Demolition of Part of Existing Convenience Store and Construction

of New Extension, Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points

and reorganisation and extension of Carpark.

Wheatland Services, Bridgnorth Road,

Much Wenlock, TF13 6AG.

Outline Planning Application - Supporting Planning Statement

1. **Introduction**
	1. This statement accompanies an application that seeks outline planning permission for:
2. The extension of the existing convenience store at Wheatland Services, Bridgnorth Road, Much Wenlock, following the part demolition of the existing store.
3. Installation of four electric vehicle charging points.
4. Extension of the car parking facilities at the property.

1. Creation of a café/take-away in the ground floor of No.17 St Mary’s Road, and
2. The installation of a range of solar panels on the roof of the extended store.
3. **The Location and Description of the Site**
	1. The application site is located at the junction of Bridgnorth Road and St Mary’s Road, in Much Wenlock, and has a frontage to both roads.
	2. The site provides vehicle fuels and convenience goods for the whole town, as well as passing trade. At present the operational site extends to around 0.213ha. However, the operator of the fuel station and the store also owns Wheatland Cottage, which lies immediately to the northwest of the site, and No.17 St Mary’s Road, which lies immediately to the north east of the site. Some land currently within the curtilage of both of these properties will be incorporated into the forecourt car parking area of the Service Station and the area of the extended retail building, as explained later in this statement. The application site therefore extends to 0.261ha.

2.3 The forecourt is currently occupied by four dual fuel dispensing pumps beneath a canopy. The pumps and the canopy will be retained in the proposal though the height of the canopy will be raised by around 600mm in order to accommodate taller vehicles that cannot presently stop for fuel. This increase in height is currently the subject of a separate planning application – ref: 21/03060/FUL.

* 1. To the north, east and south of the site are residential properties. To the west, on the opposite side of Bridgnorth Road are fields in agricultural use.
	2. The locality is generally residential in nature, with Wheatland Service Station and Store being the main commercial property. A little way to the north is a small retail building before the main commercial area of the town begins.
	3. The forecourt area presently serviced by accesses from Bridgnorth Road and St Mary’s Road to the fuel pumps and to car parking spaces that are in use by customers calling at the retail store.
	4. The current store has developed over the past 15 years or so by adding a series of extensions to what was, originally, a brick-built workshop associated with the fuel dispensing business. The interior of the building(s) has been configured so there is an unobstructed, level, area of retail sales area, but from the outside it is apparent that it comprises a number of different structures.
	5. Both Wheatland Cottage and No.17, St Mary’s Road are two storey houses, constructed in brick and render under clay-tiled roofs. No.17 is constructed at a similar level to the forecourt, but Wheatland Cottage is constructed as a level around 1.5 metres below that of the adjacent forecourt.
	6. The application site as well as Wheatland Cottage and No 17, St Mary’s Road, lie outside, but immediately adjacent to, the Much Wenlock Conservation Area.
1. **The Proposed Development**
	1. The proposal involves the part demolition of the existing retail outlet and the construction of a further extension to that part of the building that will remain. The existing floorspace totals 499 sq.m, of which around 370 sq.m.is retail floorspace and 129 sq.m. storage and offices. Some 260 sq.m of that floorspace will be demolished. A new extension amounting to 450 sq.m will be constructed such that the total floorspace of the building will expand to around 700 sq.m. Whilst there will be a small increase in retail floor area, the main purpose of the proposal is to allow the reorganisation of the internal operation such that storage facilities can be significantly increased; this will enable the frequency of deliveries to the site to be reduced.
	2. The site of the Service Station will be extended slightly (by a distance of around 2m.) into the curtilage of Wheatland Cottage. This, together with the existing rear car parking area, will provide the additional space necessary for the construction of the proposed extension.
	3. The demolition of part of the current store will allow the reconfiguration of the forecourt to provide additional car parking spaces and, with the addition of the rear garden of No. 17 St Mary’s Road, the installation of a number, initially, probably 4, electric vehicle charging points. In total, some 36 car spaces, 2 disabled car spaces, and 4 spaces for electric vehicle charging will be provided.
	4. The canopy and the existing fuel pumps will be retained as existing, and the accesses to, and egresses from, the site from Bridgnorth Road and St Mary’s Road will remain unaffected.
	5. The proposed extended retail store will remain a single storey building, constructed in brick and steel sheeting, and a shallow pitched steel sheeted roof with a deep fascia, so that, from the nearby properties, it will appear to have a flat roof. The materials and colours can be the subject of discussions with the Local Authority.
	6. The design principles centre on the need to improve the functionality of the building from a retail point of view in order that a greater choice of goods can be offered to customers. Also, importantly, the additional floorspace will allow extra space to be given over to storage facilities in order that deliveries to the store can be kept to a minimum, and allow improvements to the administrative facilities within the building in order to make the operation of the business more efficient.
	7. As residential properties exist to the north and east of the proposed building, care will be taken to ensure that no windows or mechanisms (extraction fans or refrigeration equipment, for instance) will be sited on those elevations, so as to avoid any harm to the amenities of residents on those properties. The height of the building will not exceed the existing and thus no residential amenity should be adversely affected by the development.
	8. The idea will be to concentrate the buildings on the site to the northern end of the site, thus making more useable space for car parking facilities on the southern and eastern areas.
	9. The present passage of vehicles to and from the existing fuel pumps will not be affected by the proposed developments.
	10. The surrounding dwellings are almost all of two storey construction, and so the building will be designed to retain as low a profile as possible in order that it does not dominate those properties.
	11. The application site is relatively flat, with the floor level of the existing store approximately at grade in relation to St Mary’s Road. However, Bridgnorth Road falls away from its junction with St Mary’s Road leaving the north end of the site perhaps 1.5 metres above the level of Bridgnorth Road. This difference will be retained in order that a continuous level floor can be accommodated for the retail area. The retaining wall/north end of the proposed building will be detailed to provide visual interest to the northern elevation of the building.
	12. Disabled access to the retail store will be readily available as the forecourt area will be at the same level as the entrance to the shop.
	13. Car parking facilities will be in line with, or in excess of the Council’s normal standards for parking at retail outlets, although it should be remembered that the application site sits immediately adjacent to the extent of the town central shopping area, and within walking distance of a large number of residential properties and so many customers will, in fact, walk to the Store to buy goods.
	14. The conversion of the ground floor of No.17 St Mary’s Road to a small café/take-away will provide an additional facility for the town and, in particular, will provide a safe area for drivers waiting for electric vehicles to be charged.
2. **Planning Policy**
	1. The Local Plan for the area in which the application site is situated comprises
* The Shropshire Core Strategy 2003 – 2021
* The Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev) 2006 – 2026
* The Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2026
	1. The Core Strategy Policy CS3 identifies Much Wenlock as a Key Centre as part of the overall development strategy for the County. It says that the town will:

*“…..have limited development that reflects its important service and employment centre role, whilst retaining its historic character.”*

The Policy also says that,

*“Market Towns and other Key Centres will maintain and enhance their roles in providing facilities and services to their rural hinterlands* and *providing foci for economic development and regeneration.”*

* 1. Policy CS8: Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Provision says that the development of sustainable places in Shropshire with safe and healthy communities where residents enjoy a high quality of life will be assisted by (amongst other things):
	+ Protecting and enhancing existing facilities, services and amenities that contribute to the quality of life of residents and visitors.
	+ Positively encouraging infrastructure, where this has no significant adverse impact on recognised environmental assets that mitigates and adapts to climate change, including decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy generation, and working closely with network providers to ensure provision of necessary energy distribution networks.
	1. Policy CS15: Town and Rural Centres, says that:

*“Development and other measures will maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Shropshire’s network of town and rural centres, and, within the context of the strategic approach (Policies CS1 – CS5), support the delivery of appropriate comparison and convenience retail…..”*

Key Centres in the County (which includes Much Wenlock) the Policy says, will act as district centres within their respective spatial zones, serving the needs of their immediate rural hinterlands.

* 1. SAMDev Policy MD2: Sustainable Design says that development proposals should,
1. Respond positively to local design aspirations…..as set out in (amongst others) Neighbourhood Plans,
2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character.
3. Embrace opportunities for contemporary design solutions.
	1. Policy MD10a: Managing Town Centre Development says that,

*“In other settlements* “(that is settlements other than those specifically listed in the Policy – Much Wenlock is not a settlement specifically listed)” *the preferred location for main town centre uses will be within or on the edge of a recognised high street or recognised village centre, and should be consistent with the relevant Settlement Strategy in Policies S1 – S18 or a Neighbourhood Plan.”*

* 1. Turning to the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan, Policy E14 indicates that,

*“…..Additional (retail) provision outside the retail core will be supported if it complements the town centre offer, is compatible with the size and scale of the existing town centre, and does not have unacceptable impacts on the road network.”*

* 1. Policy GQD2 of the Neighbourhood Plan says that,

*“All development will be designed to a high quality and to reinforce local distinctiveness…..”*

* 1. Plan 2: of the Much Wenlock Town Map, April 2013, shows the application site being situated within the limits of the town’s development boundary, outside the boundary of the town’s conservation area, and outside the town’s retail core.
	2. It is clear that the development proposed complies with the various relevant development plan policies in that,
1. Much Wenlock is identified in the Local Plan as a Key Centre and it is the Council’s policy to “*maintain and enhance their* (i.e. key centres) *roles in providing facilities and services to their rural hinterlands”.* The proposed development will extend an existing well established and well-used local retail outlet, which helps support the provision of vehicle fuel facilities in Much Wenlock. There are no other fuel service stations in the town, and just one other supermarket, a Spar, which is heavily constrained by existing surrounding buildings such that there is no opportunity for expansion. The existing store at Wheatland Services is the main source of groceries for the town’s inhabitants. The proposed development clearly complies with the aims of Policy No’s CS3, CS8 and CS15.
2. The extended premises will help secure local facilities for the community, and thus assist their health and well-being, as well as reducing the need to travel to other locations outside the town for instance, Bridgnorth or Telford to purchase convenience goods, and thus reduce the usage of fossil fuels.
3. The proposed extended new building will consolidate the existing conglomeration of structures and extensions and will thus provide a contemporary solution to the provision of a food store in the town. The canopy over the fuel pumps, which was specifically designed to have a hipped roof in line with the Council’s wishes, will remain on the site. The proposal complies with Policy MD10a, and Neighbourhood Plan Policy E14.
4. The provision of electric vehicle charging points will ensure the town is provided with appropriate sustainable means of fuelling vehicles and will thus help reduce the effect of vehicles on local pollution and the effects of climate change.
5. The proposed development will be designed to reflect the current appearance of the existing building and will take into account the proximity of residential properties in the near vicinity. The policy is, then, in conformity with Policy No’s MD2 and GQD2.
6. **Conclusion**

5.1 The proposed development does not conflict with the aims of the Development Plan, and thus, in accordance with the provisions of s.78 pf the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2005, the development should be approved unless there are material considerations which indicate otherwise. The Applicant is not aware of any material considerations that would militate against the granting of permission for the proposed development.

* 1. The proposed café/takeaway will provide an additional facility for the town residents, and for motorists waiting for cars to be charged.

5.3 The extension and reconfiguration of the car parking area will make the site more legible and easy to navigate.

* 1. The development will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.