



Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 11 and 12 June 2019

Site visit made on 12 and 28 June 2019

by A J Mageean BA (Hons) BPI PhD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/W/18/3208890

Land at Harrowby Lane, Grantham NG31 9TT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Absolute Property Development Ltd against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref S17/0566 dated 21 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2018.
 - The development proposed is outline application for a residential development comprising up to 100 dwellings (use class C3) with associated access, open space, landscaping and infrastructure improvements.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application was submitted in outline with all matters except access reserved for consideration at a later stage. I have considered the appeal on this basis, and with the understanding that the plans showing the site layout are for illustrative purposes only.
3. The original application was for a scheme for 'up to 100 dwellings'. The appellant has submitted a revised scheme for 'up to 75 dwellings' in which a larger area of grassland would be retained, thereby addressing concerns about the effect of the proposal on this grassland habitat and the wider ecological network. The Council has indicated that on this basis the ecological reason for refusing the application has been addressed.
4. I have considered whether the amended scheme is so changed that to consider it would deprive those who should have been consulted on the changed development the opportunity of such consultation. However, in this case consideration of the reduced scheme is not likely to prejudice interested parties. I have therefore considered the appeal on this basis, as illustrated in the 'Proposed Masterplan' (AL(0) 020).
5. At the time of the appeal hearing, the hearings associated with the examination of the emerging South Kesteven New Local Plan 2011-2036 (eLP) had recently been completed. I have considered the status of the provisions of this document, including recent correspondence with the examining Inspector, as appropriate, as part of this decision.

6. The Proposed Masterplan includes areas outside the appeal site itself, though the appellant clarified that this is for illustrative purposes only.

Main Issues

7. The decision notice issued by the Council included reasons for refusal relating to the absence of a sustainable drainage system, the absence of a minerals assessment and the absence of a satisfactory Section 106 agreement to support the provision of the infrastructure directly required to support the development. Following the submission of additional documentation and a concluded and executed section 106 agreement, the Council agreed that these reasons for refusal were no longer contested. As such the main issues are:
 - 1) The effect of the proposal on the landscape character of Grantham;
 - 2) The effect of the proposal on the setting of a number of designated heritage assets; and
 - 3) Whether any harm in relation to issues 1) and 2) and any conflict with the development plan is outweighed by other material considerations.

Reasons

Landscape character

8. The historic market town of Grantham has grown broadly on the low lying land following the valley of the River Witham. The landscape character of the area is set out in the South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (2007) (SKLCA). This identifies the 'Grantham Scarps and Valleys' landscape character area (LCA) as being defined by built development generally on the lower lying land in the valleys, and by the steep scarp slopes to the east and south with woodland or pasture cover. The rapid expansion of the town during the twentieth century brought larger housing estates and industrial development with some encroachment on higher land to the west. However, built development on rising ground to the east and south has generally been avoided, with only odd isolated buildings present in this area. This gives this side of the town a clearly defined edge and an enclosed and rural character, containing the urban influence on the wider landscape.
9. This so called 'green rim' is a significant landscape feature and has been defined as such in a number of studies. For example, the Grantham Townscape Assessment (2010) (GTA) identified the distinctive relationship between the town and its landscape fringes. Specifically, it refers to the fact that 'the topography is a key characteristic of the landscape fringe as it forms a green rim of open countryside to the skyline around the town'.
10. The appeal site is located on the dip slope of part of the eastern escarpment, which is characterised by a patchwork of fields, parkland and woodland. It comprises open grassland used as grazing land bound by mature vegetation of varying quality. This escarpment is well defined and meanders considerably further north and south. The section containing the appeal site drops steeply to directly adjoin the eastern extent of the town, specifically a residential estate with Alma Park Industrial Estate close by to the north.
11. The highest point of the site is around 121m, a little below the highest point of the escarpment to the east. It drops down to around 95m. Halls Hill to the south

reaches a little higher, and this part of the escarpment extends further west to reduce the visibility of the appeal site from viewpoints to the south. Nonetheless, from some vantage points to the north and west the appeal site and its immediate surrounds can be seen to frame the town. For example, the LVIA viewpoint 14 and Belton Lane in Great Gonerby on the north western side of the town provide a clear perspective of this escarpment containing the town below. The presence of power lines and structures does not significantly undermine the rural character and appearance of this landscape.

12. The proposed development of up to 75 dwellings on the appeal site would transform the currently open and undeveloped landscape character of the site. It's location on a significant part of the escarpment would erode the sense of containment within the landscape defined by the green rim, appearing as a break in the otherwise consistent highest urban extent in this part of the town. As this part of the elevated escarpment is highly visible in local and more distant views across the town, its urbanising effect would be readily apparent.
13. The proposed reduction in the number of dwellings, and resultant stepping away from the highest point of the site would to some degree moderate this impact, reducing the degree of visual intrusion, particularly in more distant views. Also, whilst details are sketchy at this stage, it is possible that the proposed landscaping could to some degree soften the overall appearance of the development. Specifically, the suggested enhancement of the wooded ridgeline could modestly enhance the sense of containment across the escarpment. Also, upper level grassland and extensive structural and ornamental planting within the scheme would be beneficial, particularly as planting matures. However, this would in itself undermine the patchwork effect of the combination of open fields and wooded slopes in this area. More generally, this planting would be unable to disguise built form of this scale in such a prominent location, even when fully mature.
14. This scheme would not break the ridgeline of the green rim. Nonetheless, whilst this has been inferred as a test of sensitivity in previous appeal decisions, this has no basis in policy or guidance. In this case the contribution of the open and natural appearance of all but the lowest levels of the site as part of the visual envelope of the town are important elements of landscape character. Therefore, even taking into account the suggested mitigation measures, the effect of the development would be to visibly extend the built envelope into the clearly defined rural hinterland.
15. The opportunities and constraints to growth within Grantham have been considered in a range of technical studies and policy documents in recent years. Looking specifically at the appeal site, this has consistently been identified as being located within an area of particular sensitivity. For example, the SKLCA states that this area has 'high sensitivity' for employment and residential development, with landscape management objectives including the avoidance of built development on the higher scarp slopes.
16. Further, the South Kesteven Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2011) (2011 Study) and the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2013) assessed a series of sites in Grantham and other areas in terms of their landscape sensitivity and capacity to accommodate development. The 2011 Study included a large area to the south west of the appeal site, area G3, with G3A, which includes the continuation of the scarp slope, identified as having high visual and

landscape sensitivity. In both of these assessments the distinctive scarp slope and ridgeline to the east is identified.

17. The Grantham Capacity and Limits to Growth Study 2015 (GCLGS), prepared as part of the evidence base for the eLP, concludes that "In many locations around the edge of Grantham, particularly to the east and south, capacity is limited by the 'green rim', an attractive, visually prominent escarpment. The study starts with a high level assessment of 'directions for growth' around the existing urban edge. The appeal site falls within Direction 'C' and is illustrated as falling within the urban area, though it appears that this was in error. Overall, whilst part of direction C was identified as being free of strategic constraints, the conclusion states that the 'green rim', with its heritage and landscape constraints, should be avoided.
18. Within the site specific analysis, the appeal site lies close to one of the areas identified as being free from strategic constraints, area 2 to the east of Grantham. However this area is described as 'generally level ground...to the east of the scarp slope, which is the defining characteristic edge of Grantham and forms a distinctive feature'. As such this description appears to relate to the plateau area to the south east. The appeal site is part of the scarp slope and identified as an area of sensitivity outside area 2. The conclusions also state that heritage and landscape facts indicate 'the only potentially suitable land in the Harrowby Lane transport corridor is to the east of Newgate Lane'.
19. The GCLGS is referred to in emerging Policy EN1 as part of the evidence base for assessing the impact of development on landscape. There is no evidence that the examining Inspector disagrees with this approach. I am aware that this is a strategic study assessing large scale allocations only, and that land deemed by this study not suitable for development on a large scale may have the potential to remain suitable for smaller scale development. However, the distinction between large and smaller scale is not clear, with some of the sites identified appearing similar in scale to the appeal site.
20. Finally, the GTA, whilst focusing largely on the urban area, sets out design principles, potential sites for change and limits to growth. The appeal site falls within the area described as particularly sensitive to change, with the defining wider townscape character of this area being 'the views out of the urban settlement to open green and often tree lined ridges'. Further, 'where development would maintain these views, limited expansion could be possible, but where proposals would enclose these views and urbanise the steeper slopes of the ridge they should be resisted'.
21. The range of technical studies are material to the application of relevant policy provisions. Policy SP1 of the South Kesteven Core Strategy (2010) (Core Strategy) sets out that new development proposals in Grantham shall be considered on appropriate sustainable and deliverable brownfield and appropriate greenfield sites. Policy EN1 requires that development must be appropriate to the character and significant natural, historical and cultural attributes and features of the landscape within which it is situated, and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration.
22. Given the landscape constraints identified, and the fact Policy H1 sets out that housing growth will be focused on Grantham, it is almost inevitable that development on any greenfield site on the periphery of the town will result in

some degree of landscape harm. However, in the present case the prominent nature of this part of the green rim in providing a natural boundary to the eastern part of the town is the overriding consideration. Whilst this part of the green rim may not be quite as prominent as the Halls Hill section, much of this eastern section including the appeal site is of importance in framing views in and around the town and is of great sensitivity in landscape and visual terms.

23. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) at paragraph 170 a) refers to the protection and enhancement of 'valued landscapes', though clarifying with bracketed text that this should be 'in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in a development plan'. The concept of the green rim does not relate to any statutory provisions. The GCLGS is referred to as a 'consideration' in emerging Policy EN1 of the eLP when assessing the impact of proposed development on the landscape, thus this concept will not in itself be enshrined in policy. Furthermore, the extent of the green rim is not clearly defined. Nonetheless its presence and sensitivity is clearly apparent in key views in and around the town, and as such this landscape setting of the town has value.
24. Overall, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the landscape character of Grantham. On this basis it is not an 'appropriate greenfield site' as referred to in Policy SP1, and there would be conflict with Policy EN1.

Setting of designated heritage assets

25. The undeveloped hillsides which frame Grantham contribute to the historic character of the town and the setting of a number of designated heritage assets. Consideration must therefore be given to the way in which the appeal site contributes to the setting of the affected heritage assets, in terms of either providing a vantage point from which the significance of the heritage asset can be appreciated, or by providing a foreground or backdrop to views, which contribute to the identified significance.

Belton House and Registered Park and Garden

26. Belton House and the associated 505 ha Registered Park and Garden (RPG) to the north east of the appeal site are both listed Grade I. The parkland landscape of the RPG, associated with the classically designed 17th Century country house with key views across the park, particularly along the south drive and eastern avenue, was designed to enhance the aesthetic qualities of the house. Originally the land beyond the boundaries of the park was a working agricultural landscape that was not specifically designed to contribute to these qualities. However, it did act as a rural backdrop to some of the designed views within the park.
27. The wider setting of these heritage assets was considered in the Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Development (2010) (BHPSS). The Study found that the surrounding landscape's contribution to the significance of the RPG was limited to those areas visible in the views from the key viewing points, such as the viewing platform on the roof of Belton House. This originally enabled the owner and guests to survey the parkland. Whilst the main emphasis of the elevated views gained is along the principle axes to the south and east, this vantage point produces the most extensive views of the countryside beyond. Specifically, on the periphery of these views, the hills and ridges that rise beyond the eastern edge of the RPG are largely unspoilt and are the only visible land beyond the park boundary.

28. The concept of a 'borrowed landscape' does have some resonance with such considerations in that, whilst this was not part of the design composition of the RPG, this backdrop nonetheless supports the sense of an expansive rural setting. Therefore, whilst this rural context is of less significance than the designed views and other aspects of the park, by framing these views this backdrop contributes to the landscape setting of the RPG and Belton House, and is of importance in aesthetic and evidential terms to the significance of these heritage assets.
29. The BHPSS considers the sensitivity of the park to development in terms of the effect on key views. Whilst it appears from the accompanying maps that the appeal site falls into element 2, described as urban development visible from Belton House roof, Bellmount Tower and other points, it appears that this may have been in error. The descriptor for element 1 appears more relevant, that is ground visible from Belton House roof, Bellmount Tower and other points. The photographic evidence provided by the appellant demonstrates that even at a distance of some 3km a significant portion of the upper level of the appeal site, and some of the lower level, can be seen from the roof of Belton House. In these views the extent of the undeveloped green ridge can be seen, and indeed the RPG appears to have a rural setting with the close proximity of the town itself not apparent.
30. The introduction of built development into a landscape seen in views from Belton House roof as almost pristine and undeveloped, would harm the significance that Belton House and the RPG derive from this setting. The reduced scheme of up to 75 units and the additional upper level planting would mean that this development would not be significantly intrusive to the naked eye in views from the Belton House roof, particularly as the suggested ridgeline planting matures. Nonetheless the extension of urban form up the scarp slope would result in a modest degree of visual intrusion and therefore some harm to the setting of Belton House and the RPG. Given the significance of this viewpoint overall I judge this to be moderately harmful.

Bellmount Tower

31. This mid 18th C viewing tower is at the eastern extent of the RPG and is part of the planned landscape. It is Grade II* listed and gains aesthetic and evidential significance from its prominent location at the top of the escarpment from which to view Belton House, the wider RPG, and the wider vista towards the north, west and south. The tower can be seen in distant panoramic views from the west towards the eastern escarpment and the application site, including from the Great Gonerby viewpoints identified earlier. These elements can also be seen together as part of the panoramic view from Belton House rooftop viewing platform. As such, this aspect of the setting of the Tower is of moderate significance.
32. There is no inter-visibility between the Tower and the appeal site itself by virtue of the woodland and intervening curves in the escarpment. Nonetheless the development would represent a small-scale change in the character of the wider context in which the Tower is experienced in some views. As such there would be some modest degree of harm to the significance of this setting.

Harrowby Hall and Arch

33. This country house and garden archway are both Grade II* listed structures, dating from the 17th Century. Their significance derives in part from the evidential value of their countryside setting beyond the urban extent of

Grantham, though the degree of physical separation has been considerably eroded by the expansion of Grantham in the second half of the 20th Century. They are located at a high point on the escarpment, around 600m to the south of the appeal site, though their presence is somewhat concealed by the fact that they are within a dip at the edge of the wider plateau and hence not visible from a great distance. The fields around the Hall and the access lane contribute to the rural setting of these heritage assets and hence the significance of their setting.

34. I understand that consent has been granted to convert the Hall itself into six dwellings. This could result in some domestication of its immediate setting, though there is little evidence before me on this point. Overall, my view is that these assets are sufficiently distant and concealed from the appeal site such that its development would not diminish the sense of rural approach and setting of these heritage assets to any great degree. Therefore any harm would be negligible.

St Wulfram's Church

35. This is a Grade I listed medieval parish church in the centre of Grantham. Its main feature is the slender crocketed spire which stands at 282 feet 6 inches from the ground to the top of the cross. The spire towers above the relatively modest and consistently scaled town and is visible within and across the valley. As such it is a clear indicator of the town's medieval origins and has been appreciated as a landmark for hundreds of years. Whilst the nature of the rural backdrop has in some areas been eroded, in extended views across the town from Westry Corner in Barrowby (LVIA Viewpoint 17), and from trains arriving and leaving to/from the north of the station, the spire is still seen against the green backdrop of the open fields and woodland of which the appeal site forms a part. As such, whilst these views are long distance, this setting provides evidential, aesthetic and historic value, thereby contributing to significance.
36. Whilst the development would not seek to compete with the Church spire, its effect would be to breach the existing extent of built form on the eastern side of the town and introduce development on the open green space above the settlement. Specifically, the development would be seen in the backdrop of views of the church spire in some views from the west. As this forms part of the rural setting of St Wulfram's there would be harm to the significance that the church derives from its setting. Whilst this would to some degree be mitigated by the reduction in the scale of the proposal and the suggested structure planting, some visibility and therefore modest harm to significance, would nonetheless remain.
37. Summing up, I have identified the value of the eastern escarpment in providing a green backdrop to enable the appreciation of the significance of a number of important heritage assets. Whilst this landscape is not entirely pristine, and the appeal scheme would represent a relatively small-scale incursion with a large swath of this historic backdrop remaining, this change would undermine the largely unspoilt nature and integrity of this feature. Furthermore, development in this sensitive location may also set an unacceptable precedent for the future. I have identified a modest degree of harm to the significance of the setting of most of these designated heritage assets, with a moderate level of harm ascribed to the significance of the setting of Belton House and the RPG.
38. As a result, there would be further conflict with Policy EN1 of the Core Strategy which refers to the assessment of proposals in relation to historic character, and

patterns and attributes of the landscape. I have also found further evidence that the appeal site is not an 'appropriate' greenfield site with reference to the provisions of Policy SP1. Whilst not referred to in the Decision Notice, also of relevance is Policy SAP11 of the South Kesteven Site Allocations and Policies DPD (2014). This refers to the need for proposals to demonstrate their impact on the setting of Belton House and Park, with any adverse effects removed and/or mitigated.

39. The conservation of heritage assets and their setting is a matter to which I must give considerable importance and weight. Considered cumulatively, my view is that the degree of harm overall would be less than substantial as referred to in the Framework paragraph 193. Less than substantial harm still requires clear and convincing justification and in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 196, this must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Framework paragraph 196 considerations

40. The scheme would provide for the extension of and access to the green infrastructure corridor which currently runs from the north through Londonthorpe and Alma Woods. Whilst such provision could be made without the appeal scheme, it is unlikely that this would be a commercially realistic prospect. The scheme would also provide new active leisure and play opportunities on the site itself, and the opportunity to connect to the wider footpath network. Such biodiversity and recreation gains in my view attract moderate weight.
41. The site is in a sustainable location, within walking distance of a range of services including schools, health, recreation and shopping facilities, and public transport opportunities. It is also accessible and largely unconstrained. However, these points could be made about many urban fringe sites and as such these considerations are of limited weight.
42. The scheme would provide a sustainable urban drainage system which could address the existing surface water issues raised by interested parties, and seek to ensure that the drainage solution for the site itself is satisfactory. The scheme may provide some betterment of the pre-existing groundwater run off issues. However, as such a scheme would be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, I regard this benefit as minor.
43. The development seeks to promote high quality design with a strong sense of place. The illustrative masterplan and Design and Access Statement set the framework and guidelines for a landscape led approach to development, with the suggested design approach having strong regard to established local vernacular. I understand that the scheme was identified by the Architects Journal as 'noteworthy' when submitted. Should the appeal be successful, a requirement for the reserved matters application to accord with these design principles could be conditioned, as suggested in draft condition 4. Nonetheless it remains that this is an outline application, with no certainty that the final scheme would accord with these design criteria, other than in principle.
44. The Framework paragraph 131 indicates that 'great weight' should be given to outstanding or innovative design which promotes high levels of sustainability, or helps raise the standard of design more generally in an area. However, it is not possible to conclude at this stage that such distinction could be achieved by the appeal scheme. I therefore attach limited weight to this point.

45. The fact that the development of the appeal site would open up additional view-points from which to appreciate heritage assets such as the spire of St Wulfram's is a minor point. Similarly, the suggested enhancement of the upper level planting of the site would have a minor impact on the appearance of the green rim and the setting of these heritage assets. These points do not therefore weigh significantly in favour of the appeal scheme.
46. Grantham has been identified as the main focus for growth in South Kesteven. The appeal scheme would therefore support the Council's endeavours to boost the supply of housing, and the provision of affordable housing. This is a benefit at a time when Councils are facing increasing pressure for housing growth.
47. On this matter the parties disagree as to whether South Kesteven Council is able to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. The appellant's position is that this should be calculated using the local housing need figure. On this basis, and with reference to a number of areas of disagreement with the Council in terms of the assumptions underpinning supply, the appellant believes the current supply to be 3.65 years. In contrast, the Council's view is that housing supply should be considered using the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), as this is the basis on which the eLP is being examined. Using an objectively assessed need of 650 dwellings per annum, and the 'Liverpool' approach to recovering past shortfall in housing delivery, the current supply is considered to be 5.95 years.
48. I have given careful consideration to the evidence on housing land supply. If I were to take the appellant's position, a scheme for up to 75 dwellings, of which 35% would be affordable, would make a useful contribution to the apparent deficit. Furthermore, some of the deliverable sites in the Council's 5 year supply are substantial sustainable urban extensions (SUE's), and there are some sizeable allocated sites. Smaller and less infrastructure heavy sites such as this could support the delivery of new housing at pace. Such considerations weigh moderately in favour of the scheme.
49. Pulling these considerations together, the public benefits of the scheme would include the provision of additional housing in an area where, if the appellant is correct, a five year supply of housing land is not currently in place. The scheme would also provide biodiversity and recreation gains of moderate weight. Other benefits including the design quality and improvements to drainage are of modest weight.
50. The Framework makes it clear that when considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. In this case I have found harm to the significance of the setting of a number of designated heritage assets. Three of these are listed Grade I and are therefore of exceptional interest, and the other listed Grade II* and is therefore a particularly important building of more than special interest. In each case I have found that the proposed development would introduce some degree of harm to the setting in which the asset is experienced by virtue of the prominent location of the appeal site as part of the eastern escarpment or green rim. Even when considered cumulatively, my view is that the public benefits set out above are not sufficient to outweigh this harm. They do not provide clear and convincing justification for the identified harm to significance and therefore development should be resisted.

51. The Framework footnote 7 indicates that where local planning authorities cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land the provisions of paragraph 11 d) apply. That is where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse effects of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. However, as I have identified harm in relation to policies seeking to protect designated heritage assets, these provisions do not apply as such policies provide a clear reason for refusing the development. The application therefore falls to be determined in accordance with the usual Section 38(6) test, that is in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Other matters

Comparison with other sites

52. The high level of inter-visibility across the town means that in many locations around the edge of Grantham the capacity for growth without causing some degree of landscape or heritage harm is limited. On this basis the appellant suggests that there is significant precedent for the appeal site to be developed. Specifically, the appellant notes that sites identified as sensitive to change and with low capacity for development have subsequently been assessed as suitable for development in the 2015 SHLAA (as set out in the appellant's Statement of Case, Appendix 7).
53. Looking at these sites, the Northern Quadrant to the south of Great Gonerby, does have some sensitivity, though the area visible from the roof of Belton House appears to be excluded from the allocation. It is also on part of the green rim, though on a slightly lower less complete section, in comparison to the eastern side. I also understand that this is a long-standing allocation that will deliver substantial infrastructure benefits, including a link road. Similarly, whilst the southern quadrant located beyond the south eastern extent of Grantham would be located on part of the eastern green rim, the benefit of the Grantham Southern Relief Road (A52 Bypass) is a benefit of substantial weight.
54. The Manthorpe site, has been the subject of two appeals, the first in 2012 for 1,000 dwellings and the second in 2017 for 480 dwellings¹. In relation to the larger scheme in views west from Bellmount Tower towards Belton House the site is visible, and on this basis it was considered to be part of the setting of these heritage assets. On this basis the proposed scheme was considered to reduce their dominance over the countryside. The development potential of this area was considered in the GCLGS. It concluded that there may be some potential for development within the area south of Belton Lane and west of the railway line, below the 65m contour.
55. The more recent appeal scheme appears to respond to these findings. The Inspector concluded that whilst there would be some inter-visibility between the appeal site and designated heritage assets, this was seen against the back drop of the character of the wider area changing, with pockets of built development visible in all directions from Bellmount Tower. As such there would be no harm to the relationship between the heritage assets and their wider context.

¹ APP/E2530/W/17/3173367

56. Little consideration was given to the effect of the development on views from Belton House roof. However, it appears that the location of this site on comparatively lower level land within the 'bowl' of Grantham means that it does not have a comparative level of visual sensitivity to the current appeal site.
57. The other sites include Southern Gateway Employment, Low Road Barrowby and Easthorpe Road Great Gonerby, all of which appear to be located largely on plateau areas rather than the green rim. They are therefore not directly comparable to the appeal site.
58. In addition, the appellant refers to similarities between the current scheme and the Somerby Hill appeal site², a proposal for up to 250 dwellings. Some technical studies refer to the importance of the area containing this site to the setting of the town. However, the Inspector states that whilst the site is on rising land, it sits further down within the landscape than Halls Hill. Also, its character is significantly influenced by its immediate context of residential development to the west, the Barracks, and nearby commercial and industrial units, with a proposed significantly sized SUE directly to the south. When compared with the appeal site, my view is that it is not so obviously part of the green rim, and as such any landscape and heritage harm is less significant. Furthermore, the planned developments will alter its setting, such that it is a transitional area with less of a clear role in highlighting the rural landscape and heritage context of the town than the current appeal site.

Planning Obligation

59. A signed planning obligation by unilateral undertaking has been provided. In the event of planning permission being granted this would require that not less than 35% of the dwellings on site be affordable, with a split of 60% for rent and 40% for sale. Other obligations would secure contributions towards education at a new or existing primary school, an NHS contribution towards the upgrade of the Harrowby Lane Surgery, a contribution to the cost of procuring a TRO to extend the existing 30mph speed limit along Harrowby Lane, the provision of onsite public open space (POS) and the procurement of a management plan for the POS. I consider these obligations to be directly related to the development, necessary and fairly and reasonably related to its scale and kind. This would therefore comply with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 and the Framework paragraph 56.

Conclusion

60. I have found that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the landscape setting of the town, and that there would be less than substantial harm to the significance of the setting of a number of designated heritage assets. For these reasons, and as material considerations do not indicate that I should conclude other than in accordance with the development plan, the appeal should fail.

AJ Mageean

INSPECTOR

² APP/E2530/W/16/3163514

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mr R Moore	Planning consultant
Mr T Reid	Landscape adviser
Mr G Boyce	Design adviser
Ms J Upton	Heritage adviser

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Mr P Moore	Planning Officer
Ms S Brannon	Policy Adviser (part attendance)
Mr I Wright	Heritage Adviser (part attendance)

INTERESTED PERSONS:

Cllr G Chivers	Ward Member, Belmont
Mr P Armstrong	Clerk to Parish Council
Mr Claxton	Local resident
Mr C Webb	Local resident
Mrs S Webb	Local resident

DOCUMENTS

- 1 Signed Section 106 Agreement imposing planning obligations on land at Harrowby Lane, Grantham.
- 2 South Kesteven Local Plan Examination Draft Action Points.
- 3 South Kesteven District Local Plan Examination, Inspector's letter 11 June 2019.
- 4 South Kesteven District Council, Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment 2018-2023 (March 2019).
- 5 South Kesteven District Council, Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment 2019-2024 (May 2019).
- 6 Appendix 2 – SKDC: 5 Year Housing Supply Analysis (REV C) (*submitted after the hearing*).
- 7 South Kesteven 5 Year Housing Land Statement as at 1 April 2010 (*submitted after the hearing*).
- 8 Appendix 2 – SKDC: 5 Year Housing Supply Analysis (REV D) (*submitted after the hearing*).