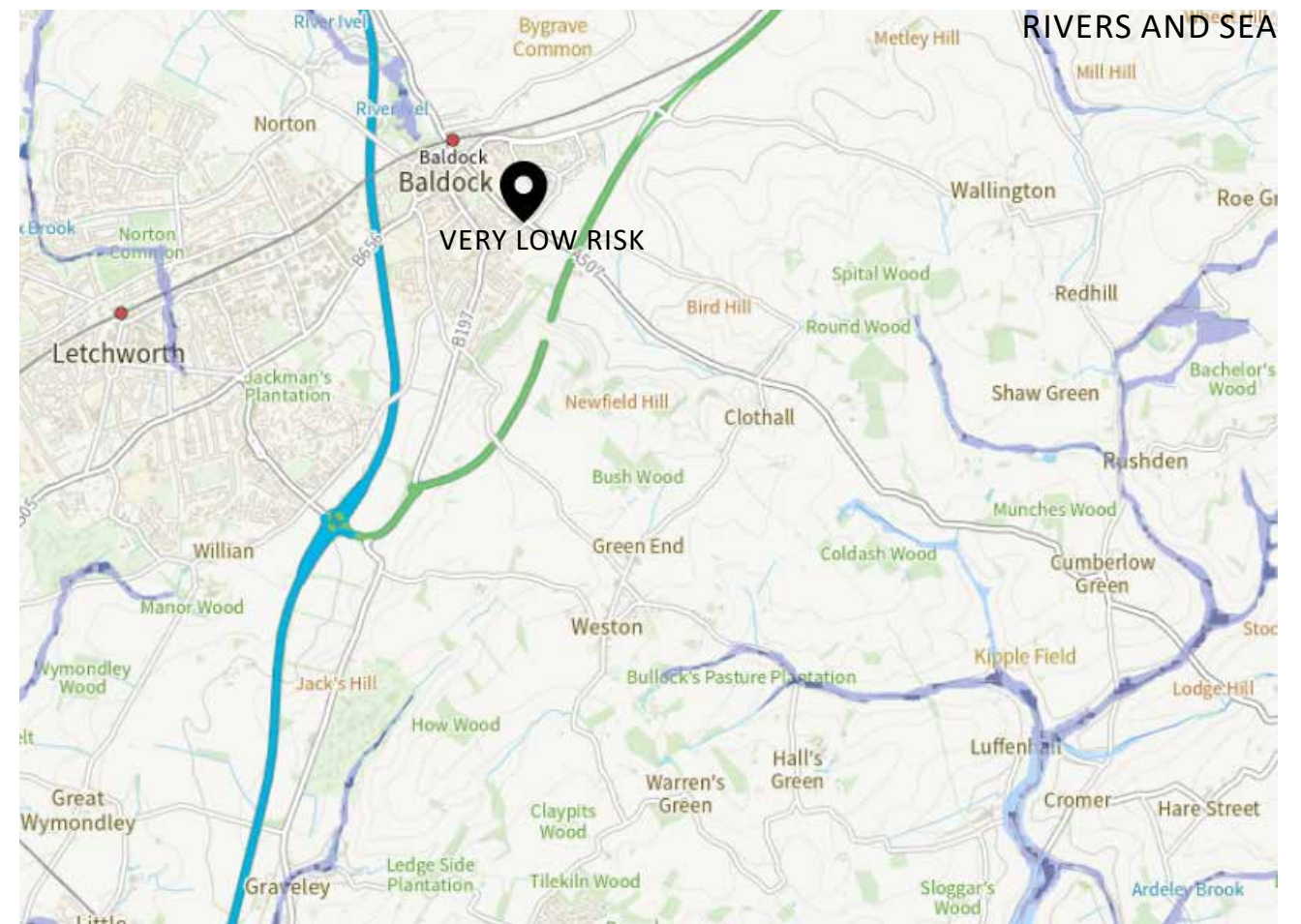
2 ASSESSMENT

2.5 FLOOD RISK - VERY LOW RISK

- High
More than 3.3% chance each year
- Medium
Between 1% and 3.3% chance each year
- Low
Between 0.1% and 1% chance each year
- Very low
Less than 0.1% chance each year



RESERVOIRS



3

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

With the ambition of achieving high quality design while enhancing and respecting the existing local character, the following analysis and precedent study has been prepared to inform and steer the design process.

3 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

3.1 DEANS YARD & IN HERTS MOTORS



Location: South adjacent to site
Building type: (including Detached/Semi/Terraced/Flats): Detached Light Industrial
No. Storeys: 1
Buildings materials: Brick, Metal Cladding
Parking: Off Street



3 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

3.2 R & D MARINE



Location: West adjacent to site
Building type: (including Detached/Semi/Terraced/Flats): Detached Light Industrial
No. Storeys: 2
Buildings materials: Brick
Parking: Off Street



3 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

3.3 CLOTHALL CORNER



Location: South away from Site along South Road

Developed/ age of buildings: 2010

Building type: (including Detached/Semi/Terraced/Flats): 8 Semis and 6 Flats

No. Storeys: 3

Buildings materials: Brick, Render

Style: Modern

Gardens: Minimal

Parking: Off Street



4

EVALUATION

4 EVALUATION

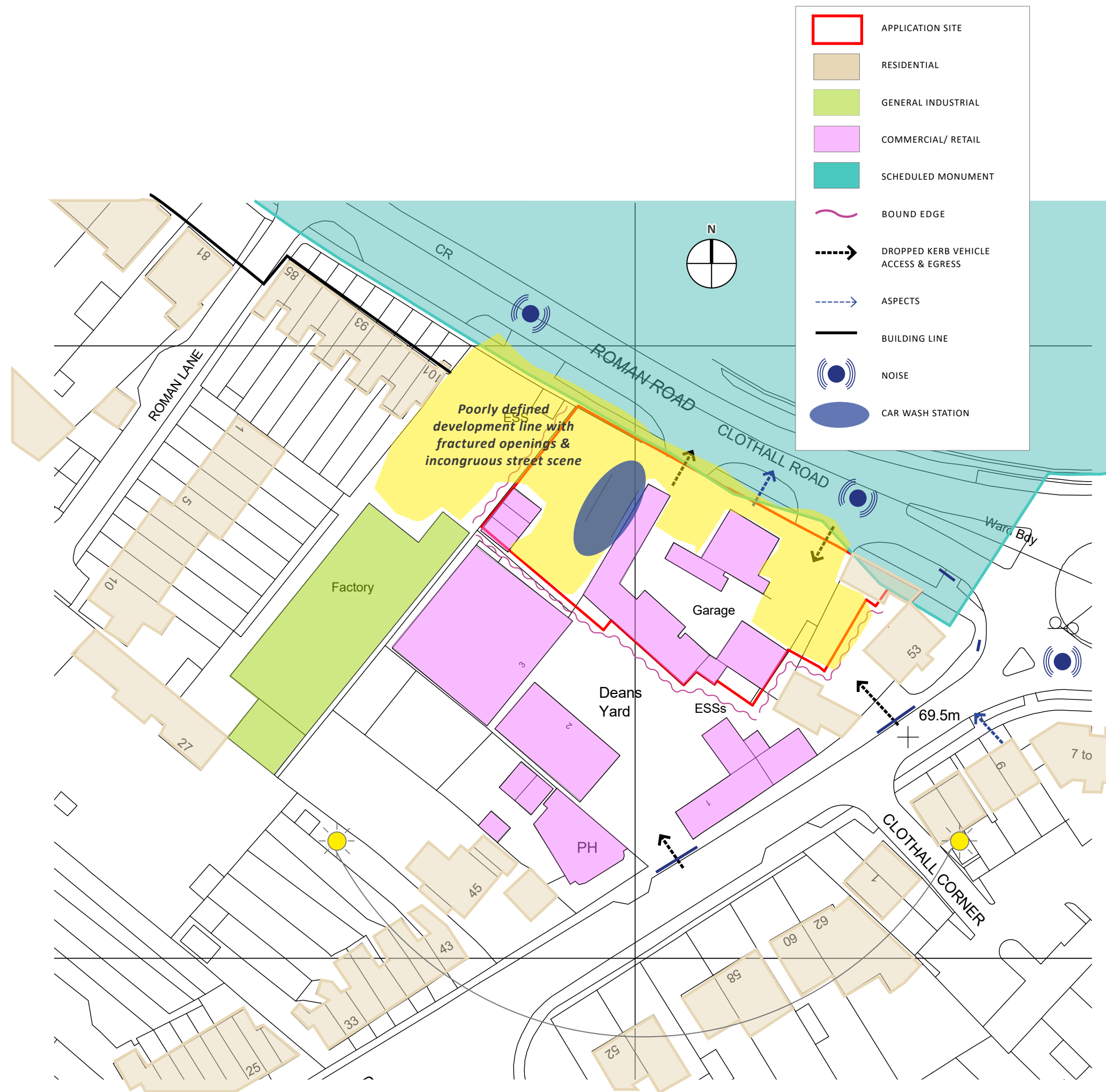
4.1 SITE INFLUENCES

Constraints:

- The site is bound by neighbouring properties to the North West, 'R&D Marine' and to the South West 'Deans Yard' & Residential (no.53) to the South East.
- The site and local area fall within the Clothall Common archaeological designation.
- The site borders a Scheduled Monument to the North.

Opportunities:

- The site has been significantly developed with excavations made for the fuel tanks, drainage routes, electrical services etc.
- To reopen an existing petrol filling station site with established neighbouring relationships with adjacent land uses.
- The renewed petrol filling station site can provide an alternative service that mitigates the need for traffic movement into Baldock Town Centre. In particular, heavy goods vehicles and non-local traffic currently use the overburdened South Road, which is a narrow residential street which is regularly congested.
- The site is a long standing vacant petrol filling station site which is decaying eye sore along the gateway Clothall Road. A renewed site will reinvigorate the street scene a positively contribute to the local character.
- A rejuvenated commercial site that provides employment opportunity for local people.
- A new development can provide a better defined development line harmonizing the street scene.
- Existing dropped kerb site access utilising existing infrastructure.
- Relatively flat site topography.
- The site is hard landscaped and the proposals introduce the opportunity to provide soft landscaping to soften the development.
- The proposals will create active frontage and improved surveillance to this low monitored area, which will improve perceived safety of this area.



4

PROJECT BRIEF

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The proposal is to demolish the existing petrol filling station buildings, forecourt canopy, car wash and vehicle service garages. These will be replaced by a new petrol filling station with enclosed car wash and new forecourt pumps and canopy. The building is proposed to the North West with the car wash access to the rear.

The existing highways access/ egress points will be reused with new landscaping and extension of the site to the North East following demolition of the outbuilding store to no.53.

Gross Internal Floor Areas (GIA)	Existing (demolished)	Proposed (new build)
Retail sales & back of house	23m2 (248 Sq.Ft)	256m2 (2,755 Sq.Ft)
Other commercial buildings on site	285 m2 (3,067 Sq.Ft)	53m2 (570 Sq.Ft) (Car Wash)
Other residential buildings on site	44m2 (473 Sq.ft) (Outbuilding)	Nil
SUB-TOTAL	352m2 (3,789 Sq.ft)	309m2 (3,326 Sq.ft)

4.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

- A sustainable development which rejuvenates a redundant commercial dilapidated site while respecting and contributing to the local context and character.
- On site allocated car parking has been incorporated into the site layout design with car parking provision & access in accordance with Herts Council parking standards and following County Council Highways standards.
- Provision for secure bicycle storage is included within the scheme design.
- Landscape design has been developed in tandem with this development to provide well considered visual amenity that softens the existing hard landscaping.

4.4 SCOPE OF WORKS

- Construction of a detached commercial retail premises which accommodates a sales area and back of house storage. Customer & staff WC facilities have been incorporated all in accordance with Building Regulations Approved Document Part M accessible buildings.
- A new modern petrol forecourt/ pumps & canopy.
- Ample car parking on-site for staff & customers which includes 2x electric vehicle charging bays.
- 1x Air & Water parking bay.
- A detached enclosed roll over car wash with modern operation and acoustic performance & mitigation standards.
- A jet wash with side enclosed bays.
- Acoustic fences separating the site to the South & East (*as required in accordance with the Acoustic consultants recommendations*).
- On site commercial refuse enclosure.

5

THE PROPOSALS

5 PROJECT BRIEF

5.1 SCHEME DEVELOPMENT

The scheme has initially evolved through the ‘Area Character Analysis’ of the local built-environment.

A pre-application inquiry was submitted to North Herts Council in March 2025 and we had a positive and proactive site meeting with Alex Howard (Senior Planning Officers). A pre-app response letter (ref: 25/00758/PRE) was received 13th May 2025.

The summary states:

"Overall, the principle of development is considered acceptable in this instance given the lawful use of the site as a petrol service station. Whilst the proposed development would be an improvement on the existing buildings on site, the new shop building appears to be very tall, and due consideration should be given to whether it can be reduced in scale or justified at this height". (Page 7).



PRE-APPLICATION ELEVATIONS



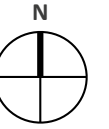
PLANNING APPLICATION ELEVATIONS

Design Response: The proposed mono-pitched roof line has been retained to provide a retail face and active frontage to the building. Following the pre-application advice, the overall height has been lowered by 1.1metres to align with the new forecourt canopy height. The proposed development is comparable in height to the existing MOT garage building and where the building roofs slopes down, the lower roof height is comparable to the existing forecourt canopy height.

The overall development is subserviently lower in height than the existing 'general use' building behind and neighbouring R&D Marine & residential no.53 buildings.

5 PROPOSAL - MASTERPLAN

5.2 LAYOUT



CLOTHALL ROAD



- Refuse Store
- Electric Vehicle Charging
- New soft landscaping
- Key Street Vista
- Improved Vista
- Increased surveillance
- Application Boundary
- Jet Wash + Air/ Water

5 PROPOSAL - MASTERPLAN

5.3 HIGHWAYS, PARKING & PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The proposals adhere to North Herts Council's parking standards which have been summaries with DWT's 'Transport Statement'.

The proposed site access utilises the existing dropped kerb access & egress points and provides a shared surface for vehicles & pedestrian crossing. The existing 2m wide Clothall Road public pavement runs to the North and there are no other access points into the site.

5.4 REFUSE STRATEGY

There is a designated on site commercial refuse store area located to the South of the site. Private commercial waste collection will be arranged and maintained at a frequency set by the retail operator.

5.5 FIRE APPLIANCE ACCESS STRATEGY

Fire appliance vehicles are able to utilise the existing access & egress with a suitably high forecourt canopy to pass under. Access to a maximum of 45m hose length from the appliance vehicle can be gained to any point within the property.

The electric vehicle charging bays have be purposefully located remote to mitigate risk of fire spread to buildings and adjoining structures.

5.6 DRAINAGE

The proposal is to reuse the existing foul drainage connections which are assumed to connect to the mains public sewer. Further inquiries and application will be made to the utilities statutory undertakers.

The preference is to use 'Sustainable Urban Drainage' SUDS for surface water drainage. Further investigations for ground conditions and infiltration test will allow potential soakaway drainage to be accommodated.

5.7 SCALE & MASSING

The proposed building footprint is comparable in scale to those found within the neighbouring context. Furthermore, the consolidated design extends the massing of the rear commercial car showroom building into a less fragmented development. A more coherent massing and development suitable fills this section of the street scene.

5.8 SUSTAINABILITY

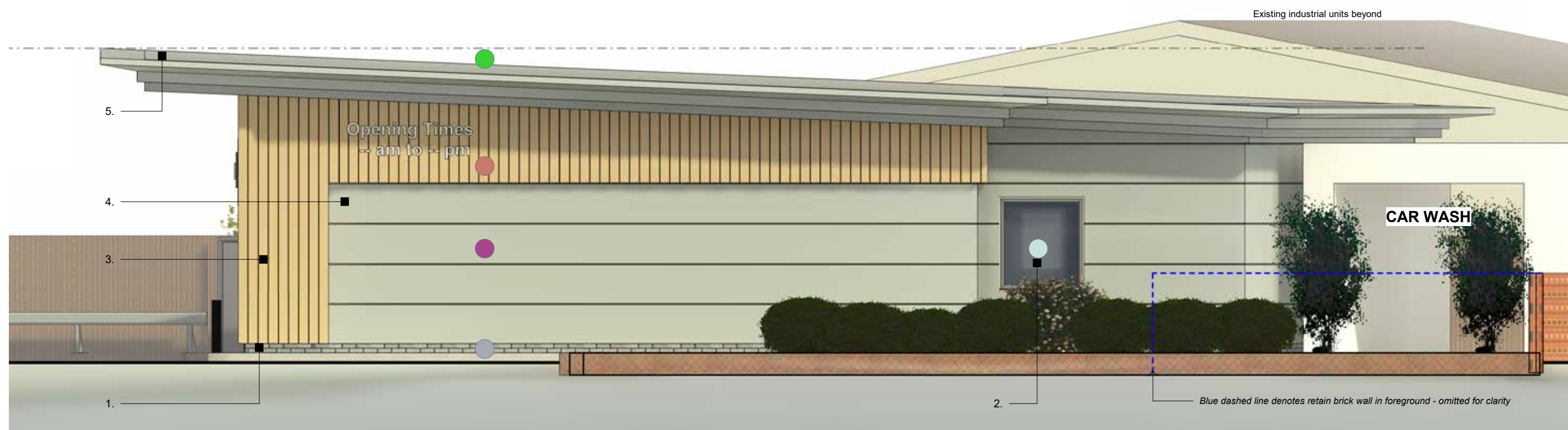
The new build commercial unit will incorporate high levels of thermal performance with accordance with the SBEM & AD Part L standards. Furthermore, subject to the SBEM design, the building will be heated using 'air source heat pumps' and some off electric grid provision will be met through photovoltaic roof panels.

External lighting and associate services will use modern efficient fittings to reduce noise & energy output.

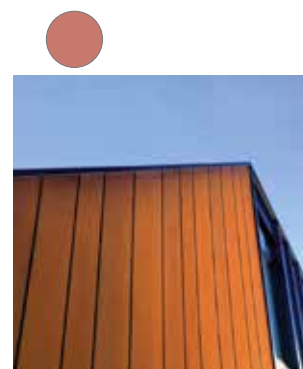
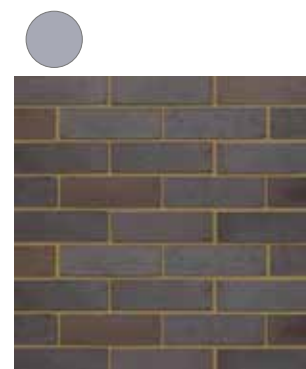
Electric vehicle charging points are provided to promote local uptake of electric vehicles by making such facilities available.

5 PROPOSAL

5.9 MATERIALS & APPEARANCE



- 1. ENGINEERING BRICK - BLACK
- 2. METAL CLADDING - BRONZE COLOUR
- 3. METAL CLADDING - SILVER COLOUR
- 4. ALUMINIUM WINDOWS - GREY
- 5. ALUMINIUM EAVES - SILVER COLOUR



5 PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The design of this proposed development provides a rejuvenation to the Clothall Road street scene at a highly visible gateway with South Road leading into Baldock Town Centre.

There have been pre-application discussions with North Herts Council to deliver a high quality retail development which will complement the surrounding developments, enhance the visual appearance of the area and meet local community and Council needs.

The proposed scheme significantly repairs the street frontage on both Clothall Road & South Road introducing a building frontage of quality design which is sympathetic to the renewed petrol filling station and mixed use neighbouring context.

The scale and massing of the built form sits well within the context of the site and it's surroundings. The design encompasses three distinct materials which reflects the existing commercial buildings with which the scheme adjoins. But also acknowledges the contemporary Clothall Corner residential development.

The proposal includes the addition of soft landscaping to boundaries & the site edges.

Access for all has been designed into the scheme with levels, circulation route widths and parking designed to accommodate disabled people.

The development proposed is therefore of the highest quality design that will have a significant contribution to the visual uplift and architectural appearance of this area, and one that the area can become proud of.



APPENDIX A

PRE APPLICATION ADVICE

A PRE APPLICATION ADVICE



www.north-herts.gov.uk

AJ Planning	Our Ref :	25/00758/PRE
Office 14	Contact :	Alex Howard
35 Stow Park Circle	Direct Line :	01462 474608
Newport	Email :	alex.howard@north-herts.gov.uk
NP20 4HF	Date :	13th May 2025

FAO: Mr Andrew Ayles

Dear Sir / Madam,

Pre Application Advice: Redevelopment scheme including shop, car wash and associated development
Whitehorse Service Station, Clothall Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 6PD

I refer to your request for pre-application advice regarding the aforementioned site; I am writing to you following an assessment of the supporting documents submitted and a site visit.

I would emphasise that this document does not constitute a formal determination and is without prejudice to any subsequent planning application.

For your information the relevant government guidance and policies from the development plan are as follows:

National Planning Policy Framework (generally and specifically);

Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 – Making effective use of land
Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031

Policy SP1 Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
Policy SP2 Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
Policy SP9 Design and Sustainability
Policy ETC3 New retail, leisure and other main town centre development
Policy T1 Assessment of transport matters
Policy T2 Parking
Policy D1 Sustainable Design
Policy D3 Protecting living conditions
Policy D4 Air Quality
Policy HE3 Non-designated heritage assets
Policy NE12 Renewable and low carbon energy development

Vehicle Parking at New Developments SPD - November 2011

Sustainability SPD September 2024

Site

The site is a long-established petrol filling station, located on the south side of Clothall Road, Baldock. The site comprises several dated buildings and a petrol filling canopy set over a large area of hardstanding, with a large number of parked cars on it. There is an existing in and out access to the site from the highway with a pedestrian footway. To the north of the site is a designated Scheduled Monument and to the east of the site is 53 South Road, a Building of Local Interest (BLI). To the south of the site is Deans Yard, which comprises a number of industrial buildings, and to the west of the site is further industrial type buildings and residential properties fronting Clothall Road and Roman Lane.

The whole site is within the settlement boundary of Baldock, is within an Archaeological Area and represents 'previously developed land'. The site forms part of the BA11 allocated housing site in the Local Plan, which includes Deans Yard to the south, for a total of 20 homes.

Proposal

Pre-application advice is sought for the redevelopment of the petrol filling station. The existing buildings and associated structures on site will be demolished and a scheme to re-configure and develop the layout/site is submitted for consideration, which includes a new shop building and car wash in the western part of the site, new petrol filling pumps and a canopy in the centre of the site, a new jet wash facility in the south of the site, and other associated development including car and bicycle parking, and soft and hard landscaping.

Principle of Development

The site constitutes 'Previously Developed Land' and is a petrol filling station and shop, although the site is not trading/in use. The scheme seeks to demolish and redevelop the site into a modern petrol station, which is considered acceptable in principle given the lawful use. Whilst a petrol station is considered to be a main town centre use in the North Herts Local Plan and this site is outside of the town centre boundary, the existing petrol station does have an existing shop element, albeit not in use currently along with the whole of the site. Therefore, as there is an existing shop on site as part of the sites lawful use, I do not consider that the sequential test as set out under Policy ETC3 is required in this instance, given the relevant case law which sets out that LPAs should take a proportionate approach and only request such when relevant, necessary and material. As the proposed use is the same as the lawful use, it would not be reasonable or proportionate to request a full sequential test in my opinion. In any case, I would suggest that this be fully justified in any subsequent submission, setting out that a sequential test has at least been considered and your view on whether it is required or justifiable, with reference to relevant Local Plan policies and case law where appropriate.

It is acknowledged that the site forms approx. half of the BA11 allocated housing site in the Local Plan, which includes Deans Yard to the south, for a total of 20 homes. Whilst this scheme would technically be contrary to the principle of this housing allocation, the lawful

A PRE APPLICATION ADVICE

use of the site is a material consideration which weighs in favour of the principle of this redevelopment. There is also the other half of the allocated housing site which could be brought forward for some form of residential development.

Design/Layout

Following the demolition of all existing buildings and structures on site, the proposal comprises a new shop building and car wash in the western part of the site, new petrol filling pumps and a canopy in the centre of the site, a new jet wash facility in the south of the site, and other associated development including car and bicycle parking, and soft and hard landscaping.

The primary aspect of this proposal is the new shop building and car wash. The building would cover an area in the west of the site and measure approx. 18.7m deep and 17.7m wide, with a shallow lean-to roof measuring approx. 4.0m at its rear and 6.0m at the front. The building would be a typical modern building for this kind of use, with cladded external walls on a brick plinth, large, glazed sections on the front elevation and associated signage. The scheme would also include an automatic car wash which would go around the new shop building in a one way system. In the centre of the site a new canopy above new fuel pumps is proposed, but no elevations are submitted for this aspect. The layout of the proposal comprises a jet wash area, air/water pumps, and 13 parking spaces.

In terms of the new shop building, I have no objections to the layout, footprint and external appearance. The building would be a contemporary addition and in any case, would improve on the existing conditions on site. However, I do have some concerns with the proposed height of the building at present, which measures approx. 4.0m at the rear and 6.0m at the front, which is a considerable increase in scale from the existing buildings on site and may look overly dominant in this prominent location. I would therefore invite some consideration as to whether the primary building can be reduced in height, or if you are minded to disagree with my concerns regarding height, I would expect a comparative study with section drawings showing the heights of new and existing built form in this immediate area in any formal submission, to justify the building as submitted. Furthermore, I would suggest that the side elevation of the building facing the road could be improved to become a more active frontage, perhaps by including more windows or similar, just so this isn't a blank wall.

The general layout of the site appears to be acceptable, with suitable positioning of buildings, pumps/canopy and parking spaces associated with this type of use. Full elevations for the proposed carwash, pump canopy and jetwash buildings will be expected in any formal submission.

Access, Parking and Highways

The proposal seeks to utilise the existing in and out access to the site with no changes to the layout. The Highway Authority do offer pre-application services so you may wish to enter into preliminary discussions with them. I would anticipate that a full and comprehensive Transport Statement and tracking plans for larger vehicles will be expected in any formal submission.

In respect of parking, the proposal seeks to deliver 13 spaces, 2 of which will be disabled bays, 2 will be for staff parking, and 2 will be for EV charging points. The maximum parking standards set out in the Vehicle Parking at New Development SPD state that for Petrol Filling Stations: *"3 spaces per 4 employees plus 3 waiting spaces per bay or run in to row of bays (additional parking is required where a shop is provided)"*. It is unclear at this stage whether the provision complies with this maximum standard as no details of proposed employee numbers is submitted, but the provision of parking will be for you to justify in any formal submission.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

The site is adjacent to a few neighbouring dwellings. The closest of these neighbours is 53 South Road which is due east of the site and shares a boundary. Due west of the site and separated by an area of hardstanding and a commercial building, are properties on Clothall Road and Roman Lane, which are approx. 20.0m – 30.0m away from the boundary of the site.

In terms of No.53 South Road, the siting of the new shop building away from this boundary is considered positive. There are existing parking spaces in this location on the shared boundary and therefore no objections are raised. It is unlikely that the canopy structure will be adversely harmful to this neighbour even though it is to be sited closer to the shared boundary. Due consideration should be given to the possible impact of the jetwash area on the occupants of No.53 South Road and if this is appropriate in this location and whether there is any mitigation that could reduce impacts.

In terms of the properties to the west on Clothall Road and Roman Lane, the proposed shop building and car wash would be the closest elements of this development. The building itself is at its lowest point on the rear, and subject to earlier comments about whether this building can be reduced in height further, this would not be overbearing in my view. The car wash will be within relatively close proximity to the dwellings and rear gardens of 85-101 Clothall Road and 1-3 Roman Lane, with the remaining properties on this road screened by the existing commercial building. Due consideration will need to be given to the impact of this car wash on these neighbours, in respect of noise and disturbance. This could form the basis of a noise report that is recommended to be submitted for the whole scheme to justify certain elements, which could include any advisory mitigation measures where appropriate to limit wider harm to amenity.

Heritage Impacts

The site is within an Archaeological Area and adjacent to a Scheduled Monument, with known heritage potential. It will therefore be expected that a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) be submitted with any subsequent application and subject to the formal view of the County Council's LEADS team, further assessments may well be required. You may wish to make contact with HCC LEADS to request assistance on the scope of this assessment. It may also be appropriate to consider whether Historic England have any requirements in respect of possible impacts to the neighbouring Scheduled Monument.

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The site neighbours 53 South Road, which is a BLI and non-designated heritage asset. Policy HE3 of the Local Plan covers the impact of development on non-designated heritage assets. The impact of the proposal on the BLI will need to be addressed in a supporting statement in a subsequent submission, where the Council's Conservation Officer will be consulted upon it. In my view, the level of harm to the BLI will be relatively low.

Ecology Impacts

Following consultation with the Council's Ecologist, the following response was received:

"Having looked at the submitted pre-app above there would be no ecological objection to the principle of development on this site.

The site photos would appear to indicate no natural space on site and, as such, the development would be exempt from mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. However, North Herts Local Plan policy NE4 still requires a net gain to be demonstrated which is easily achieved through the proposed soft landscaping".

Following further correspondence in regards to No.53 South Road and the removal of the garage building, the following response was received:

"I see there is some vegetation there which will go but looks under 25sqm so would be de minimis – which they should write on their application. Strictly speaking though, once habitat degradation occurs anywhere on site the whole site should be assessed and there's an area of lawn still included in red line beside the house. Can you advise them to amend RLB to just around the developable area and not include the house and front garden? In the scheme of things it's nothing really ecologically damaging but conscious I don't want to set a precedent for another scheme that may be".

Environmental Impacts

Following consultation with the Council's Environmental Health Officer, the following response was received:

"We would need to see a land contamination assessment to ensure that any contamination from the historical use of the site is dealt with appropriately both during construction and for the end use. This would typically be a phase 1 and 2 assessments 'up front' although we could use conditions on any decision notice.

What we would need to see 'up front' is a noise assessment looking at the impacts of the use as proposed. This would include looking at the day to day use of the premises including plant, vehicle movements, deliveries and any other activities, including the car wash. On first viewing, I am unsure whether the car wash on the north-western façade (on the proposed plans) is the best location for this activity given the residential properties in this direction. However, this will ultimately be quantified in any noise report, there may be a better layout in this regard. It may result in a restriction on the hours of use.

Additionally, a report on the external lighting to be installed would be required to ensure mitigation of any light spill".

It is anticipated that the results of any noise report would then inform proposed hours of operation for certain aspects of the development, such as the shop, carwash and jetwash area. It is for you to justify and put forward proposed hours of operation and then our Environmental Health Team will consider this formally.

Flood Risk/Impacts

The site is within Flood Zone 1, which is the lowest probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. You may be required to submit a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy due to the surface water flood risk, which we would then consult the Local Lead Flood Authority and Environment Agency on.

Other Matters

It is noted from the floor plans that the proposed shop building includes a bakery area, which would see an element of hot food takeaway from the site. This will need to be set out and fully justified in any future submission and may be subject to restrictions where appropriate.

Please identify where on the site the proposed bins and storage areas will be located.

Please identify where deliveries for the petrol and shop elements will park and when they will normally arrive. Deliveries should not be early in the morning or late at night, given the relative proximity to neighbouring properties.

Climate Change Emergency

On 21 May 2019, the Council passed a Climate Emergency motion which pledged to do everything within the Council's power achieve zero carbon emissions in North Hertfordshire by 2030. As one of the first councils to pass this motion, NHDC is leading the way on climate action. This declaration asserted the Council's commitment toward Climate Action beyond current government targets and international agreements. Climate action has been a long-term corporate priority area for the Council, and has been pursued through our objective to Prosper and Protect North Hertfordshire:

This objective informs our commitments to:

- ☐ Green space provision;
- ☐ Representing the Climate Change interests of North Hertfordshire residents on county and regional plans, policies and aspirations;
- ☐ Supporting initiatives that increase the energy efficiency of residents' homes, reduce resource waste, and increase our sustainability for the longer term;
- ☐ Protecting our physical heritage;
- ☐ Finding environmentally sustainable solutions to the challenges

Along with the inclusion of EV charging points, other mitigation should be considered in order to make a positive contribution to the mitigation of the climate emergency. This might be achieved through maximising solar gain where possible, which has been incorporated on the proposed new building. This would be seen as a positive attribute of any scheme alongside

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the inclusion of renewable energy technology. The Council has published its Sustainability SPD which you are encouraged to consider in this context.

Information Requirements

The following documents are required and/or advised at submission:

- Planning/Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation
- Noise Assessment
- External Lighting Report/Assessment
- Phase 1/2 Contaminated Land Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment/Drainage Strategy

Developer Contributions

It is not expected that this proposal will be subject to any developer contributions. However, this will become known following consultation with the relevant bodies during the application process, which has not been possible for this pre-app.

Summary

Overall, the principle of development is considered acceptable in this instance given the lawful use of the site as a petrol service station. Whilst the proposed development would be an improvement on the existing buildings on site, the new shop building appears to be very tall, and due consideration should be given to whether it can be reduced in scale or justified at this height. Several reports and assessments are required to support this development proposal, and the details will largely shape the success of any application.

Any advice given by Council Officers for pre-application enquiries does not constitute formal response or decision of the Council with regards to future planning permission or consents.

Kind regards

Alex Howard

Senior Planning Officer

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