



One The Brayford

### Local developers lead the way

"Lincoln never stopped developing throughout the recession," says Leigh Hall, director of local developer Manorcrest Group. An expanding university helped keep cranes on the skyline during the global downturn, and local entities developing space in the city centre is a recurring theme.

Lincolnshire Co-op has pushed the button on retail-led development next to the station, while Manorcrest is on site with a 45-room extension to the Double Tree by Hilton hotel on Brayford Pool, due to complete this autumn. "What makes Lincoln popular is the fact that there aren't a lot of sites available," adds Hall.

Next to the Hilton, another local developer, Jackson & Jackson, is well advanced with its £20m One The Brayford scheme, where around 90 high-end residential units and three restaurants are under construction.

"National chains are knocking

on Lincoln's door," says the firm's co-founder, Dominik Jackson. He is eyeing up potential future developments – the company holds land in various parts of the city, including next to the Science & Innovation Park. "As long as we can find a large enough scheme we'll develop in Lincoln," he says.

For the moment both Manorcrest and Jackson & Jackson have their sights set on residential development (traditional homes, as they say they find build to rent hard to stack up financially), though the potential of City View, the city centre's last large-scale (20 acres) mixed-use development opportunity, will not have passed them by.

With a price tag of £10m – "a figure that would be unheard of just five years ago", says Tim Downing, senior partner of local agent Pygott & Crone – the question is whether local talent will be outbid by national or even international players.



Corn Exchange, Cornhill Quarter

The first phase of the Cornhill Quarter, redevelopment of the historic Corn Exchange to create around 50,000 sq ft of retail and leisure space, is already under way, with completion due before the end of the year.

"This is going to be something special. We will have a mix of interesting

independent retailers – we don't want to be a clone centre," promises Lidbetter, despite the fact that one of the first retailers to sign up is national chain Moss Bros.

#### Crosshead

A further two phases, each of around 50,000 sq ft, are scheduled to follow. "Lincoln's



Sincil Street, Cornhill Quarter

prime retail pitch is very, very tight. We are able to offer units at a discount to existing prime," says Tim Bradford, managing director at Banks Long, the local agent on the scheme. With zone A rents hovering at £150 per sq ft the space is certainly affordable.

But has Lincoln been able to shake off perceptions about being isolated?

Andrew Reavley, director at national letting agent Lunson Mitchenall, believes so, pointing out that completion of dualling of the A46 between Newark and Lincoln has boosted accessibility. He says: "We are not that far from Nottingham, and the city has grown in its position in the East Midlands. The population is

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Andrew Reavley | Lunson Mitchenall

### Making a place case for Lincoln(shire)

Public perceptions are not always in sync with reality. To check the current mood around Lincoln, the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership commissioned a placemaking review last autumn.

As consultation work is still ongoing (the final results are likely to be announced in April) a definitive picture is yet to emerge, but one of the expected responses is a lingering sense by those outside the region that Lincoln(shire) is difficult to get to. "That's just not the case any more," says LEP director Ruth Carver, pointing to recent road enhancement work and future rail connection improvements.

Carver notes that while placemaking exercises often focus on developers and investors, the audience Lincoln hopes to attract is at a consumer level. She says: "At the moment there is no single place where people can go to find out what it is like actually living here, whereas there is plenty of information on tourism. As a result, people who might take jobs here may go elsewhere."

Although extending its reach to other parts of the UK is important, Lincoln is also aware of the importance of retaining those already in the city. "Place marketing is often stronger when you speak to your own," says Carver.

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#### Crosshead

Institutional fund Standard Life Investments agrees. The owner of the St Marks Shopping Centre scheme is proposing to flatten retail warehouses and replace them with up to 485,000 sq ft of retail and leisure space, plus residential, student and hotel accommodation. A planning application for the £150m redevelopment was submitted in February. "We considered a range of issues. Some were property-related and others were broader considerations, such as demographic change. In all, these conditions were positive," says David Stewart, fund manager at Standard Life.

If the scheme gains consent, work would start in 2020 with completion by early 2024.

Mark Simmons

### Tech hub Lincoln?

Lincoln is hoping that tech companies will do the maths and locate to the 20,000 sq ft Boole Technology Centre that this month opens its doors on Lincoln Science & Innovation Park.

Named after the 19th century mathematician George Boole, the £7m centre, a follow-up to the Think Tank building opened in 2009, is designed to attract high-tech start-up companies, particularly those formed from initiatives hatched at the city's university.

Five tenants have already been confirmed for the centre, which has received both government and Local Enterprise Partnership funding. LSIP is a joint venture between the Lincolnshire Co-op and Lincoln council. The latter's assistant director of planning and regeneration, Kate Ellis, says: "The tenants on the park are genuinely pioneering, looking not at what's coming next, but what comes after that."

LSIP's owners are taking the same view. Lincolnshire Co-op chief executive Ursula Lidbetter says: "There is a lot more to do building up the park." There is certainly land available – around six acres for the next phase of development – but whether potential tenants will come flocking is unknown, although that should become clearer by the end of this year.

Some local experts, such as Lambert Smith Hampton's Sam Elkington, have no doubt that the presence of nearby occupiers such as Siemens are likely to spur growth on the park. "The importance of Siemens to the city can't be underestimated because of the spin-off businesses it brings," he says.

