DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING

Application No:	**H14-1002-25**	**Applicant:**	**Venture Business Space Limited**
Proposal:	Proposed change of use of ex-Bell public house to fall within Use Class E including part demolition, single storey rear extension and external works including hard and soft landscaping, external lighting and plant compound		
Location:	The Bell Inn 33 Church Street Pinchbeck		
Terminal Date:	14th January 2026		

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019

01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
04	Approach to Flood Risk
24	The Retail Hierarchy
25	Supporting the Vitality and Viability of Boston and Spalding Town Centres
26	Primary Shopping Frontages
27	Additional Retail Provision
30	Pollution
36	Vehicle and Cycle Parking
APPENDIX 6	Parking Standards

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Section 4 - Decision-Making
Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
Section 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	1	0	0	0

WARD MEMBER	1	0	0	0
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
WELLAND AND DEEPINGS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	0	0	0	1
SHDC INTERNAL	0	0	0	2
OTHER STATUTORY BODIES	1	0	0	2
RESIDENTS	13	0	0	2

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

This is a full planning application for a proposed change of use of the ex-Bell Inn public house to fall within Use Class E, including part demolition, single storey rear extension and external works including hard and soft landscaping, external lighting and plant compound.

The existing public house and outbuildings have a floor area of 417 sqm. Part of the proposal involves demolition (of rear two storey element) and rebuilding (of single storey extension) this reduces the area to 355 sqm. The ground floor is proposed to provide 225 sqm of tradeable floorspace. The building is proposed to operate as a convenience store, within Class E of the Use Classes order. The applicant proposes a 7-day opening 0600 - 2300.

The site plan shows that access/egress will be attained to the south of the retail unit with parking provision located to the south/southwest of the building. The main access to the store would be located on the southern elevation with a 'faux' door surrounded by portico installed on the principal elevation. Other building operations include the demolition of part of the rear building and the erection of a single storey rear extension.

The applicant has submitted a full suite of plans including transport assessment, BNG information, drainage, heritage impact statement, lighting design including amenity technical specification, FRA, noise impact assessment amongst other documents some of which are additional that seek to address issues raised during the application.

Site Description

The application site relates to the Bell Inn public House which fronts Church Street opposite the junction with Church Walk. The site benefits from an extant planning permission to convert the building into residential apartments (as part of a larger scheme), this relates to The Bell Inn and its former paddock. The Bell Inn appears on original OS mapping. Though with a smaller footprint, the front entrance was blocked up during the 20th Century.

The PH is at present boarded up with Heras fencing preventing access to its rear. It is finished in a cream painted facing brick with black solider course and advertising to the front. The building is bookended by chimneys and to the rear is more ad hoc and has with former extension providing a more irregular aesthetic (to its formal frontage).

The proposal is within defined settlement limits of Pinchbeck (and Spalding) and is also located within the conservation area, the surrounding area is characterised by buildings of varying ages and designs. A Fish & Chip Shop (creatively named the Pinchbeck Friar, given its location close to the church (and its function)) is located to the south of the Bell Inn, this has space for patrons to park to the front.

The closest listed buildings are located to the north, on Church Street. There is also a listed building, 'Former Doctors Surgery' located on Church walk, all of which are Grade II. The Parish of St Marys which is located to the south of the Bell Inn is a Grade I listed building.

The site is within Pinchbeck Conservation Area. The site is in Environment Agency Flood Zone 3, but low risk in terms of the South East Lincolnshire SFRA.

History

H14-1131-92 Full - Replacement windows - Refused - 11 December 1992.
H14-0621-94 Full - Domestic garage and shed - Approved - 11 October 1994.
H14-0097-96 Full - Dining room extension - Approved - 30 April 1996
H14-1172-17 Full -Demolition of existing building; creation of new single-storey A1 retail unit, with associated car park and rear yard area (with fencing); creation of new access road into site, with turning area for delivery vehicles; removal of trees - Application Withdrawn - 26 March 2018.
H14-0219-22 - THE BELL INN - Conversion of the ex-Bell Public House into five flats and the development of nine detached bungalows to the rear. Approved 06-04-23
H14-0583-25 - Proposed change of use of ex-Bell public house to fall within Use Class E including part demolition, single storey rear extension and external works including hard and soft landscaping, external lighting and plant compound. Withdrawn

Consultation Responses

Pinchbeck Parish Council

Pinchbeck Parish Council formally objects to the above application for the change of use of the former public house to Use Class E, together with part demolition, a single-storey rear extension, external works, external lighting and the creation of a plant compound. Grounds of objection The Parish Council considers that the proposal raises significant concerns that outweigh the benefits asserted by the applicant. The key issues are summarised below.

1. Heritage and character - The Bell Inn is centrally located within the village and the Conservation Area. Its loss or alteration would diminish the character and vitality of the local centre. - The Heritage Impact Assessment acknowledges the building's local historic value. - The proposed demolition, extension and plant compound would erode the traditional scale, streetscape and setting of Church Street. - The design, massing and extent of works are not sufficiently respectful of the heritage context, and no clear public heritage benefit has been demonstrated.

2. Traffic, parking and highway safety - Church Street is a busy route with regular pedestrian and vehicle movements. A Use Class E premises, combined with the extension and plant compound, is likely to increase traffic, deliveries and servicing, with resulting impacts on residential amenity and safety. - The Transport Statement (October 2025) does not adequately assess cumulative impacts or peak-time effects. - Parking information is insufficient, particularly for staff, visitors and servicing. There is a clear risk of displacement onto nearby residential streets.

3. Noise, disturbance and amenity - The proposed plant compound and external lighting raise concerns about noise, vibration and light spill affecting nearby homes. - The lighting design (including "Exterior Windermere Street Light 30W 4000K") may result in unacceptable light intrusion. - The Use Class E operation may introduce extended delivery or servicing hours, causing disturbance in an area currently more residential in character.

4. Drainage, flooding and environmental impact - The Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessments do not demonstrate that the proposed system will integrate effectively with existing drainage or meet climate change allowances. - The increased impermeable area (Plan 30340-GGP-XX-XX-DR-C-9002 Rev P01) risks raising surface water run-off and exacerbating flood issues in this low-lying fenland location.

5. Biodiversity and landscaping - Although a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment and metric have been submitted, the Parish Council is not satisfied that the claimed gains are robust, evidenced or secured by condition or Section 106 obligation. - Greater clarity is required on long-term landscaping, ecological mitigation and habitat enhancement.
6. Plant compound and visual impact - The plant compound and roof-mounted/external plant appear visually intrusive and risk undermining the character of the building and the wider Conservation Area. - The Parish Council questions whether the scale of plant equipment is justified and whether less intrusive alternatives have been explored

Historic Environment Officer

As mentioned above, there is potential for development on this site to have an impact on buried remains that should be recorded prior to their destruction - NPPF (paragraph 218). We recommend that if permission is granted, there be an archaeological condition for a mitigation strategy to effectively deal with this site. This will comprise a phased approach of archaeological investigation and mitigation work. This will initially comprise but may not be limited to an archaeological trial trench evaluation of the site which should aim to determine the presence, absence, significance, depth and character of any archaeological remains which could be impacted by the proposed development as noted above and to inform a programme of further archaeological mitigation work which may be required if archaeological remains are identified in the evaluation. This will enable any remaining archaeology which currently survives on this site to be properly assessed and recorded prior to their alteration or destruction.

This should be secured by South Holland District Council's standard conditions AR01, 02 , 03 and 05 and is in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 207 and 218 and the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (Policy 29).

Highways & Suds Support

1st Response
15 parking spaces, 1 for disabled, 2 cycle stands. The Parking falls short of the 25 required under Lincolnshire County Council's Design Approach and South East Lincolnshire Local Plan. Is there scope to increase the parking given the blue line? It is noted that informal cycle parking will be provided to the rear for staff - will staff take up some of the parking allocation? Servicing will mean coning off 3 parking spaces. Parking justification statement is required. The width of access and footway is to be detailed on the proposed site plan. The visibility is measured incorrectly - it should be measured to the nearside edge of the carriageway. It is appreciated that Trips will be generally linked or pass by trips. A simple Transport Statement is required detailing the vehicle movements associated with the former use and those envisaged with the proposal on a daily basis.

Additional Comments

Highways have response informally between the agents as well as the LPA, through email responses to updated documents. As it stands the highway authority are still not in a position to support this development and this is based upon insufficient information to demonstrate that the development would be safe for both existing and future users of the highway.

IDB

No objections

Environmental Protection

Noise Impact assessment acceptable. Noes on Land contamination.

Representations

This application has been advertised in accordance with the requirements of the Development Management Procedure Order 2015. A number of objections have been received.

The posits raised by objectors can be summarised as:

-Concerns regarding Highway Safety
-Located away from existing shops

-Ecology
-Impact upon residential amenity
-Noise and disturbance concerns as well as other polluting activities such as light.
-No a compatible use with a residential area.

Comments have also been received from the Ward Member and MP.

Ward Member

I object to the proposed retail development. It is entirely out of keeping with the conservation area and will be detrimental to the Grade 1 listed church situated in close proximity. Opening hours of 0600 to 2300, with the inevitable accompanying increase in traffic, noise and floodlights, will affect local residents' peace and quiet. There will be an increase in light pollution and noise pollution. In addition, cars pulling in and out of the entrance will create a potential hazard on this road. There will also be an increase in lorries making deliveries to the unit. This will also be detrimental to the conservation area. Another retail outlet in our village is entirely unnecessary. We already have two excellent convenience stores with long opening hours, on Knight Street.

Member of Parliament

The MP has written in with a letter of objection, sharing his constituents' concerns, that the proposal would have a detrimental impact upon neighbouring dwellings, this relates to noise and disturbance. Concerns are also expressed regarding the heritage impacts of the development. Lastly the MP also expresses concerns in relation to highway safety impacts.

Planning Considerations

Evaluation

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019, forms the development plan for the District, and is the basis for decision making in South Holland. The relevant development plan policies are detailed within the report above .

The policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (updated December 2024) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

Furthermore, where a Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted, this alongside the adopted Local Plan, forms part of the Development Plan for the District, and must be considered when assessing development proposals. In this instance, no relevant neighbourhood plans have been adopted.

Key Considerations

This application is for retail development which is a town centre use. The application site is located within the settlement limits of Pinchbeck and also within the identified conservation area. The application site is located with flood zone 3 in accordance with EA maps for planning.

The key considerations to this assessment include:

- Principle of Development
- Retail Development
- Highway Safety
- Heritage & Design
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Environmental Issues/Amenity
- Land Contamination
- Ecology/BNG
- Planning Balance .

Principle of Development

The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan sets out the settlement hierarchy in respect of delivering sustainable development that meets the social and economic needs of the area whilst protecting and enhancing the environment; in order to provide enough choice of land for housing to satisfy local housing need, whilst making more sustainable use of land and to minimise the loss of high quality agricultural land by developing in sustainable locations and at appropriate densities.

Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan sets out a spatial strategy for delivering sustainable development across South East Lincolnshire until 2036. Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy) expresses the sustainable framework of settlements, ranking the settlements deemed to be most sustainable in descending order. The most sustainable locations for development are situated within the 'Sub-Regional Centres', followed by 'Main Service Centres'. Lower down the hierarchy in respect of sustainable development are areas of limited development opportunity including Minor Service Centres, with areas of development constraint comprising 'Other Service Centres and Settlements'. The countryside is at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy and represents the least sustainable location.

The application site is located within the main service centre of Pinchbeck. Of these areas, Policy 1, point 2, states:

Within the settlement boundaries of the Main Service Centres (as shown on the Inset Maps) development will be permitted that supports their role as a service centre for the settlement itself, helps sustain existing facilities or helps meet the service needs of other local communities.

The Bell Inn benefits from a permission (along with a wider scheme) to be converted into apartments. However, given the nature of this proposal, for retail development, the policies related to retail in that plan are pertinent to assess whether this development would support the role of Pinchbeck as a service centre and if it helps sustain existing facilities or helps meet the service needs of other local communities.

Principle of Retail Development

SELLP Policy 24 sets out the districts retail hierarchy. Part C of the policy sets out considerations for application sites that are located outside of sub-regional centres as well as district and local centres, such as the application site. It states:

The vitality and viability of centres in the retail hierarchy will be maintained and enhanced. Proposals for retail use outside the Primary Shopping Areas as identified on the Policies Map, or for other main town centre uses, outside the town centre boundaries and where not provided for under Policy 27, will be required to demonstrate their suitability through a sequential test in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, and other than for provision under Policy 27, a robust assessment of impact on nearby town centres will be required for any retail proposal that:

1. provides a retail floor space of 500sqm (net) or more outside Boston town centre boundary (but within Boston Borough); and

2. provides a retail floor space of 250sqm (net) or more outside Spalding town centre boundary and the District and Local Centres (for Kirton within Boston Borough and for all other town centres within South Holland District).
If planning permission is granted for retail development in an out-of-centre or edge-of-centre location (as defined by national policy), the range of goods sold may be restricted either through planning conditions or legal agreement.

Local Plan Policy 27 is concerned with additional retail provision. It considers Comparison goods floor space, Convenience goods floor space as well as Other Local Shops and Town Centre Uses. The proposal is for a new purpose-built retail unit, within a residential setting and considered therefore as a local shop.

Policy 27c states (in part): "Proposed new shops in such circumstances, will be limited to a maximum 100 sqm (net) floor space, unless a qualitative need to remedy a geographical deficiency in the distribution of food shopping can be demonstrated, in which case units up to 500 sqm (net) floor space will be permitted."

Paragraph 91 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that "Local planning

authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan. Main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered."

Applicants Retail Assessment

The applicant has submitted a Retail Statement to support the proposed convenience store at 33 Church Street, Pinchbeck. The assessment includes both a sequential test and a retail impact assessment in accordance with the NPPF (December 2024) and Local Plan (2019) policies.

The sequential test identifies the proposed store as a small-scale convenience unit (355sqm gross, 225sqm net sales floor) intended to serve a local catchment within approximately 1.5km catchment range. The applicant considered alternative sites within Spalding Town Centre and a 300m edge-of-centre boundary through a combination of online property searches, liaison with local agents, and review of planning records. Four sites were identified, but the applicant concluded that none were suitable due to size constraints, the need for associated parking, refuse, and plant areas, or other development limitations. The assessment therefore concludes that the application site passes the sequential test.

The retail impact assessment focuses on convenience expenditure within the local catchment. Using data from the South East Lincolnshire Town Centre and Retail Capacity Study (2020), adjusted with 2021 ONS population figures, the applicant estimates existing retail provision in Pinchbeck and the potential turnover of the proposed store. The assessment suggests that even with the new store, a significant surplus of convenience expenditure would remain, indicating that the development would not have an adverse impact on the vitality or viability of Spalding Town Centre. The assessment also notes that the proposed store falls below the NPPF and Local Plan thresholds requiring a retail impact assessment, but the exercise was undertaken for robustness.

Overall, the applicant concludes that the proposed development meets the sequential and impact policy requirements and would provide local convenience retail provision without harming nearby centres.

LPAs assessment

Sequential Assessment and SELLP Policy 27

The applicant has submitted a sequential assessment for the proposed convenience store, considering sites within Spalding Town Centre and the 300m edge-of-centre boundary. Four potential alternative sites were identified:

- Retail Unit, Red Lion Street, PE11 - 650sqm: Located within the town centre and conservation area, actively marketed for sale. The site comprises ground-floor commercial units with upper-floor offices and escape rooms. Its overall floorspace exceeds the upper threshold suitable for the proposed development and it is not available in part to accommodate a smaller unit. It is therefore discounted.

- 24-25 Bridge Street, PE11 - 238sqm: Situated within the town centre, conservation area, and primary shopping area, this site is too small to accommodate the proposed store and is discounted.

- 10-11 Hall Place, PE11 - 482sqm: Located within the primary shopping frontage, this property is over three floors and not currently available as a sub-divided unit. While theoretical subdivision could accommodate a smaller store, there is no evidence this was explored. The site is therefore discounted.

- 7 Market Place, Spalding, PE11 1SL - 1,633sqm: Although located within the search area, Spalding town centre, 300m boundary, and primary shopping frontage, the site is too large for the proposed development and is discounted.

The applicant's exercise in identifying potential alternative sites meets the minimum procedural expectations established in the PPG and endorsed in cases such as Zurich Assurance v North Lincolnshire, Aldergate Properties, and Tesco v Dundee. They undertook online searches, engaged with local agents, reviewed planning records, and produced a schedule of sites with basic reasons

for discounting.

Despite this, the assessment does not demonstrate sufficient flexibility in scale, layout, or format consistent with SELLP Policy 27 and national planning policy (Paragraph 91 of the NPPF (December 2024)). Such policy requires that sequentially preferable locations be considered first, with new local shops outside existing centres permitted only where there is a clear qualitative need to remedy a deficiency in the distribution of convenience goods.

Case law establishes that flexibility must be applied in sequential assessments. Tesco Stores Ltd v Dundee City Council (2012) confirms that sites must be assessed for their suitability with genuine flexibility in scale, format, and layout. Applicants should consider whether the proposed use could reasonably be accommodated within existing town-centre premises, including multi-level units, smaller subdivided units, or alternative layouts. The applicant has not sufficiently explored these possibilities, nor demonstrated that operational requirements necessitate an out-of-centre location. Consequently, the sequential test has not been fully satisfied.

The Council recognises that case law establishes applicants are not required to disaggregate their proposals into multiple smaller units (e.g., Aldi v Mansfield, Sainsbury's v Wolverhampton). However, this does not remove the need to apply reasonable flexibility in scale, format, and layout, as confirmed by the Supreme Court in Tesco v Dundee. **Flexibility concerns whether the same store could operate in an adjusted configuration within a sequentially preferable site; it does not require the proposal to be split or fundamentally altered. The applicant's assessment does not demonstrate that such flexibility has been explored and therefore does not satisfy the substantive requirements of the sequential test.**

The proposed unit, at 225-355 sqm net, also exceeds the 100sqm threshold typical of a local shop and **is only justified under Policy 27 (c) if a clear qualitative deficiency is demonstrated.** The assessment provides limited evidence of such deficiency, and the site does not fall within an area identified as underserved. Knight Street, while not formally designated in the Local Plan, functions as the established neighbourhood centre for Pinchbeck, hosting two existing SPAR convenience stores and other local services.

The proposal would therefore represent an additional out-of-centre unit in a location that already benefits from accessible convenience retail provision, contrary to the policy objective of supporting sustainable retail distribution.

Retail Impact Assessment

The applicant's Retail Impact Assessment considers trade diversion, local catchment expenditure, and potential effects on nearby stores within a 1.5km radius. While it suggests sufficient expenditure exists to support the new store, the Council identifies methodological shortcomings, including limited assessment of trade diversion from the established SPAR stores on Knight Street, no scenario testing or sensitivity analysis, and insufficient evidence of a qualitative deficiency in local convenience provision. While the unit falls below the quantitative thresholds in SELLP Policy 24 and the NPPF for a full impact assessment, these limitations reinforce concerns regarding harm to the vitality of the established neighbourhood centre.

Summary

The proposal is considered to be contrary to SELLP Policies 24, 27 (c) and paragraph 91 of the NPPF. The unit exceeds the policy threshold for a local shop without a demonstrated qualitative need, and the sequential assessment does not fully explore the potential for flexible accommodation within Spalding Town Centre. The four alternative sites are discounted, but the assessment does not adequately consider smaller units, multi-level arrangements, or realistic town-centre configurations/solutions that could accommodate a convenience store. Furthermore, Knight Street functions as the established neighbourhood centre, and the proposed out-of-centre unit would risk undermining its role.

On balance, the development would introduce a convenience retail unit in a location that does not support the qualitative distribution of convenience goods and fails to demonstrate compliance with the sequential test. The proposal is therefore inconsistent with the Local Plan's approach to sustainable retail provision and is recommended for refusal on these grounds.

Highway Safety

SELLP Policy 2 details that proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, specifically in relation to access and vehicle generation.

SELLP Policy 3 details that development proposals will demonstrate how accessibility by a choice of travel modes including the provision of public transport, public rights of way and cycle ways will be secured, where they are relevant to the proposal.

SELLP Policy 36 is concerned with Vehicle and Cycle Parking it states that "All new development, including change of use, should provide vehicle and cycle parking, in accordance with the minimum Parking Standards adopted by the Local Planning Authorities (in Appendix 6).

Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) specifically relates to 'Promoting sustainable transport'. It advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

The application is supported by a Transport Statement (TS) and has subsequently been supplemented by a Statutory Response Note and an updated Proposed Site Plan (Drawing Ref: 8738s/PA05C). While these documents clarify certain aspects of the layout and operational assumptions, they do not resolve the fundamental concerns relating to parking provision, servicing, and access safety.

Parking provision and methodology

The updated layout (8738s/PA05C) continues to provide 15 car parking spaces, an additional disabled parking bay, with two cycle spaces. When assessed against Appendix 3 of the SELLP, retail development is required to provide parking based on gross floorspace, not net sales area. On this basis, the proposed 355 sqm gross retail unit generates a requirement of 25 spaces. The proposal therefore results in a shortfall of 10 spaces, even before any allowance is made for servicing or staff parking.

The applicant has instead calculated parking demand using the 225 sqm net sales area, producing a requirement of approximately 16 spaces. This approach is not supported by the Local Plan or by the County's adopted design guidance and has not been justified by any site-specific parking accumulation, turnover, or empirical demand analysis. The reliance on theoretical trip generation and generalised assumptions about convenience store behaviour does not demonstrate that a significant departure from the adopted standards is acceptable in this location.

The updated site plan shows only marginal geometric adjustments within the application boundary and does not materially increase parking capacity. These changes therefore do not overcome the underlying conflict with adopted parking standards.

The Appellant has sought to draw support from a June 2024 appeal decision at Horsham Car Centre, where a reduced level of parking was found acceptable for a small Class E(a) convenience store. **However, that decision was based on a fundamentally different policy framework and on a detailed body of site-specific evidence which is absent in the present case.** In Horsham, the adopted development plan did not impose numerical parking standards, and the Inspector relied on extensive dwell-time surveys, parking accumulation data, demonstrated spare capacity within an adjoining layby, and servicing arrangements that did not reduce the number of available spaces. None of those conditions apply here. By contrast, the Bell Inn proposal departs from the adopted SELLP Appendix 3 standard by 9 spaces, increasing to 12 spaces during servicing, without any local parking surveys, dwell-time evidence or overspill capacity assessment to justify that deficit. The Horsham decision therefore illustrates the level of evidential rigour required to support reduced parking provision.

Servicing and effective parking capacity

Servicing arrangements require three customer parking spaces to be temporarily unavailable during delivery operations. This reduces the effective operational provision to 12 spaces at those times. The submitted material does not quantify the frequency, duration, or timing of servicing activity, and therefore it is not possible to assess when this reduction in capacity would coincide with peak customer demand.

No assessment has been provided of how servicing interacts with customer and staff parking, nor how overspill would be managed. In the absence of such information, there is a clear risk that vehicles would be displaced onto Church Street or surrounding residential streets, increasing on-street parking pressure and creating potential hazards close to the site access.

Staff parking

The applicant's assumption that staff parking demand will be minimal because employees are expected to walk or cycle has not been supported by any evidence. No staff numbers, shift patterns, or mode share assumptions have been provided. Even a small number of staff vehicles would further erode the already limited parking supply, particularly at peak trading times.

Without quantified staff parking data, it is not possible to demonstrate that the proposed provision would operate satisfactorily in practice.

Access and visibility

The updated drawings show an access width of 5.2m and a footway of 1.2m, which clarifies the basic layout. However, the critical issue remains whether safe and suitable visibility is achieved at the junction with Church Street for the level of traffic likely to be generated by a convenience retail use.

The Transport Statement relies on visibility measurements taken to a point offset from the nearside kerb, based on an interpretation of Manual for Streets 2. However, this approach does not demonstrate that appropriate intervisibility is achieved between vehicles emerging from the site and approaching traffic along Church Street in a manner consistent with the local highway authority's adopted methodology. As a result, the submitted visibility splays cannot be relied upon to show that vehicles can safely enter and leave the site. Highways have confirmed that the visibility is still not acceptable, the LPA have not received an updated response to suggest the plans shows acceptable visibility.

In the absence of correctly derived and verified visibility data, the application does not demonstrate that the proposed access would operate safely for all users of the highway, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

Trip generation and comparison with former use

The TS includes estimates of peak hour and daily vehicle movements associated with the proposed store and the former public house use. However, this information does not compensate for the physical shortcomings of the site layout. A convenience store is characterised by frequent, short-stay visits, which place different and more intensive demands on parking turnover and access arrangements than a public house. The submitted material does not assess how this different pattern of use interacts with the constrained parking and servicing arrangements.

Summary

Notwithstanding the updated Proposed Site Plan (8738s/PA05C) and the additional explanatory material submitted, the proposal continues to fail to demonstrate compliance with SELLP Policies 2, 3 and 36 and Section 9 of the NPPF. The development would operate with a substantial and unjustified shortfall in parking provision, compounded by servicing requirements and unquantified staff parking demand. In addition, the submitted visibility information does not provide a reliable basis for concluding that the site access would be safe.

Taken together, these deficiencies mean that the Local Planning Authority cannot be satisfied that the development would operate without giving rise to unacceptable impacts on highway safety or undue pressure on the surrounding highway network. The proposal is therefore unacceptable on highway grounds.

Heritage & Design

Policy 29 of the SELLP states that the "Distinctive elements of the South East Lincolnshire historic environment will be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. Opportunities to identify a heritage asset's contribution to the economy, tourism, education and the local community will be

utilised including:

-The historic archaeological and drainage landscape of the Fens;
-The distinctive character of South East Lincolnshire market towns and villages;
-The dominance within the landscape of church towers, spires and historic windmills;

To respect the historical legacy, varied character and appearance of South East Lincolnshire's historic environment, development proposals will conserve and enhance the character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, such as important known archaeology or that found during development, historic buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, street patterns, streetscapes, landscapes, parks (including Registered Parks and Gardens), river frontages, structures and their settings through high-quality sensitive design."

Notwithstanding the fact that the building is not listed (but considered an NDHA) parts A, B C and F of SELLP 29 are relevant. The application site is also located within Pinchbeck Conservation Area.

Policy 2 of the SELLP states that design which is inappropriate to the local area, or which fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area, will not be acceptable.

Policy 2 point 1 states that proposals should meet with sustainable development considerations specifically in relation to 'size, scale, layout, density and impact on the amenity, trees, character and appearance of the area and the relationship to existing development and land uses'.

Policy 3 sets out the 'Design of new development' in part it states that "Design which is inappropriate to the local area, or which fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area, will not be acceptable".

The applicant has provided a heritage impact assessment. The proposal includes some demolition work to the rear of the building and in place the erection of a single storey extension. Given that the principal facade remains in tact and the works relate to the rear, which has been subject to previous dilution then this approach is considered acceptable. A condition would be required prior to any building works however to ensure the correct material are being provided.

The loss of the PH is already established and there are no heritage related concerns therefore regarding the proposed use.

Given that the application, in the main relates to a use change, and building operations are minimal, and, with weight given to the extant permission to make changes to this building (as well as for the erection of dwellings) it is considered that the impacts from this proposal, upon the setting of nearby listed buildings, as well as the NDHA itself are considered acceptable.

In terms of Archaeology the Historic Places Team have been consulted and following review of the Archaeological desk based assessment have stated that conditions are required to mitigate against the impact to any buried archaeology. These conditions would be attached to any permission.

On this basis and given the aforementioned information relating to external materials and archaeology the proposal would accord with SELLP Policies 2, 3 and 29, in addition to Section 16 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

SELLP Policy 4 sets out the Council's approach to flood risk and permits development within Flood Zones 2 and 3, or within areas at risk of breach or overtopping, where it is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment addressing all sources of flooding, including the effects of climate change. That requirement has been met through the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment accompanying the application.

Although the proposal includes a rear extension, it is relevant that the site benefits from an extant permission for residential use at ground floor level, which falls within the 'more vulnerable' category as defined in the NPPF (Annexe 3). By contrast, the proposed use of the building as a shop within Use Class E is classed as 'less vulnerable'. The proposal would therefore represent a reduction in flood risk vulnerability when compared with the lawful fallback position.

In these circumstances, and subject to appropriate conditions securing the recommended flood

mitigation and drainage measures, the principle of the development is acceptable in flood risk terms and accords with Policy 4 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Drainage

The applicant has submitted a suite of drainage-related documentation in support of the proposal. During the consultation process, the Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board (IDB) initially requested confirmation of the existing surface water drainage arrangements serving the former public house, in order to better understand the baseline against which the proposed drainage strategy should be assessed.

Following the submission of further clarification by the applicant, the IDB has confirmed that it does not object to the development. This indicates that the outstanding matters raised earlier have been satisfactorily addressed and that, in principle, the proposed surface water arrangements are capable of operating without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

In any event, even allowing for the proposed rear extension, the development would not be expected to result in a material increase in surface water runoff, particularly as the extent and nature of any hard surfacing within the parking area would be controlled through the planning process. Where necessary, any remaining detailed drainage matters can be secured through appropriately worded planning conditions requiring final surface water drainage details to be submitted and approved prior to commencement.

On this basis, and having regard to the IDB's confirmed position of no objection, the proposal is considered to accord with SELLP Policy 4 in respect of drainage.

Environmental Issues/Amenity

SELLP Policy 30 is concerned with pollution and places impacts in relation to noise, disturbance and air quality as important considerations when considering proposals for planning.

SELLP Policy 2 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) requires that development proposals respect residential amenity and the relationship between new and existing land uses. SELLP Policy 30 further requires that development does not give rise to unacceptable impacts in respect of noise, disturbance, lighting or air quality.

The lawful use of the premises, notwithstanding the unimplemented residential permission, remains as a public house, which is capable of operating without restriction. While the PH could potentially attract a similar number of visitors as the proposed retail use, a PH is less likely to be frequented by car users, and those who do arrive by car are likely to stay for longer periods.

In contrast, the proposed retail use (a convenience store) would typically generate short-stay visits, often on foot or by cycle, resulting in more frequent turnover but lower overall dwell times in the car park. In that context, the change of use is unlikely to result in materially greater impacts from parking or vehicular activity on the surrounding area.

The application has been supported by a Noise Impact Assessment dated 21 November 2025, which considers noise arising from plant, servicing, and general store activity. That assessment concludes that, subject to appropriate mitigation and management, noise levels would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on nearby residential properties. Any necessary noise control measures, including those relating to fixed plant and servicing activity, can be secured through planning conditions.

The proposal is also accompanied by a lighting scheme, including technical specifications addressing light spill and glare. These details demonstrate that external lighting can be controlled so as to avoid adverse effects on neighbouring occupiers.

While the Transport Statement does not provide a direct quantitative comparison with the former PH use, the lawful use is unrestricted in hours and patron numbers. The proposed retail use would operate under defined opening hours and other controls. Given the nature of short-stay, quick-stop visits typical of convenience stores, it is unlikely that the change of use would result in greater disturbance than the PH could generate.

The physical works associated with the proposal, including the rear extension, are modest in scale and would not result in unacceptable overlooking, loss of light, or overbearing impacts on neighbouring properties.

Taking these matters together, and having regard to the Noise Impact Assessment dated 21 November 2025 and the scope to control operations through conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in amenity terms and would accord with SELLP Policies 2 and 30.

Land Contamination

SELLP Policy 30 is concerned with Pollution. It states that "Development proposals will not be permitted where, taking account of any proposed mitigation measures, they would lead to unacceptable adverse impacts upon and quality and condition".

The Environmental Protection Officer has requested that a land contamination condition is applied to any permission granted. However, the proposal represents a change of use (with modest physical works) and so an informative requiring any unforeseen contamination to be reported and addressed (if found) is a more proportionate approach.

Given the aforementioned mitigation, the proposal would accord with SELLP 30.

Ecology/BNG

SELLP Policy 28 is concerned with the Natural Environment points 2 and 3 are relevant to this assessment, point 2 is concerned with Nationally or locally designated sites and protected or priority habitats and species and point 3 with addressing gaps in the ecological network.

The applicant has provided a biodiversity net gain assessment, metric tool and information relating to off-site credits. The proposal would result in a loss of circa 0.79 habitat units. A Gain conditions and HMMP would ensure that the net gain is captured, despite being off-site.

The applicant has also provided ecological appraisals of which the recommendation would be conditionally linked to any permission granted.

Therefore, the LPA are in a position to consider that mandatory BNG can be met. Any permission will be subject to conditions that would demonstrate this.

On this basis the proposal would accord with SELLP Policy 28.

Planning Balance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions are made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal seeks the change of use of the former Bell Inn to a convenience retail store, including part-demolition, a single-storey rear extension, and associated external works. The site lies within the settlement limits of Pinchbeck, within Flood Zone 3, and the Conservation Area. The principle of development is broadly acceptable, and the proposed shop represents a less vulnerable use than the extant residential fallback. Heritage, archaeological, drainage, noise, lighting, amenity, and ecological impacts are acceptable or can be controlled through conditions. The physical works are modest and largely confined to the rear, preserving the principal facade and character of the building.

However, the proposal constitutes out-of-centre retail. The unit exceeds the 100sqm local shop threshold, providing 225sqm net floorspace, and no clear qualitative deficiency in local convenience provision has been demonstrated. The sequential assessment discounts four town-centre sites but does not adequately explore flexibility in scale, layout, or format (e.g., multi-level units, subdivided premises), as required by Policy 27(c) and paragraph 91 of the NPPF. Knight Street functions as the established neighbourhood centre with two existing SPAR stores; the proposed development risks diverting trade and undermining its vitality.

Highway safety concerns also weigh against the proposal, with a shortfall in parking, unquantified staff demand, servicing impacts, and unresolved visibility issues. These factors, combined with the out-of-centre location and insufficient sequential justification, outweigh the limited benefits of

providing additional local convenience retail.

Overall, the proposal fails to comply with SELLP Policies 27 and 36, as well as the paragraphs of the NPPF identified in this report. The adverse impacts on the established neighbourhood centre and highway safety mean the proposal is contrary to the Development Plan and is therefore recommended for refusal.

Additional Considerations

Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:
A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).
C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

Human Rights

In making a decision, the Authority should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as South Holland District Council to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority is referred specifically to Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property).

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

Conclusion

Taking the above considerations into account, the proposal is considered to be contrary with policies 1, 2, 3, 24 , 27 & 36 (including the parking standards set out within Appendix 3) of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), along with the identified sections contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).