

Pre-Hearing Statement

Matter 7: Housing Sites

Issue 5 – Medium Villages – Policy S81

WL/SC/004A – Land off Jupiter Drive, Scothern



1. Background

1.1 The land subject to the allocation is part of the wider land holding of Barber Farms Limited. Lindum Homes have a contractual relationship with Barber Farms on the part of the site the subject of the allocation, requiring the delivery of housing if the allocation is ratified and planning permission is achieved.

1.2 As such, both ourselves and the landowners are very keen to bring forward development, should the allocation be secured, in a timely manner – indeed we are contractually obliged to do so.

2. Inspectors Questions - What effect will the allocation have on the rural character of Scothern?

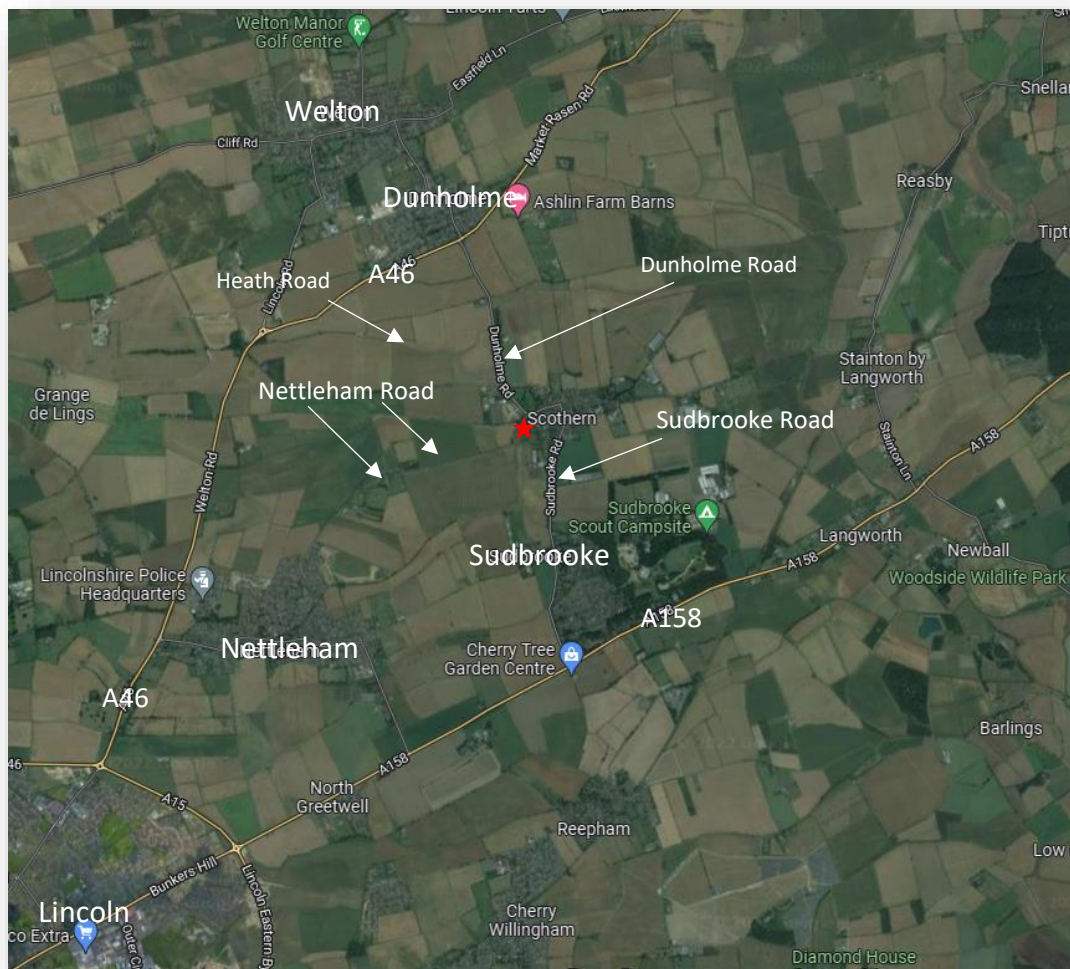
Has this been considered as part of the preparation of the Local Plan?

2.1 In the first instance, it is important to consider the location of the site in the context of both the townscape setting of the village and its overarching rural character. Such considerations include wider influences which impact upon its setting, including the routes into and out of the village and specific views available from these routes. It is also important to consider site specific factors which development of this site may influence, including the existing built form around the edges of the site which will frame any development of the site.

2.2 As I am sure the Inspector will appreciate, this statement is in no way intended to consider all relevant factors as a detailed landscape and visual assessment would do. Rather, it is specifically written to give the Inspector some comfort that any allocation of the site would not, in principle, be detrimental to the rural character of the village. The need for any site-specific measures would, of course, be examined as part of the Development Management process should the allocation be ratified.

2.3 The Wider Site Context – Routes into and out of the Village

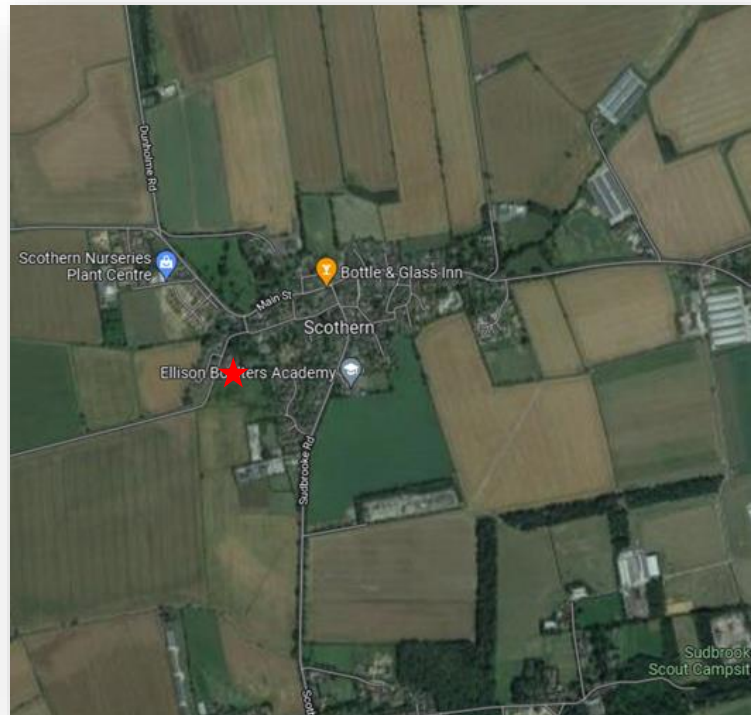
2.3.1 Scothern is to the north-east of the City of Lincoln. It is in proximity to the villages of Sudbrooke to the south, and Dunholme and Welton to the north. Also, immediately to the west of Scothern sits the large village of Nettleham. The main routes into and out of Lincoln from Scothern are via the A46, which runs to the north and west, and the A158 which runs to the south. The location of the village in context can be seen on the google maps extract below (site is shown with a red star).



2.3.2 The site itself would be on the south western edge of Scothern, accessed from Nettleham Road which is one of three routes connecting the village to the A46. The A46 connects the village to both the City of Lincoln to the south and the towns of Market Rasen, Caistor and Grimsby to the north. Importantly, however, the route from Nettleham Road is convoluted and only gets to the A46 by going through the large village of Nettleham. As such, the two easiest, most direct routes from the village to the A46 are via Dunholme Road and Scothern Lane, to the north, and Dunholme Road/Heath Road

which runs to the west. Both of these routes provide direct access to the A46, and therefore provide the most likely routes into and out of the village

2.3.3 As well as this, there is a further route from and into Lincoln via Sudbrooke Road/Scothern Lane. This runs south from the centre of the village to the A158, which provides the most direct route into Lincoln, whilst also providing access to the market towns of Wragby and Horncastle, and the coastal settlements along the east coast beyond.



2.3.4 The analysis of the routes into and out of the village is important when assessing the

likely impact of the development of the site on the rural character of the Scothern. Clearly the impact of development would be most keenly felt when viewed from the most common routes, with the more prominent and well used routes being more sensitive to change.

2.3.5 The analysis above shows that the site is positioned on one of the least prominent routes into and out of the village. With development only being seen from Nettleham Road, the impact would therefore be more localised, and its impact on the rural character of the village lessened as a result.

2.4 The Immediate Site Context – Built Form and the Edge of the Settlement

2.4.1 In terms of landscape and townscape setting, the site is not within an Area of Natural Beauty (AONB), Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) or Green Wedge. The site is not therefore in an area which benefits from any wider protection. For context, images from some prominent views can be seen at Appendix 1.

2.4.2 More specifically, whilst the site is located at the edge of the settlement, it is surrounded by residential development, particularly to the east where it borders development off Juniper Drive and The Alders. In addition, residential development is also present immediately to the west, along Heathlea, and to the north along Cade Close. As well as this, the site is located adjacent to Mark Harris Commercial, a Maxi Mover Dealership which sits to the south of the site.



2.4.3 The site would therefore be seen in context with the adjacent residential development which also sits on the settlement edge and, together with the commercial buildings to the south which also form prominent features in the landscape. Existing development therefore surrounds the site, the commercial buildings in particular screening the site when viewed from the prominent Sudbrooke Road route into and out of the village.

2.4.4 Specifically, the longer views into the village from Nettleham Road would also be framed by existing and established hedgerows, which would be capable of retention, with views of the Mark Harris Commercial buildings and existing power lines also being prominent. In addition, the residential

developments of Juniper Drive and, particularly as you get closer to the site, Heathlea and Cade Close are also prominent.

2.4.5 The rural character of the village from the west is therefore very much characterised by existing housing and commercial development, as illustrated above. Existing Landscaping is also important, and this can be a characteristic prioritised in any housing layout – and this is common in many housing developments on the edges of settlements.

3. Other Influences on the Rural Character

3.1 As well as the views of the site in context with the existing countryside and built form, many other development related matters have the potential to impact upon the rural character of the village. As well as the landscaping, density of development is also a key factor and it is noted that the proposed allocation includes an indicative density.

3.2 The site itself extends to some 2.72 hectares/6.7 acres, and the proposed site capacity is listed as 41 units. Clearly the density needs to be tested against several key design cues, including the need to incorporate a 10% net gain in biodiversity across the site.

3.3 Pages 10 and 11 of the Evidence Report for Policies S76-S82 (HOU002a) include the approach to calculating site capacity as incorporated in the allocation policies. This approach states that 75% of the site should be considered developable for sites of between 2 and 20 hectares. In addition, a density of 20 dwellings per hectare is assumed in medium/small villages, which results in the indicative figure of 41 units for this site.

3.4 It is acknowledged that a low-density development on the edge of a rural settlement is likely to be the most appropriate, particularly when considering this in the context of the rural character of the village. The indicative capacity proposed, however, equates to 15 dwellings per hectare, or 6 dwellings per acre in total. The Inspector will be aware that this is *significantly* below typical densities, even in a rural setting.

3.5 In terms of the use of the 75% developable area figure, in development terms this is extremely high. In addition, the use of the 20 dwellings per hectare figure, is also extremely low – typically the minimum we achieve on our sites is 24 per hectare as a whole and this is much lower than most housebuilders. Even utilising the developable area figure, applying our standard, lower than average density results in a capacity of 49 dwellings.

3.6 The site capacity is therefore a key component in ensuring the development maintains the rural character of Scothern. As currently proposed, there is a danger this could deliver a development which

is uncharacteristic and not typical of the village, resulting in large houses on large plots which does not reflect the surroundings or the needs of the village.

3.7 It is recognised these figures are indicative, however our experience is that they can be rigidly applied and used as a ceiling by other interest parties. It is therefore respectfully requested that this is reviewed, and a more realistic indicative figure provided which is more reflective of the character of the village and typical densities which have been delivered across similar sites in the district in the recent past.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The site is located on one of the least prominent routes into and out of the village. There are better routes to the north and west, towards the A46, and to the south towards the A158, which have more of an impact on the townscape setting of the village. The site's location on a less prominent route ensures the overall impact of any development would be lessened as a result, the nature of any impact being localised.

4.2 In addition, the site is not subject to any landscape classification, whilst the village edge is already characterised by existing residential and commercial development. Any development on this site would be seen in context with the existing built form currently prominent at the village edge, particularly the large commercial buildings to the south of the site.

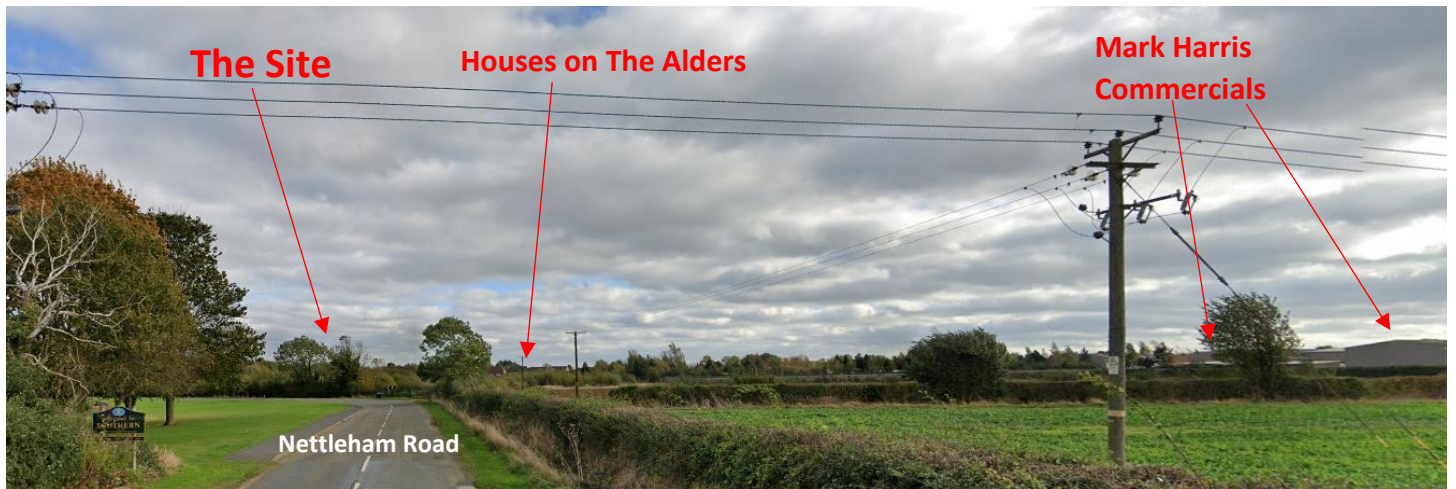
4.3 Finally, design and density would be key aspects in ensuring rural character is maintained, and it is agreed that this density should be lower to reflect the site's location. At the density proposed, however, the site would be significantly below standard densities, and this could result in a development uncharacteristic of the village.

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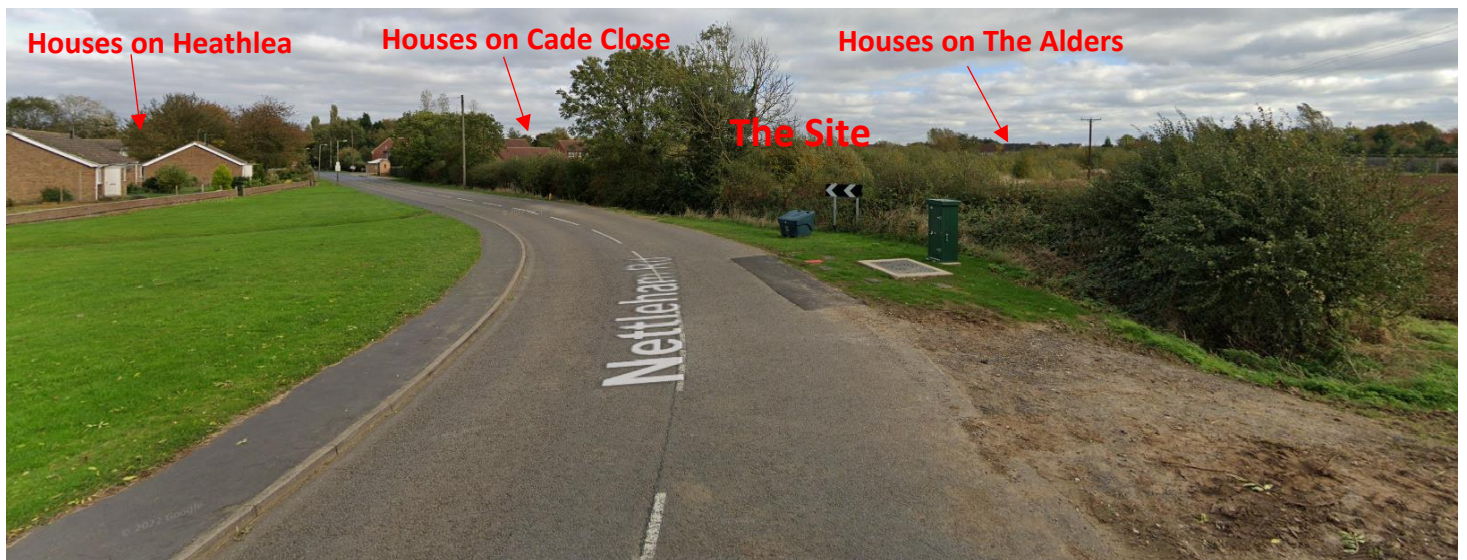
Land and Planning Director

Lindum Homes

Appendix 1 – Views into and out of the Site



View towards the site from Nettleham Road, looking east



View from Nettleham Road across the site, towards the village



View from Sudbrooke Road, looking north west towards the site