

# 8878 – Design & Access Statement

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## Proposed Yurt Structures Grange Garden Centre Asfordby Hill



## General Information

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HSSP Architects Limited  
Pera Business Park  
Nottingham Road  
Melton Mowbray  
Leicestershire  
LE13 0PB

01664 563 288  
info@hssparchitects.co.uk  
www.hssparchitects.co.uk

## Company Biography

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HSSP Architects Ltd was established in 1966 and is a professional Company which has always prided itself on its quality service and client relationship. Based in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire we work throughout the East Midlands and UK

## Issue Record

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Revision	Date	By	Checked	Admin	Note
0	15.03.2023	NC		SAM	First Issue
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The format and content of this statement has been based upon the guidance supplied by CABE in their publication "Design and access statements - How to write, read and use them"

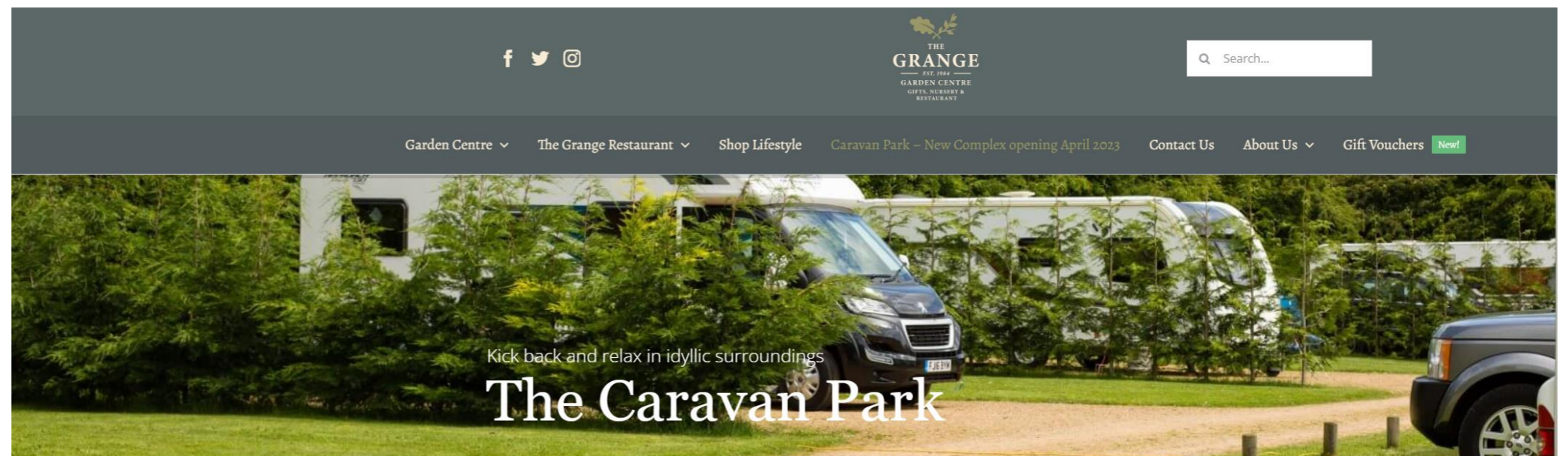
# 0.0 Executive Summary

This request for planning approval relates to the existing Grange Camping & Caravan Park at the Grange Garden Centre, Asfordby Hill Melton Mowbray.

The proposal is for the siting of two yurt structures providing additional diversified accommodation for prospective holidaymakers.

This document sets out:

- The planning history and development over time of the whole garden centre and campsite – an award winning tourism and leisure destination on the edge of Melton Mowbray.
- The proposed development layout and its impact on the wider setting of the site and its surroundings.
- Compliance with design specific local and national plan policy.



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Brief and aspirations

Our client Mr & Mrs Houghton have asked HSSP Architects to put forward their proposals for the siting of two yurt structures to help increase capacity and diversify their current and planned Leisure and Tourism business at the Grange site.

Mr Houghton's family have farmed and worked on the site since the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and over the last 30 years the site has been developed into the current business, regarded as Melton's premier award winning Garden Centre and Restaurant.

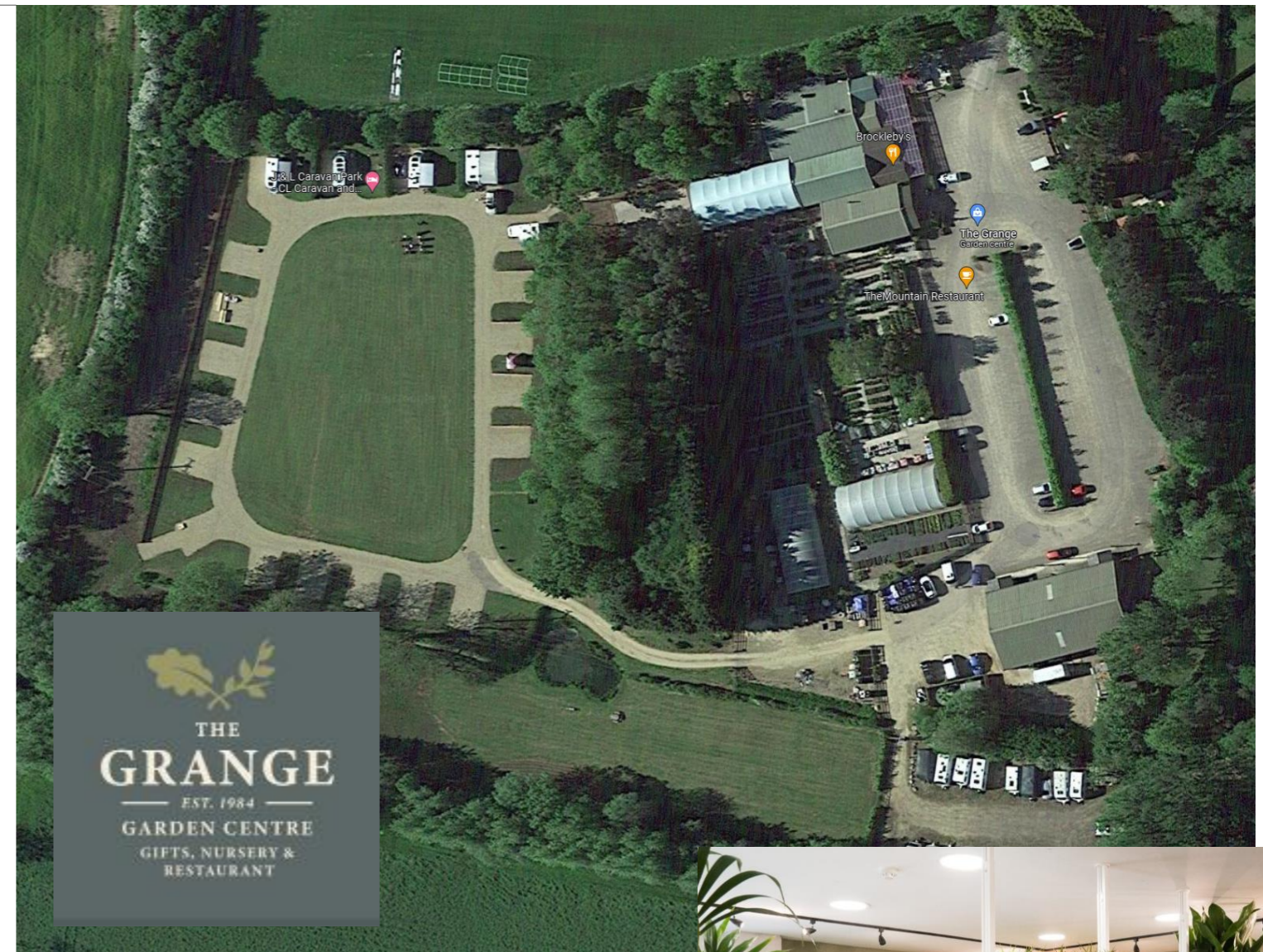
The Campsite has recently been expanded to cater for the increased British tourism demand, following the Covid Pandemic lockdowns, approvals have been granted in line with the Melton Borough Council's policy supporting Leisure and Tourism provision.

The Campsite element of the business has grown from providing 5 hard standing touring caravan pitches, to its current position with 21 caravan/ mobile home pitches along with a camping field. A flagship new building has been constructed to serve the campsite, known as 'The Farmhouse', providing WC and showers and a small campsite shop and coffee bar.

The Grange Garden Centre additionally provides indoor and outdoor nursery garden centre products, a gift shop and the successful restaurant business attracting visitors from far afield. More recently, areas of the site have been dedicated to provide secure caravan storage.

The site attracts circa 100,000 people annually to its facilities.

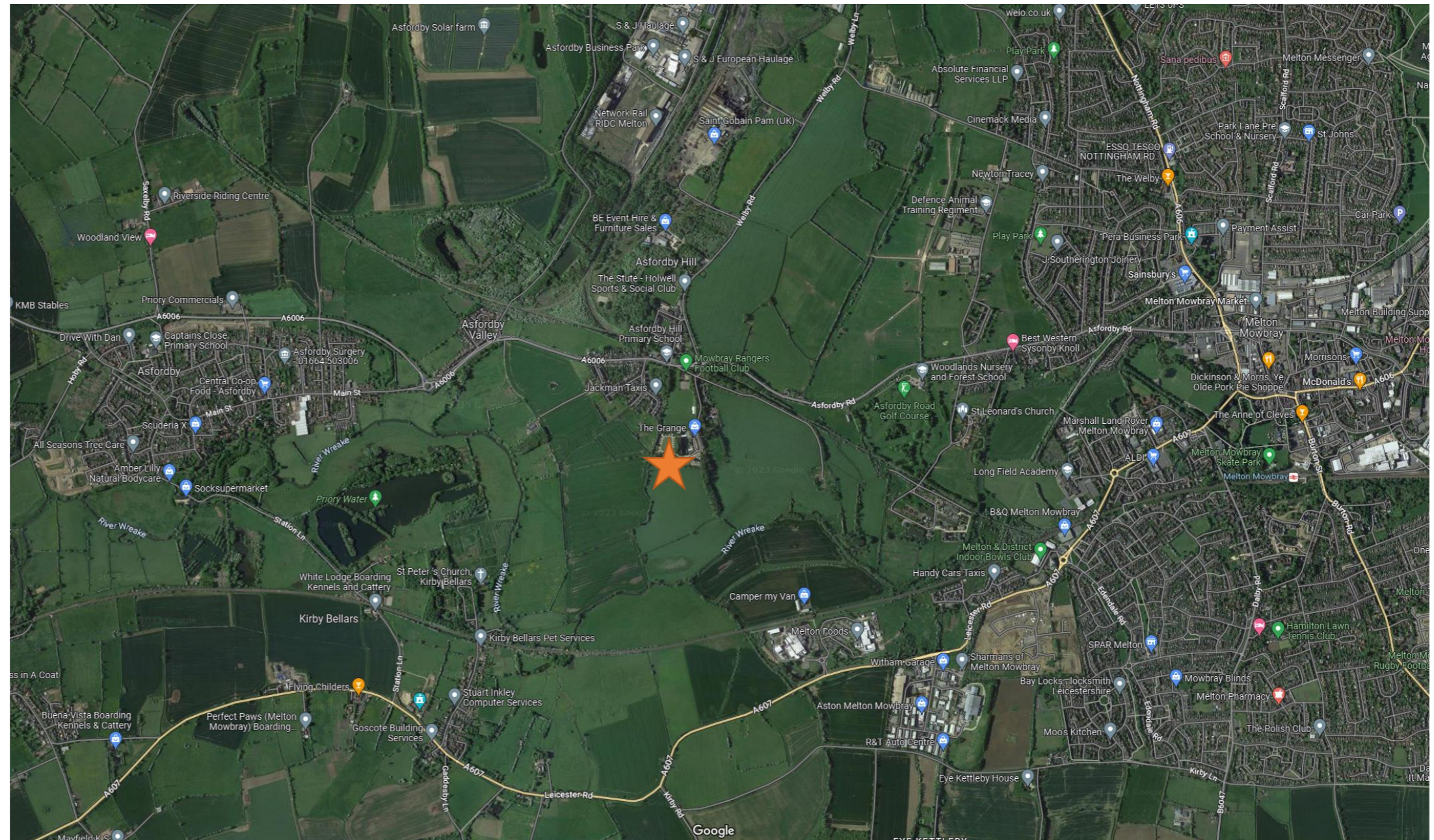
Brockleby's Pies have a unit on the site manufacturing produce and undertaking visitor experiences. The company were crowned Supreme Champions at this years British Pie Championships which will undoubtedly elevate their business marketing and by virtue of this, the site's presence, to a National and potentially International audience.



## 2.0 Site Assessment

### 2.1 Site location

- Asfordby Hill, Melton Mowbray
- Approx 2600m to the West of Melton Mowbray Town Centre, the nearest Local Centre
- Asfordby, the nearest 'service centre' is only 1700m westwards
- Easy access onto A6007, A607 and A46 and A1 beyond
- Leicester Approx. 20km SW  
Nottingham Approx. 25km North West  
Loughborough Approx. 18km Westwards
- The site lies on the edge of the Vale of Belvoir with its associated tourist attractions such as Belvoir Castle and in close proximity to Rutland Water and National Tourist attractions in the adjacent cities such as The National Space Centre, Nottingham Caves and the King Richard III Centre.



## 2.0 Site Assessment

### 2.2 Site description

- Topography – The site falls from North to South, lowering towards the River Wreake Valley beyond.
- E to W fall is relatively flat
- Land Use – Leisure and Tourism
- Existing buildings – Mixture of portal framed buildings, brick and steel with a new timber clad camping facilities building.
- Vegetation – semi mature shelter belt of tree planting across the southern boundary – ornamental planting within the campsite.
- Water – pond adjacent to the campsite amenity building.
- Boundaries – as described above.
- Access – Existing shared access drive to the garden centre with access controlled barriers onto the campsite.

#### Features (see plan right)

- Part of an attractive tourism facility.
- Wider garden centre tourism attraction.
- Adjacent new residential development on the Eastern boundary site boundary.
- Self contained site close to village facilities and bus routes.



## 2.0 Site Assessment

### 2.3 Site context

Melton Landscape Character Assessment

LCA 12 Wreake Valley

A gentle lowland river valley landscape with contrasting sinuous river course and regular pattern of small to medium scale pastoral fields with distinct wetland and water areas from former gravel pits, and small-nucleated villages situated along the rising slopes of the valley edge.

Local context

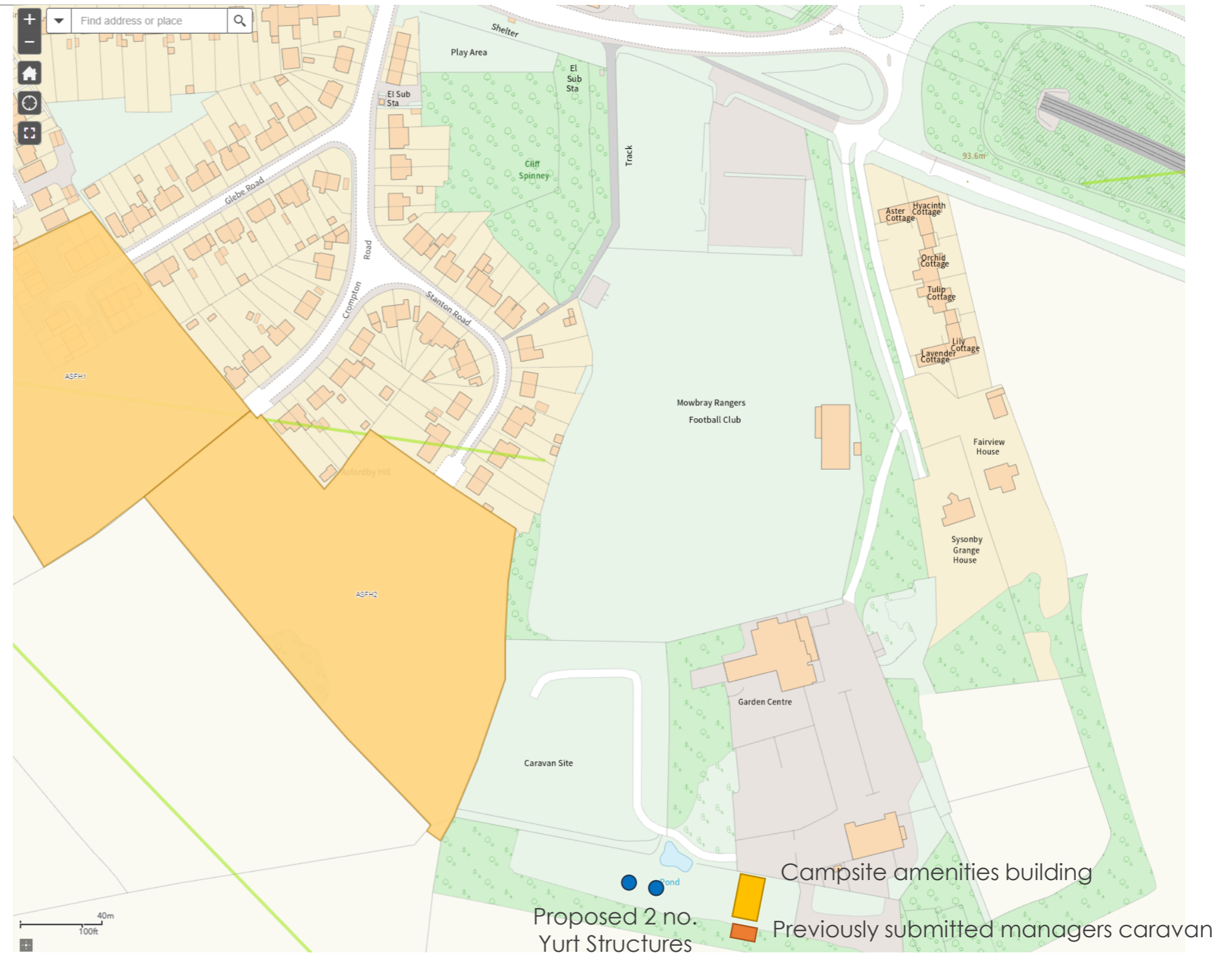
- Hill top location broadly at 100m AOD.
- Wide views over the Wreake Valley to West, South and East directions.
- Planted tree buffer across the southern boundary of the site, filtering views of the site from afar.

### 2.4 Site history

- Agricultural landscape set within scattered tree plantations.
- The site of Grange Garden Centre has been extensively developed over the last 30 years to its current status.

### 2.5 Local character

- Garden Centre site sits to the East of the Village.
- New housing developments –
- 6 bungalows ref. 18/00973/REM
- A single new house ref 20/01007/FUL and
- 6 Houses ref.19/01388/OUT now being considered with an application for 14 dwellings ref. 21/00518/FUL.



Extract from the MBC Local Plan Interactive map.

Note the proximity of allocated housing Land ASF2 to the West of the Grange Garden Centre. Recent housing approvals as noted earlier to the Eastern edge of the Grange Garden Centre. Established tree shelter belt to the site's Southernmost boundary.

An area of separation is signified across open farmland to the West to separate Asfordby Hill from Asfordby and Asfordby Valley.



## 2.0 Site Assessment



Photos showing the new campsite amenity building – 'The Farmhouse' providing facilities for the enlarged Grange Garden Centre Campsite



Photos showing the improved internal roadways to the mobile home and camper van plots with a new field area for tent pitches along the southern edge



Existing caravan storage yard and the existing tree shelterbelt along the southern boundary – further ecological enhancements around the pond area

## 3.1 National Planning Policy (NPPF)

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### Section 2 – Sustainable Development

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

#### **Proposal response by HSSP Architects -**

This application aims to build upon the existing success of the Grange Garden Centre and its newer venture, to provide a sustainable tourism site. The current wider business employs 30 local people at present and the site as a whole contributes significantly to the tourism economy for Melton Borough.

The applicants have invested significantly into the site over the covid period and are now looking to ensure that their investments can be returned. The site has been developed as an eco campsite, with reed bed waste water treatment, new planting and biodiversity and incorporation of bat, swift and swallow nest boxes around the new amenity building to name just a few examples.

### Section 6 – building a strong, competitive economy

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Para 84. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

#### **Proposal response by HSSP Architects -**

The Grange Garden Centre provides a premier facility for Leisure and Tourism within Melton Borough, with a variety of attractions and offers available.

Mr & Mrs Houghton have invested significant amounts of money into the campsite element of the business, building a flagship amenities block, coffee shop and provisions store to ensure that the campsite achieves its potential.

The sensitive introduction of two yurt structures to the southern edge of the site looks to expand the campsites offering to potential tourists and to further diversify the type of tourists the campsite caters towards.

## 3.0 Planning Policy

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### 3.02 Local Plan

The Melton Local Plan was adopted in October 2018.

Asfordby Hill is considered to be a Rural Hub - Rural Hubs are a village or a group of villages which share a range of essential and important local services which serve the basic needs of people living within them and in nearby settlements, which can be accessed by cycling and walking.

The village has 2 housing allocations sited on the western edge of the village, the second of which ASFH2 – land off Stanton Road abuts the western edge of the campsite fields.

The plan discusses the allocation of sites in services centres and rural hubs under Policy SS2 – development strategy and development in smaller ‘unsustainable’ villages under Policy SS3.

#### **Development on unallocated sites in the rural area**

*4.2.17 Where no sites are allocated for new housing, schemes may be permitted where they represent sustainable development or demonstrably meet identified needs and/or help to sustain local services or facilities. Schemes of up to about 10 dwellings may be appropriate within or on the edge of Service Centres, schemes of up to about 5 dwellings for Rural Hubs, and schemes of up to about 3 dwellings for Rural Settlements.*

In recent years 2 developments have been constructed on the eastern edge of Asfordby Hill, occupying land to the East of the Grange Garden Centre development, both by HSSP Architects.

Ref. 18/00973/REM For the development of 6 bungalows.

Ref. 20/01007/FUL for the development of a new 4 bedroomed house.

Furthermore, an outline application has been consented Ref.

19/01388/OUT for the development of 6 houses.

These developments – refer to the site plan in section 2.2 of this statement have enclosed the Garden Centre site on the eastern edge and the Local Plan site allocation similarly enclose the site on the western edge.

The principle of residential development around the site is established and can be supported under the Local Plan policies, should the applicant chose to pursue this.

## Chapter 6.9 – Melton’s Rural Economy

*The Council acknowledge that rural business has a strong local connection with its workforce and supports business to grow from start ups to medium sized business where this can be achieved without any significant adverse impacts on the environment, local infrastructure and amenity.*

The site is well established and it has consent for the additional traffic associated with the enlarged campsite. The proposal for the introduction of two yurt structures to the campsite will not detrimentally affect the high-quality infrastructure that is already in place.

#### **Policy EC8 – Sustainable Tourism**

*Sustainable tourism, visitor and cultural development proposals will be supported where they improve the facilities for visitors, including attractions and accommodation subject to the proposal:*

- 1. being of an appropriate scale in the context of the host settlement; and*
- 2. having benefits to local businesses in creating the potential to generate revenues.*

*Attractions and facilities of a significant scale should be located firstly within the town centre, then on the edge of the town centre, and then at other accessible locations.*

*Melton Borough Council will support, where appropriate, the restoration of the Grantham Canal. Moreover the Borough Council will resist planning applications which will have an adverse impact on tourism across the Borough, but with particular protection applied to valued attractions such as the Vale of Belvoir, Belvoir Castle and Burrough on the Hill Iron Age Fort, two of the most valued tourist attractions in the Borough.*

*Larger proposals for tourist attractions/accommodation outside of Melton Mowbray, Service Centres and Rural Hubs may be supported, provided it can be proven to add significantly and demonstrably to the Borough’s economic or tourist offer and can be demonstrated that a suitable more sustainable location is not available or practicable.*

This policy should wholly support the proposals being put forward for introduction of two yurt structures on a Tourism and Leisure site.

## 4.0 Business Case

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### 4.01 Application Site Planning History

Planning consent for the expansion of the site from the original 5 caravan/ campervan plots was granted under approval ref. 17/01288/FUL.

The approval was then modified to include enhanced facilities within the amenity building, adding a first floor for office and admin duties under approval ref. 21/01404/FUL.

Planning consent was achieved for the applicant on 2 occasions within the site ownership in the past – 06/00302/FUL for a modest dormer bungalow and an amendment to this 14/00616/NONMAT for a reduced version.

### 4.04 Project Costings and Finance

The Campsite redevelopment has been undertaken to compliment the wider Garden Centres facility and strengthen its position as one of the Borough's leading Tourism and Leisure offering.

The applicants have invested circa half a million pounds into the project and have sold their current property to assist in the financing of the project.

# 5.0 Design proposals



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- PROPOSAL KEY:**
- EXTG CARAVAN PITCHES
  - PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
  - VEHUCULAR ROUTES
  - PROPOSED YURT STRUCTURES

Rev.	Date	Drawn



Pera Innovation Park, Nottingham Road  
Melton Mowbray, LE13 0PB  
Telephone: 01664 563 288 Fax: 01664 503 360  
E-Mail info@hssparchitects.co.uk Web www.hssparchitects.co.uk

**J&L SYSONBY HOLDINGS**  
**THE GRANGE**  
**ASFORDBY HILL**

<b>PROPOSED SITE PLAN</b>			
Scale:	Drawn:	Checked:	Date:
1:1250	CS		10/23
Drawing No:	Revision:		
8878 - 03 - 03			

HSSP A3

## 5.0 Proposed Design

### 5.00 Overview

Traditional Yurts are circular domed tents formed of skins or felt stretched over a collapsible lattice framework and used by pastoral peoples of inner Asia. Their popularity has grown significantly within the UK in the last 10 years as a way of providing a semi-permanent form of camping. The yurts enable a more luxurious type of accommodation to traditional tents but allows users to still engage with the countryside. The organic aesthetic form and practical lattice structure has also been a large driver behind the appeal of this alternative form of accommodation that blends well into the natural landscape.

The yurts have a thick outer fabric and an insulated lining which reduces any sound emitted from within the structure. Views towards the yurts are largely shielded by existing planting and trees as indicated on the landscape plan. This combined with the neutrally coloured yurt colouring will blend the site into the existing landscape.

### 5.01 Use

The Yurts will provide luxury temporary accommodation for holiday makers visiting Melton Mowbray and the surrounding rural landscape.

### 5.02 Amount

Each yurt structure has the capacity to house two people to sleep in.

### 5.03 layout

The two Yurts will be positioned to the South of the site on land that is already used to accommodate tents on the Grange campsite. Inside, the yurt has the capacity to house a double bed and log burner.

### 5.04 Scale

The proposed yurts will be single storey in height and have a wall height of 1.60 meters and a crown height of 2.75 meters. A single yurt structure will have an internal floor area of 19.60m<sup>2</sup>.

The weaved timber structure will be finished in a sheep's wool felt a exterior skin that tonally complements the surrounding natural environment.



Appearance of the proposed Yurt Structures. Image provided by supplier.

## 6.0 Access

### 6.1 Vehicular access

- The existing site access to the Grange Garden Centre and the associated Campsite facility will be utilised.

### 6.2 Pedestrian access

- There is no direct pedestrian access to the site - the access drive is shared between pedestrians and vehicles.

### 6.3 Emergency Service access

The existing site has a driveway of sufficient width to allow emergency vehicles to access the site – turning spaces are available within the site and its parking area.



View from the Grange Garden Centre car park – new barrier gate to the Campsite development and 'The Farmhouse' providing visitor amenities

## 7.0 Conclusion

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This Statement has been prepared to accompany the planning application submitted on behalf of our clients and forms part of the suite of supporting documents.

We have undertaken a comprehensive review of the relevant National, Local and, where relevant, Supplementary Planning Policy and Guidance which will be relevant to the determination of this application.

We do not consider that there are any adverse impacts arising from the proposal which outweigh the economic benefits of this new sustainable tourism-based addition to the existing campsite. Therefore, this proposal is considered compliant with the relevant planning policy and in no way detrimental or incongruous to the surrounding rural landscape.

This application forms part of a dream of a local couple who are dedicated to investing, working and living in the area. They believe this proposal is dynamic and sustainable and provides a unique visitor attraction for the area in a respectful way to this sensitive natural landscape. If approved the Yurts will help bolster the high quality, sustainable rural business and will result in further local economic investment and provide an attraction for tourists to visit this popular area.