

PLANNING REPORT

Site Name : Land rear of the Old Cottage, 32 Church Street.

Site Location : Elsham, North Lincolnshire, DN20 0RG.

Heritage Assessment: Church Street.



Ms Jane Leach
December 2020

Job Number C/0043/1

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Document Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Heritage Designations	3
3. Planning Policy and Guidance – Heritage Setting	6
4. Heritage Setting Guidance.	8
5. Case Law on Setting and Designated Heritage Assets	11
6. Description.	14
7. Historic Record.	18
8. Assessment of Significance	21
9. Heritage Impact Assessment.	22
10. Conclusions	23

Sources used in this report



1. Introduction.

- 1.1. This Heritage Assessment accompanies the planning application for the erection of a single detached dwelling at land to the rear of 32 Church Street, Elsham. This report should be read in conjunction with the Planning and Design & Access Statement which accompanies the application for comprehensive details of design and design philosophy.
- 1.2. The report was commissioned by Ms Jane Leach and has been prepared by Neil Boughey BA (Hons), LLB Laws, DipTP, MRTPI. It has been produced using the Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (April 2008) and Advice Note 10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage (February 2018). A site survey was undertaken on 14 December 2020. Photography was undertaken with the integral camera of an Iphone X, the weather conditions being overcast to sunny. This allowed assessment to be undertaken in the context of "winter views" where deciduous leaf cover will be at a minimum and hence the assessment considers the proposal at a time of the year where screening etc will be at its barest and the proposal site would be most exposed.
- 1.3. The application site is on the north eastern edge of the village of Elsham, situated approximately 3.5 miles (5.5 km) and 8 miles (13 km) from the centres of the market towns of Brigg and Barton-upon-Humber respectively, and 15 miles (14 km) east of the town of Scunthorpe via the M180 motorway. To the north of the site lies the curtilage of the Grade 2 Listed cottage at 32 Church St, and the rear curtilage of No 30 Church St, to the west the extensive rear garden to a large detached dwelling at 28 Church St. To the south an undeveloped area of tree lined grassland. The Eastern boundary is on to Front Street and open countryside beyond.



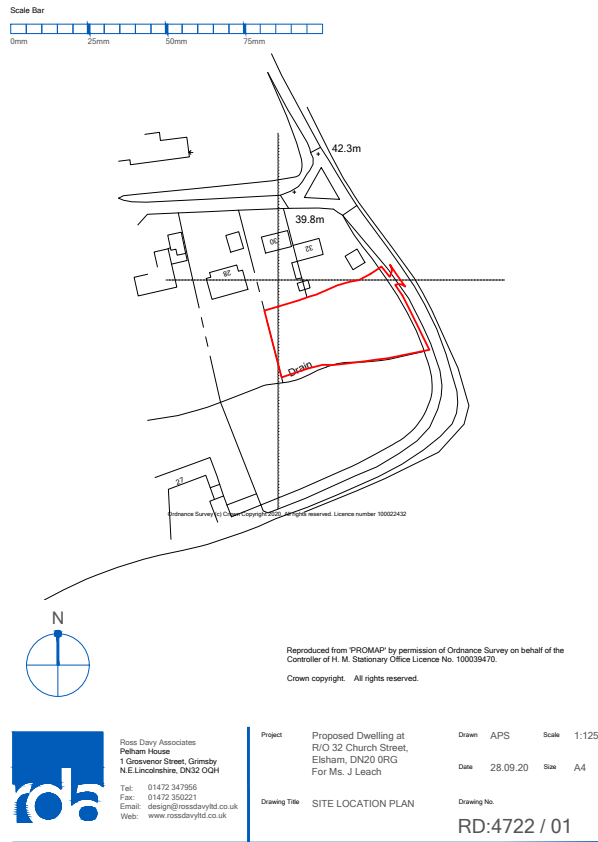


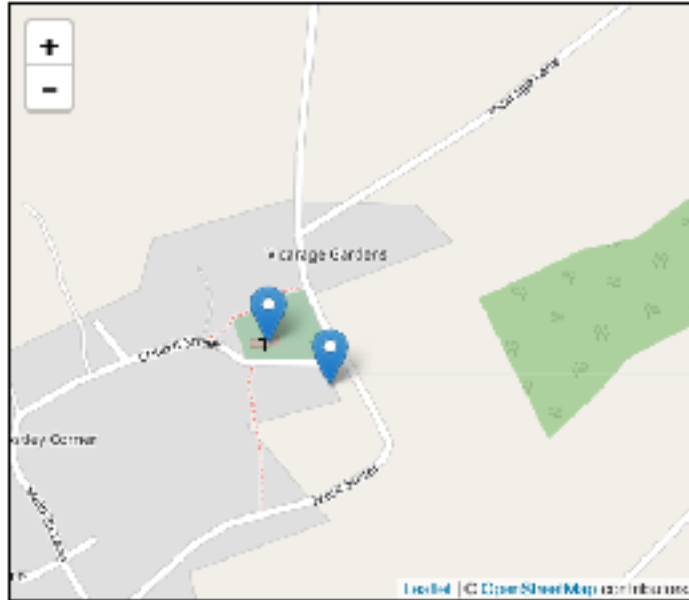
Fig 1 – Site Location.

1.4. Information on the history of the site has been drawn from a number of sources including historical map regression. The list of sources used in the preparation of the report is presented on p24.



2. Heritage Designations.

2.1. The locations of Designated Heritage assets in proximity to the application site are shown below:



2.2. The Church of All Saints to the immediate north of the proposal site is a Grade 2* listed building. Grade 2* buildings are considered as particularly important buildings of more than special interest, only around 5.8% of listed buildings are Grade 2*. The list entry (list entry number 1103684) reads as follows:

“Parish church. C11 - C12 origins to tower, nave and chancel, with C13 - C14 north transept and alterations to tower, including west door. Restorations of 1873/4 by W Scott Champion included extensive rebuilding of nave, chancel and transept. Limestone and ironstone rubble and ashlar with limestone ashlar dressings. Slate roof. West tower with west entrance, 3-bay nave with single-bay north transept (now vestry) and 2-bay chancel. 2-stage tower: large diagonal off-set buttresses, chamfered plinth. Very fine door has pointed arch of 4 orders with fillet mouldings on 5 orders of filleted shafts with naturalistic foliate capitals, hood-mould and headstops; string course above. Buttresses flanking door each have recessed C13 carved relief panels, that to right with angel and 5 naked figures, that to left also with figures but much weathered. North and south lancets to first-stage. String course cut by pointed 2-light west window with C19 geometrical tracery, original hood-mould and headstops. 1896 clockface above. Square-headed 2- light belfry openings containing C19 pierced ashlar tablets. Moulded string-course, coped parapet. Low pyramidal spire with wrought-iron finial.



Nave: south side has restored lancet and C19 pointed 2-light windows with curvilinear tracery, hood-moulds and mainly original headstops. Pointed 2-light north window with C19 geometrical tracery, original hood-mould and headstops. Transept: C19 pointed chamfered north door with square-headed traceried single-light window and pedimented coped gable above; C14 square-headed 2-light trefoiled east and west windows; re-used Romanesque moulded stone in north wall. Chancel: round-arched chamfered north door with plain hood-mould and carved stops; restored pointed 2-light windows with C19 tracery, hood-moulds and headstops, some of the latter original. String course and coped parapet throughout. Interior. Small round-headed tower arch with roll moulding and restored imposts; small blocked basket-arched opening above with chamfered jambs. Former opening to transept has double- chamfered segmental arch, chamfered jambs and plain imposts. Pointed piscina to south side of chancel. C19 fittings. Former medieval font in tower with plain octagonal bowl and cylindrical shaft.”

- 2.3. 32 Church St is a Grade 2 listed building (although there appears to be some disparity as the Listing is out of date in describing this as No.1 Church Street, as it was renumbered as no. 32 approximately 20 years ago). Grade 2 buildings are deemed of special interest; 91.7% of all listed buildings are in this class. The list entry (list entry number 1464098) reads as follows:

“GV II House. Probably early C17 origins, refronted 1696, converted to pair of cottages in mid C19. Renovations of 1979-80 included rebuilding left gable end and conversion to single house. Red brick with some re-used limestone ashlar blocks to right gable end. Pantile roof. 2-room central-entrance plan with continuous rear outshut. 2 storeys, 3 first-floor windows. Tall moulded brick plinth. Plain recessed board door to left of centre beneath segmental header arch. Former entrance to right with C20 2-light sliding sash below similar arch. 3-light ground-floor sliding sashes with horizontal glazing bars beneath segmental header arches; top of plinth forms window sills. 3-course brick first-floor band with central cogged course. First floor: two 3-light sliding sashes and small central casement above a recessed painted datestone with ovolo-moulded brick surround. End stacks. Right return has similar plinth, first-floor band and 2-course band at eaves level with dentilled lower course; left return rebuilt with similar details. Attic casements to gables. Interior: details date from C19 and C20. Renovations revealed original white-washed wall behind present front, and remains of original thatching..”



- 2.4. Neither the list entry for the church nor the house make mention of any group value and there are no other listed buildings nearby.
- 2.5. The proposal site is not located within a designated conservation area.
- 2.6. Given the proximity of the proposal site to the Grade 2* listed church and Grade 2 listed dwelling, this heritage assessment has been undertaken to assess impacts on the setting of these designated heritage assets.



3. Planning Policy and Guidance – Heritage Setting

3.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

3.2. Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2019) states the following in paragraph 193;

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

3.3. NPPF also states the following in paragraph 196;

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

3.4. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

3.5. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“the Listed Building Act”) requires decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

3.6. The statutory duty is reflected in the policy of the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy adopted June 2011.



3.7. The North Lincolnshire Core Strategy June 2011.

- 3.8. Policy CS6: Historic Environment aims to ensure that North Lincolnshire's important sites and areas of historic and built heritage value are protected, conserved and enhanced in order that they continue to make an important contribution to the area's scene and the quality of life for local people. Policy CS6 provides, inter alia, that:

"CS6: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

The council will seek to protect, conserve and enhance North Lincolnshire's historic environment, as well as the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance including historic buildings, conservation areas, listed buildings (both statutory and locally listed), registered parks and gardens, scheduled ancient monuments and archaeological remains.

All new development must respect and enhance the local character and distinctiveness of the area in which it would be situated, particularly in areas with high heritage value."



4. Heritage Setting Guidance.

- 4.1. Heritage Setting guidance is proved in the Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition).
- 4.2. The Good Practice Advice states that its purpose is to provide information on good practice to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the NPPF and the related guidance in the national Planning Practice Guide (PPG).

It states that it should be read in conjunction with Good Practice Advice notes 1 (The Historic Environment in Local Plans) and 2 (Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment). This good practice advice acknowledges the primacy of the NPPF and PPG, supporting the implementation of national policy, but does not constitute a statement of Government policy itself, nor does it seek to prescribe a single methodology or particular data sources.

4.3. Guidance – Settings and Views

- 4.4. Part 1 of the Historic England Guidance, ‘Settings and Views’, refers to NPPF Glossary; ‘Setting of a heritage asset’ which describes ‘setting’ as follows;

- *The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral*
- *A thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset under consideration and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.*
- *Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not*



- *The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.*

4.5. The Guidance recommends the following broad approach to assessment, undertaken as a series of steps that apply proportionately to the complexity of the case, from straightforward to complex:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

4.6. The Guidance states the following;

'Development proposals involving the setting of single and less significant assets and straightforward effects on setting may best be handled through a simple check list approach and can usefully take the form of a short narrative statement for each assessment stage'.



4.7. The Guidance suggested checklist, considers the significance of the heritage asset itself and then the contribution made by its setting as follows;

The asset's physical surroundings

- Topography
- Aspect
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains)
- Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces
- Formal design e.g. hierarchy, layout
- Orientation and aspect
- Historic materials and surfaces
- Green space, trees and vegetation
- Openness, enclosure and boundaries
- Functional relationships and communications
- History and degree of change over time



5. Case Law on Setting and Designated Heritage Assets.

5.1. I consider it useful to state the current legal position regarding issues relating to impact on the setting of designated built heritage assets in planning decisions.

5.2. The High Court recently handed down judgment in *R.(oao James Hall and Company Limited) v City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Co-Operative Group Limited [2019] EWHC 2899*. Her Honour Judge Belcher found for the Claimant on all grounds of challenge. In doing so, the Learned Judge clarified a number of important points concerning heritage policies.

5.3. In addressing harm, the Court held there are only 3 categories of harm:

“34. In my judgment the three categories of harm recognised in the NPPF are clear. There is substantial harm, less than substantial harm and no harm. There are no other grades or categories of harm, and it is inevitable that each of the categories of substantial harm, and less than substantial harm will cover a broad range of harm ...”

Hence the Court determined that even limited or negligible harm was enough to fall within the bracket of ‘less than substantial harm’.

5.4. In relation to degrees of harm and planning judgement, the Court determined:

“34.... It will be a matter of planning judgement as to the point at which a particular degree of harm moves from substantial to less than substantial, but it is equally the case that there will be a number of types of harm that will fall into less than substantial, including harm which might otherwise be described as very much less than substantial. There is no intermediate bracket at the bottom end of the less than substantial category of harm for something which is limited, or even negligible, but nevertheless has a harmful impact. The fact that the harm may be limited or negligible will plainly go to the weight to be given to it as recognised in Paragraph 193 NPPF. “



- 5.5. It is therefore clear that while most harm will fall within the category of “less than substantial harm”, it is the weight that is given to limited or negligible harm in the planning balance against public benefit that is commensurately reduced. It is not the case that less than substantial harm is given overriding weight in the planning balance irrespective of degree of harm or weight of public benefit.



6. Description.

- 6.1. The proposal site is a semi maintained grassed area surrounded by a variety of tall mature hedgerow and mature trees, located immediately south of the main dwelling (which is the Grade 2 listed dwelling at 32 Church Street). The site changes in levels, sloping gently east – west.



Fig2 – view looking north across the proposal site from southern perimeter. Rear facing of Grade 2 listed dwelling visible in background behind hedge line.

- 6.2. The provision of a new access into the proposal site to access the new dwelling will create a new vista across the proposal site, albeit that this will be a passing glimpsed view through a break in the existing tall hedgerow, for motorists and other road users. As can be seen in figure 3, because the proposed new dwelling will be set back towards the western area of the site, the additional viewpoint created will present an uninterrupted view onto the rear of the Grade 2 Listed Dwelling at 32 Church St.





Fig 3 –View looking north west into the site from the proposed new access off Front St, outbuildings to 32 Church St prominent in foreground, rear of Graded 2 Listed dwelling (roofline and chimney) just visible in background.

6.3. The proposal site, in the context of the Grade 2* listed church, is to the south, behind the existing frontage dwellings on the south side of Church St. Due to intervening topography, the Grade 2* Listed church is significantly elevated from the proposal site. A view from the church entrance, to replicate a perspective looking across the wider landscape and down towards the proposal sites illustrates that there are no views onto the proposal site, existing dwellings, existing trees and planting, and the difference in site levels completely obscuring any views from the church down onto the proposal site.



Fig 4 – view from church entrance, south east across the proposal site, existing dwellings on Church St just visible in background, no gaps or breaks in the built frontage allow views into the proposal site.



- 6.4. Views from the church entrance onto Church Street again illustrate that views onto the proposal site are obscured by the existing built frontage and existing mature trees and hedges.



Fig 5 – view from entrance to church yard looking south east towards proposal site through only obvious gap in built frontage. Existing treeline visible in background, all views onto proposal site obscured.

- 6.5. As one walks in an easterly direction from the Grade 2* Listed Church of All Saints along Church View to its junction with Front St, again the existing built frontage obscures any views into the proposal site.



Fig 6 – view from Church Street looking east, approximately 100m west from front of no.32 Church St.



- 6.6. Viewing the proposal site from an approaching view along Front St from the south east, existing tall mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees obscure all views across the proposal site. The only change proposed, a gap in this hedgerow to create a site access, is assessed at para 6.2 and Fig.3 above.



Fig 7 – view onto proposal site across from approximately 100m south along Front St, looking north west across existing hedgerow.

- 6.7. The wide view across the site from the south west, at the entrance to a large detached dwelling at 27 Front St, again shows that existing tree cover entirely obscures views onto the proposal site.



Fig 8 – view looking South east across site from access to 27 Front St.



7. Historic Record.

- 7.1. The name Elsham originates with the Anglo-Saxons that once inhabited these areas. In fact it is one of the few Saxon-named settlements amongst the mainly Danish villages in the area. The village is referred to as Ellesham on the common seal of William De Barton, the fourth named prior of Elsham Priory who died in 1303, the entry in the Domesday Book however quotes it as Elesham.
- 7.2. Elsham falls within the Central Lincolnshire Vale National Landscape Character Area (NCA). The Central Lincolnshire Vale is a long, linear NCA which runs south from the Humber Estuary to the Fens and comprises the broad, low-lying vale between the Lincolnshire Wolds and the Lincolnshire Edge. It is a very gently undulating landscape, becoming flat and near to sea level in the Ancholme Valley in the north and on the edge of the Fens in the south. The scarp slope of the Wolds in the east provides a strong visual boundary for the northern half of the Vale and north around Elsham these hills cross into the Vales rising around 90 m above the flats of the River Ancholme's flood plain.
- 7.3. In terms of settlement pattern, the National Landscape Character profile for the Central Lincolnshire Vale describes a deeply rural, tranquil landscape with sparsely distributed small nucleated settlements and isolated farmsteads linked by an extensive but sparse network of minor roads and tracks with few major roads.
- 7.4. Reference to historic mapping shows how the proposal site has developed. The 1886 Ordnance Survey map illustrates the site, and shows that the footprint of 32 Church St has not changed since that time.





Fig 9 – Extract from 1886 OS Map.

7.5. The site remains unchanged by 1908 although the scale of new development on the south western edge of the village is apparent.



Fig 10 – Extract from 1908 OS Map.



- 7.6. The mapping series over roughly the next 42 years up to 1950 still shows no change to the site layout or surrounds. It is therefore the case that all relevant existing structures surrounding the proposal site post date 1958.

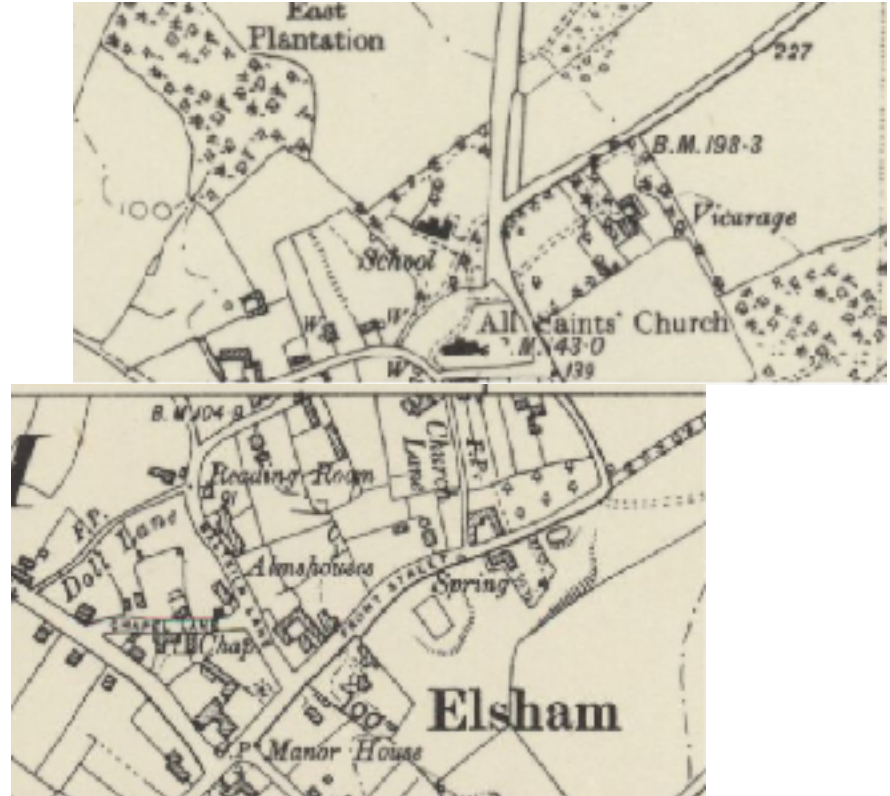


Fig 11 – Extract from 1950 OS Map.



8. Assessment of Significance.

- 8.1. Physical Impacts on Listed Buildings and other Heritage Assets within the proposal site.
- 8.2. There are no statutorily listed buildings or other designated heritage assets on the site that will be altered or directly impacted or affected by the proposal
- 8.3. Contribution made by site to setting.
- 8.4. As the NPPF makes clear, setting comprises ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’ (Annexe 2 Glossary). Consequently, the contribution of setting goes beyond purely visual relationships to take in other aspects of a Site’s use. The NPPF also notes, the ‘extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.’
- 8.5. The impacts of the proposal on the setting of the Grade 2* listed Church of All Saints and the Grade 2 dwelling at 32 Church St has been assessed using the guidance contained within the Historic England document, Good Practice Advice in Planning – Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017), which recommends a staged approach to assessment.
- 8.6. The Site and its immediate environs share typical features of settlements in the area identified by the Landscape Character Area profile, i.e. a nucleated village.
- 8.7. From the historic mapping series it does appear that the proposal site was functionally connected with the dwelling at 32 Church St, although I understand at some point it fell into separate ownership and the current owner/the applicant subsequently acquired title.
- 8.8. Due to existing mature perimeter planting and built frontages along Church St, there is absolute separation and hence no inter visibility between the Grade 2* Listed Church and the proposal site to the south. There is inter visibility between the proposal site and the Grade 2 Listed Cottage but only from within the curtilage of 32 Church St at what is proposed to be the curtilage of a separate new dwelling. There are no public views within or into the proposal site at present, and opening up a new vista in creating an access to the new dwelling will only give rise to a limited new view onto the rear of the dwelling at 32 Church St, which will not be interrupted by the siting of the new dwelling.



9. Heritage Impact Assessment.

- 9.1. Due to the demonstrable absence of any inter visibility between the proposal site and the Grade 2* Listed Church, as described at para. 8.8 above, there will be **no harm** in terms of impact on the setting of the Grade 2* Listed Church of All Saints.
- 9.2. The introduction of a new dwelling on the proposal site will undoubtedly represents some change to the site in the context of the setting of the Grade 2 listed dwelling at 32 Church St, and hence the impact of the proposal must be considered as **less than substantial harm** in terms of national planning guidance as defined at NPPF para 196.
- 9.3. The impact of the proposal must be balanced by the positive impact the proposal will make in terms of making a modest contribution to meeting the acknowledged lack of a deliverable 5 year housing supply in the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy area. The proposal will provide a contemporary dwelling externally designed in a local vernacular farmhouse style, contextually typical of those found in rural villages in this part of Lincolnshire. In the context of the “Bradford” case discussed in Section 5 above, the minimal impact of the proposed new dwelling to me indicates that “harm” should be given minimal weight against public benefit when considered in the “planning balance”.
- 9.4. The retention and enhancement of the existing tree and hedgerow planting along the entire site perimeter, particularly along the northern boundary separating the proposal site and the curtilage of 32 Church St, will maintain and strengthen a visual buffer between the proposal site and surrounding routes, and between the proposal site and the Grade 2 listed dwelling at 32 Church St. The landscape and planting concept for the proposal will be integrally based on principles of enhancing and improving biodiversity throughout the site, such gains must also be weighed positively in the “planning balance”.
- 9.5. The pastoral setting provided by the open fields to the east and south of the proposal site will not be affected.



10. Conclusions

- 10.1. This Heritage Statement assesses the impact on the proposal on the Grade 2* Listed Church of All Saints and Grade 2 Listed dwelling at 32 Church St.
- 10.2. In summary, due to the demonstrable absence of any inter visibility between the proposal site and the Grade 2* Listed Church there will be no impact on the building or its setting.
- 10.3. The introduction of a new dwelling on the proposal site will undoubtedly represent some change to the site in the context of the setting of the Grade 2 listed dwelling at 32 Church St, and hence the impact of the proposal must be considered as less than substantial harm, offset by the benefit the proposal will make in terms of making a modest contribution to meeting the acknowledged lack of a deliverable 5 year housing supply in the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy area.



SOURCES USED IN THE REPORT

- Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition).
- National Character Area Profile 43:Lincolnshire Wolds, Natural England 2015.
- <https://maps.nls.uk/os/25inch-england-and-wales/>

