

APPLICATION NO	PA/2019/326
APPLICANT	Mr Jim Colver
DEVELOPMENT	Outline planning permission for the erection of one dwelling with all matters reserved (re-submission of PA/2018/248)
LOCATION	Land adjacent to Saffron Garth, High Street, Belton, DN9 1NL
PARISH	Belton
WARD	Axholme Central
CASE OFFICER	Leanne Pogson-Wray
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION	Refuse permission
REASONS FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE	Officer discretion (significant public interest)

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework: Paragraph 10 states, so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 11 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Paragraph 79 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

- the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside; or
- where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or
- where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting; or
- the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling.

Paragraph 122 states that decisions should support development that makes an efficient use of land, taking into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting.

Paragraph 127 states that proposals should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Paragraph 130 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

North Lincolnshire Local Plan: Policies DS1, RD2, T1, T2, T19, LC7, LC14, H5 and H8 apply.

North Lincolnshire Core Strategy: Policies CS1, CS2, CS3, CS5, CS6, CS7 and CS8 apply.

CONSULTATIONS

Highways: Advise conditions.

Severn Trent Water Ltd: Makes comments regarding the method of drainage. Advises an informative.

HER: Recommends refusal. This area is designated for its unique historic landscape, retaining the pattern of ancient open strip fields and early enclosures surrounding the villages on the Isle; the application site is located within Belton Open Field, one of the best preserved areas of the Historic Landscape in the Isle.

The application area lies outside the development boundary and the proposed development would be an unacceptable visual intrusion and extension of the built environment into the historic landscape.

The Historic Environment Record recommends refusal of planning permission as the development would adversely affect the character, appearance and setting of the historic landscape and is potentially damaging to the archaeological interest of the site contrary to the NPPF, local planning policies LC14, LC7 and RD2, and Core Strategy policy CS6.

Environmental Health: Following submission of a screening assessment form, advise a contamination monitoring condition.

Ecology: No ecological surveys required. Sensitive working methods will be required to avoid harm to hedgehogs, badgers and nesting birds. Biodiversity enhancements would be required.

PARISH COUNCIL

Object to the proposal as it is backland development and would encroach onto Belton Fields; this application is outside the village plan. There would be an increase in traffic onto the narrow bridleway and the character of the area would be changed.

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by site and press notice. Over 20 letters of objection have been received raising the following material issues:

- encroachment onto the historic Belton strip fields/area of Historic Landscape

- access is inadequate (width, no passing place, exiting onto A161 safety issues, highway safety)
- impact on the character of the area
- outside the development boundary
- backland development
- would encourage other developments on green space
- development should not be allowed to encroach onto Belton Fields, which serves as a green site for the community and visitors to the area
- no significant differences to the previous application for two dwellings (PA/2018/248), reduction to one dwelling does not change fundamental issues
- one dwelling does not address the issue of housing supply
- concerns regarding flooding
- poor surface of the track would be made worse with an additional dwelling
- infrastructure is over-stretched
- impact on amenity
- impact on wildlife.

Two letters of support have been received suggesting the response regarding historic landscape is outdated and should not be a blanket over the whole LC14 area but preserve the historic features. The site could fall into decline and it is in a sustainable location. A passing place would be a beneficial contribution.

ASSESSMENT

This application was deferred at a previous meeting of the planning committee to enable members to visit the site prior to making a decision.

The application site is a vacant piece of grassland accessed by Mann Lane, a track running to the north of the site, exiting onto High Street. An access also runs to the east of the site; however, this access had been deemed to be unacceptable to the Highways department. The site is very large with an area in excess of 0.3 hectares. The site is located just outside the development boundary, which runs to the rear of the gardens of the dwellings on High Street to the east. The site also lies within the Area of Historic Landscape of the Isle of Axholme (LC14). Outline planning permission is being sought for the erection of one dwelling.

Planning permission was previously sought for two dwellings on the site under PA/2018/248, which was withdrawn following Highways' concerns. Under this previous application access was proposed via the track to the east of the site. The concerns from Highways related to the inability of two vehicles to pass each other which could cause vehicles to sit on, or reverse onto, a principal traffic route. The application was withdrawn

following these concerns. This resubmitted application is for a single dwelling with a re-sited access.

The main issues in determining this application are whether the proposed development is acceptable in principle in terms of development in the open countryside, whether the proposal constitutes sustainable development, and whether there would be an adverse impact on the Area of Special Historic Landscape, on the character of the area or on highway safety.

Principle

Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy sets out a spatial strategy for North Lincolnshire, which, amongst other matters, provides that rural settlements will be supported as thriving sustainable communities, with a strong focus on retaining and enhancing local services to meet local needs and that any development that takes place should be in keeping with the character and nature of the settlement. Policy CS8 deals with the distribution of housing sites and prioritises development in Scunthorpe and the market towns, with brownfield sites and sites within development boundaries being the primary focus. With regard to rural settlements, the policy states that new housing will create opportunities for small-scale infill development that maintains the viability of the settlement and meets identified local needs without increasing the need to travel.

Policy CS8, whilst restricting housing outside development limits, contemplates some greenfield development as it refers to allowing development on such sites where it can be demonstrated that this would bring additional community benefits, contribute to building sustainable communities and be acceptable in terms of its impact on the high quality environment and adjoining countryside. This overall approach is supported by policy CS2 which sets out a sequential approach for development. Policy CS3 provides that development limits will be defined in future development plan documents. Outside these boundaries development will be restricted to that which is essential to the functioning of the countryside. The development limits were subsequently defined in the Housing and Employment Land Allocations Plan, and the application site is located outside the designated development limit for Belton. There are no allocated housing sites within Belton.

Local plan saved policy RD2 restricts development in the open countryside other than in exceptional circumstances. This policy only supports residential development outside defined development limits where it is to meet an essential proven need and the open countryside is the only appropriate location for the development. Whilst this policy remains, it has largely been overtaken by policies in subsequent plans addressing the same issue (such as policies CS2 and CS3 referenced above).

The aforementioned policies are aimed at focussing housing within settlement limits as defined in the Housing and Employment Land Allocations DPD. The application site is entirely outside the defined development boundary for Belton and is therefore considered to be in breach of policies CS2, CS3 and CS8 of the Core Strategy and RD2 of the local plan.

Notwithstanding the development plan policies set out above, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration when determining planning applications. The NPPF states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where the local planning authority

cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, relevant policies which guide the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date.

This statement confirms that North Lincolnshire Council does not currently have a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The consequence of this shortfall is to demonstrate that current policies are failing to deliver a five-year supply of housing in accordance with the NPPF and they are, therefore, failing to meet short-term housing needs. As such it is considered that there is a clear and demonstrable need for housing development in the area. Accordingly there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and development proposals should be approved unless the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

A single dwelling would have limited social and economic benefits in terms of addressing the current under-supply of housing land. Investment in construction and related employment would also represent a very limited benefit, as would the support which the additional population would produce for the local economy. Furthermore, the site is located in close proximity to a range of facilities within Belton and as such the proposal accords with the need to site development in locations with accessible local services. These matters weigh in favour of the proposal in terms of the economic and social dimensions of sustainability.

In terms of the environmental dimension, the site is located on land outside the defined settlement boundary which is also an area of Special Historic Landscape interest as defined in policy LC14 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan. The application would extend inappropriate development into the historic landscape and would therefore damage its existing character and setting. This matter is discussed in more detail below. On this basis the environmental dimension of sustainable development is not considered to be met in this case.

Therefore, whilst policies specifically related to the delivery of housing attract reduced weight, there are other policies within the NPPF and the local plan that would be in conflict with the proposed development with regard to cultural heritage and the impact upon the Special Historic Landscape.

Historic landscape

The historic landscape character of the Isle of Axholme is the sum of three historic landscape character types. The LC14 policy area includes all the character types within the designated area and seeks to protect the character, appearance and setting of the historic landscape as a whole.

The essential character and appearance of the Ancient Open Strip Fields (AOSF) historic landscape type is of open unenclosed agricultural land and the lack of any physical boundary features, including hedgerows and fences. Other characteristics of this landscape include the roads, common ways and access tracks known locally as meres; a general absence of farms in the open fields, these being located in the built-up settlement areas; and the presence of visual reference points such as church, mill and water towers that afford legibility to the core historic landscape and form part of its setting.

Also characteristic of the ancient open field landscape are areas of piecemeal enclosure, frequently found around the fringes of the open strip fields and the settlements where they form the immediate setting of the AOSF. This 'Early Enclosed Land' (EEL) comprising

amalgamated blocks of strips within the former open fields served as 'home closes' for stock-keeping and mixed farming, and date from the late-medieval period onwards. Early, in this context, does not necessarily refer to the period at which the enclosure happened, but to the character of an individual strip, or group of strips, enclosed directly from the open field. These early enclosed fields are typified by their narrow long or irregular shape, with sinuous boundaries that retain the S-shaped ploughing curve of the former cultivated strips; often hedged, the character of the EEL is in marked contrast to the unenclosed, AOSF that they frequently buffer.

Elsewhere enclosures with regular straight boundaries, frequently formed by ditches, were laid out when the marshlands surrounding the Isle were drained to create farmland from the 17th century onwards. The enclosures of this 'Recent Enclosed Land' (REL) are largely devoid of upstanding boundary features, and maintain the characteristic open aspect of this historic landscape, even where such enclosures are combined into blocks of large modern fields.

The enclosed landscape character types are important in their own right and in terms of their spatial associations and intervisibility with each other, and with the remaining areas of the open strip fields at the core of the historic landscape, surrounding the villages of the Isle. The individual historic landscape character areas share their settings with the other character type areas, and together they form the overall setting of the historic landscape character. The evolution over time of these distinctive historic character types with their differing and contrasting physical features and appearance that add to their legibility are what make the Isle of Axholme a 'Special Landscape'.

The persistence of these elements of the former landscape and the resultant openness of the core area remains the dominant characteristic of the contemporary landscape of historical importance. This remnant landscape is acknowledged as the best example of very few surviving landscapes of this type in the country, with the Isle of Axholme being by far the largest of the three best-known survivors.

The site is within the open countryside outside the development boundary. Residential use, other than in connection with agriculture, has no association with the historic landscape and is considered to be inappropriate development in this part of the landscape. Saffron Garth itself is a replacement dwelling of one of the few 19th century farmsteads that were established around the open field; the application site has always been farmland within the open field.

The proposed development would commence infilling the gap between the ribbon development along High Street and Saffron Garth within the open field, resulting in the merging of the residential zone and extending the built form into the open field. As such the proposed development would be a visual intrusion that alters the appearance of the historic landscape and damages the legibility of the character zones at this location.

It would also introduce the potential for further inappropriate development and enclosure which would be incompatible with the essential character of the open fields as set out above; proposals to landscape and screen the site would introduce landforms and enclosure that do not relate to the historic character. The proposed residential use would introduce further inappropriate domestic elements into the historic landscape such as boundary fencing, hard paved surfaces and external lighting; landscaped gardens and associated domestic and recreational structures such as sheds and greenhouses, as well

as otherwise permitted development. Such items would not be related to the traditional features and uses of the historic landscape and would harm the character.

Because the proposed development represents a change of use to residential that is not related to the traditional historic landscape character type of the open strip fields, and because it would introduce inappropriate development into this historic landscape, it would damage the existing character and setting of the open strip field landscape of Belton Field. As such it would be an unacceptable encroachment into the Area of Special Historic Landscape.

Highways

The site is accessed via a narrow track (Mann Lane) between 52 and 54 High Street, which is also a public footpath (number 34). This track is less than 4.1 metres wide, which is the minimum recommended. There is a wall either side of the footpath and a telegraph pole close to the junction with the High Street. There is insufficient width for two vehicles to pass on this track, which already serves five dwellings. A passing place is proposed as part of this application within the application site. Whilst this would help with traffic movements to an extent, due to its location, it would not ease pressures on the junction with High Street. Whilst the visibility from the junction is not ideal, due to the track being an existing access and the splays which can be achieved, these splays are considered to be sufficient. However, the additional single dwelling would not be considered to create a significant increase in traffic movements which would have a detrimental impact on highway safety, as confirmed by the Highways team.

Character

The proposed development for a single dwelling on an extensive site would not meet the density criteria of 30–35 dwellings per hectare as defined by policy CS7, and would be out of keeping with the higher density residential development to the north and east of the site. The proposal can be considered as backland development as the character of the area is generally defined by frontage development. Whilst this property would front its access track, it is considered that the proposal would be out of character with the surrounding area.

Other issues

With regard to ecology/wildlife, the site is considered to be of negligible biodiversity value and no ecological surveys have been requested. However, if permission is granted, biodiversity enhancements will be sought.

Concerns have been raised regarding flood risk. The site is within Zone 1, which is at a low risk of flooding. Appropriate drainage could be achieved for the development if approval is given.

As the proposal is for outline permission, no information is available regarding design. Concerns regarding amenity by way of overlooking, overshadowing and other amenity issues, could be overcome at reserved matters stage with appropriate design and siting.

Comments have been made regarding infrastructure. Belton is a large rural settlement ranking 19th overall in the Settlement Survey, with 5 of 7 key facilities. Belton is considered able to take some growth of the settlement and one dwelling would not be considered to put a strain on these facilities.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to result in extremely limited economic and social benefits, whilst having a significant adverse impact on the environment in respect of uncharacteristic and harmful encroachment into the historic landscape. As such the proposal is not considered to be a sustainable form of development that would benefit from the presumption in favour. The adverse impacts of the development would demonstrably outweigh the benefits and as such the application is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION Refuse permission for the following reasons:

1.

The proposed development represents unnecessary and inappropriate encroachment into the ancient strip fields designated as the Isle of Axholme Area of Special Historic Environment Interest under policy LC14 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan, thereby adversely affecting its historic character, appearance and setting. Accordingly, the proposal is considered contrary to policies LC14 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan and CS6 of the Core Strategy.

2.

The proposed development, by way of siting, plot size and density, would be out of character with the surrounding development which is of higher density and generally characterised by plots fronting principal roads. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to policies DS1 of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan; CS5, CS7 and CS8 of the Core Strategy; and paragraphs 122, 127 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

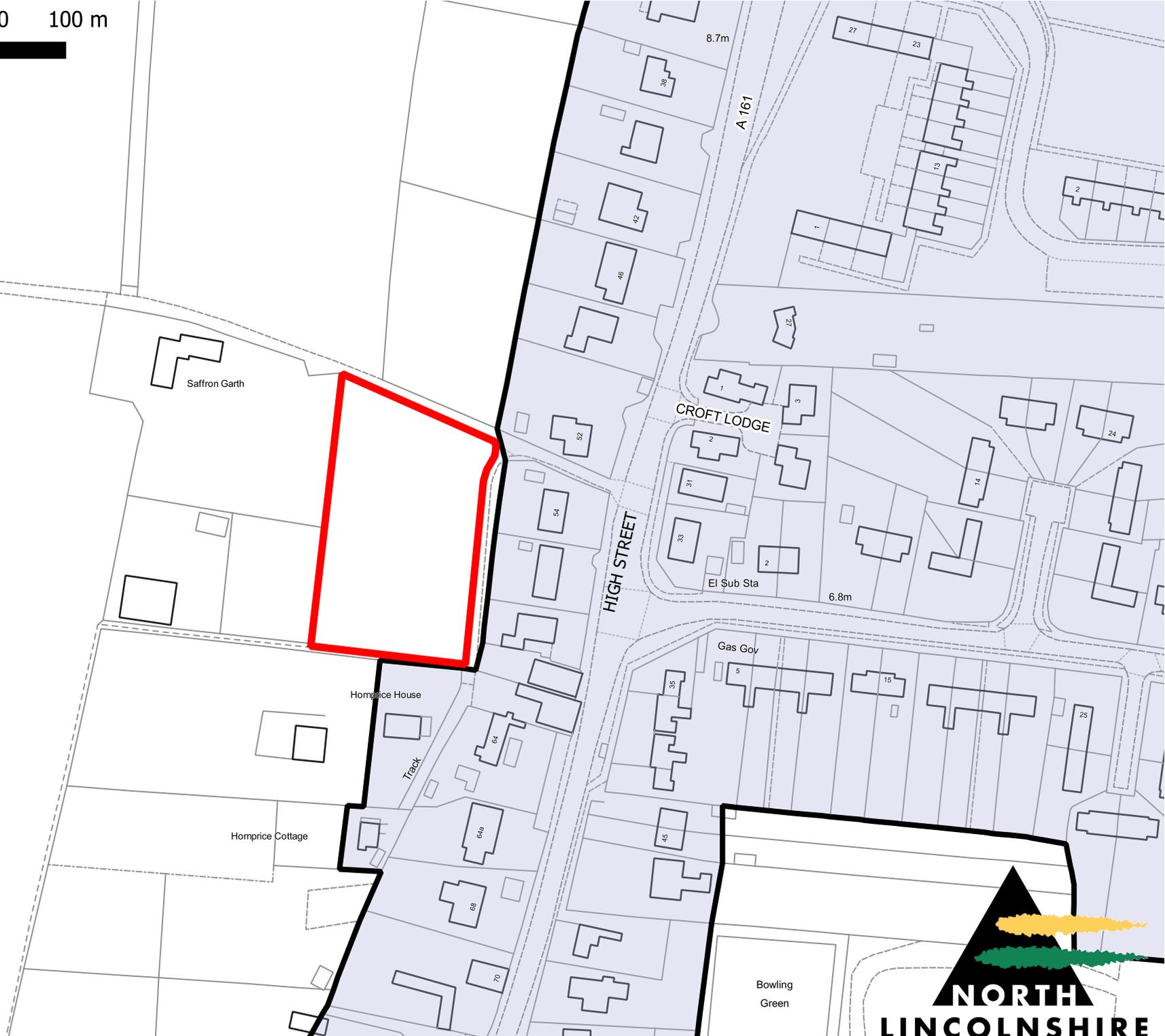
Informative

In determining this application, the council, as local planning authority, has taken account of the guidance in paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework in order to seek to secure sustainable development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

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 Development Boundary



PA/2019/326

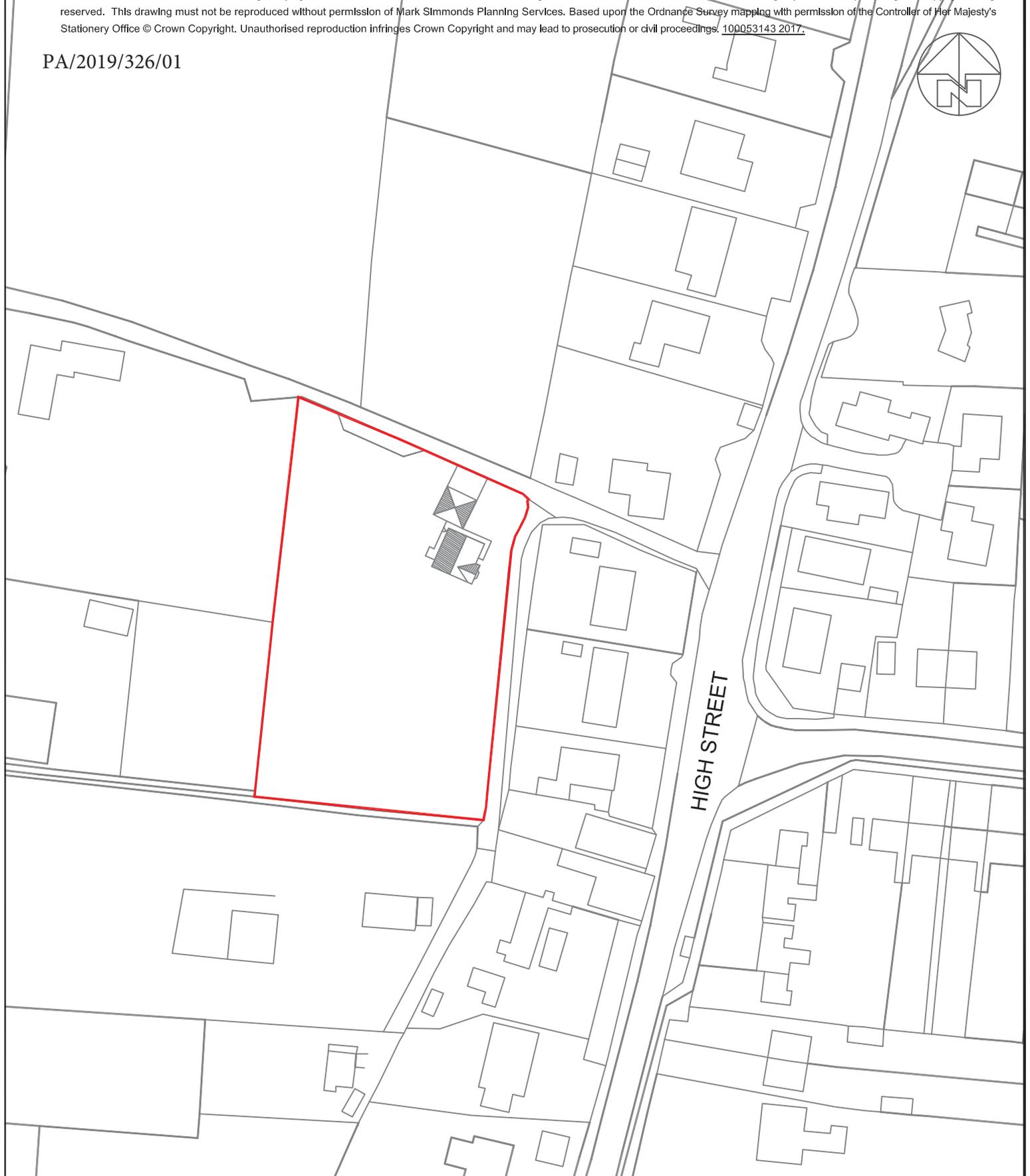
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PA/2019/326 Block plan (not to scale)

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Drawing Title

**SITE PLAN
HIGH STREET
BELTON**

Ref: **LISG 005**

Scale @ A4
1:1000

Date
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