



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 January 2026

by **David Smith BA(Hons) DMS MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th January 2026

Appeal Ref: 6001313

Land west of Doddington Lane, Stubton, NG23 5BX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Richard Patchett (Hilltop Ltd) against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref is S25/1033.
The development proposed is for up to 4 detached dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for up to 4 detached dwellings at land west of Doddington Lane, Stubton, NG23 5BX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref S25/1033, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The outline application was submitted with all matters reserved apart from access. The layout plan and indicative house types provided are illustrative only.

Main Issue

3. This is the effect of the proposed development on the significance of an area of ridge and furrow earthworks which is a non-designated heritage asset and on the character of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Effect on the significance of an area of ridge and furrow

4. The appeal site is an L shaped parcel of land which is part of a larger rectangular field that extends to the south. Within it are ridge and furrow earthworks. These are associated with the once prevalent system of open-field farming that persisted until around the eighteenth century. They are almost always associated with settlements of mediaeval origins, such as Stubton. Their derivation, evolution and different landform types are well understood due to the extensive amount of academic and industry publications on the subject.
5. The Stubton Neighbourhood Plan refers to numerous examples of original ridge and furrow fields around the village and the appellant's Heritage Impact Assessment identifies large areas to the south and west. The raised strips run east to west across the northern part of the field that includes the appeal site and then change orientation to north to south on the southern section. The earthworks are upstanding features and so have a distinct and visible form. However, this area

was once part of a much greater furlong that extended west and which has been ploughed flat. As such, they are a residual fragment of what existed previously.

6. The significance of this non-designated heritage asset stems primarily from its physical illustration and reminder of past farming practices. However, the value of this area is limited due to its small size and truncation. The undulating landform is essentially functional which, whilst recognisable, does not hold any particular architectural or artistic interest. There is also no indication that these ridge and furrow earthworks would add meaningfully to the existing body of archaeological evidence about mediaeval agriculture or life. The site nevertheless has historic interest although its overall level of significance is low. There is no suggestion that it is of equivalent significance to a scheduled monument.
7. Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework prescribes that the effect on a non-designated heritage asset requires a balanced judgement. It is unlikely that any remnant of the earthworks could reasonably be retained in the long run as garden space. Therefore, the Council maintains that all of the area of ridge and furrow shown to be occupied by the proposed dwellings (around 0.5ha) would be lost. On the other hand, around 75% of this feature within the larger field would remain. Overall, the scale of the harm caused by the proposal would be limited.
8. The site is of local historic value and all heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance according to the Framework. The negative impact of the proposal in this respect would be contrary to Policy EN6 of the South Kesteven Local Plan 2011-2036 regarding the historic environment. It would also conflict with Policy NE2 of the Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to protect the important features which define the character of the Parish.

Effect on the character of the surrounding area

9. The appeal site is well-contained by a strong roadside hedgerow and built development would extend no further south than that on the opposite side of Doddington Lane. The existing greenery would be disrupted by the need to create an access. However, there is no clear evidence that significant clearance would be required in order to create the necessary sight lines. Indeed, the hedge is set back from the edge of the carriageway. As an important rural feature, the impact on it should be minimised but this could be done through the reserved matters.
10. Although there are public rights of way around three sides of the site, views from them would generally be distant and filtered by existing vegetation. Additional planting to soften the outlines of the dwellings could also be required. The wider landscape impact would therefore be minimal in line with Neighbourhood Plan Policy NE2 and Local Plan Policies EN1 and DE1 on landscape character and good quality design.
11. Coupled with the removal of the existing strips and troughs, the proposal would alter the character of the site. However, in combination, the high level of screening; the modest width of the frontage; the overall amount of development and the relationship with nearby buildings mean that this would not be adverse. There is therefore no objection in this respect as the character of the surrounding area would not be harmed.

Other considerations

12. The housing requirement for South Kesteven is 895 dwellings per annum. However, only 4.07 years of specific deliverable housing sites can currently be demonstrated. This is below the minimum of five years specified in the Framework. Whilst four additional dwellings would not make a vast numerical difference, they would nevertheless contribute meaningfully to reducing the shortfall. This is a matter that clearly favours the proposal.
13. The economic benefits associated with the construction and occupation of the dwellings have not been quantified but could be expected to be modest. Biodiversity gains could be achieved on the southern part of the appeal site slightly in excess of the mandatory requirements and this is also a minor advantage.

Other Matters

14. Seven letters of support for the scheme were received in response to the application. Some concerns have nonetheless been raised but matters relating to the layout and type of the dwellings are not included at this stage and would be dealt with subsequently. The proposal is well related to existing built development at this small village and the number of units proposed would not be overly dense. Representations indicate that there have been drainage issues in the vicinity but the arrangements for the site could be dealt with by means of a condition.

Final Balancing

15. In cases where development is likely to cause harm to the significance of a heritage asset, Policy EN6 indicates that permission will only be granted where the public benefits outweigh the potential harm. However, the harm in this case would affect a non-designated heritage asset and therefore paragraph 11 d) of the Framework is relevant given the housing supply position.
16. Although a matter of considerable importance and weight, the scale of heritage harm resulting from the proposal would be limited. There would nonetheless be conflict with Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies in this respect. On the other hand, the proposal would deliver four new homes in a District where housing supply is well short of expectations. The Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes. In addition, there would be modest economic and biodiversity benefits. Overall, the adverse heritage impacts do not outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The presumption in favour of sustainable development therefore applies. Indeed, the positive aspects outweigh the negative ones such that the proposal is acceptable.

Conditions

17. In addition to the standard time limits for outline permissions the plans should be specified in the interests of certainty. Given the historic value of the site, a scheme of archaeological investigation of the ridges and furrows should take place. Due to the local issues highlighted, details of surface and foul water drainage and of its implementation are necessary.
18. Enhancements in accordance with the Local Plan should be secured along the lines of the recommendations in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report. Because of the proximity to housing a construction management plan is justified but as the final form of development is not known the wording of the condition can be

less prescriptive. The Local Plan contains expectations for sustainable building in order to mitigate against and adapt to climate change and details of how this would be achieved should be provided.

19. Development may not commence until a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to and approved by the planning authority as per paragraph 13(2) of Schedule 7A of the Act. There is therefore no need to require a separate scheme of biodiversity mitigation and enhancement. The permission is for up to four dwellings and so there is no need to repeat this in a condition.

Conclusion

20. The material considerations, especially the provisions of the Framework, indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should succeed.

David Smith

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) Details of appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale, ("the reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development takes place and the development shall be carried out as approved.
- 2) Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than three years from the date of this permission.
- 3) The development hereby permitted shall take place not later than two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
- 4) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 2815-A1-01a and 2815-A1-02a in respect of the approved access.
- 5) No development shall take place until a scheme of archaeological investigation including a topographic survey of all upstanding ridges and furrows has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- 6) No development shall take place until a scheme for the treatment of surface and foul water drainage has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall be carried out in accordance with a timetable specified by the local planning authority.
- 7) No development shall take place until a scheme of ecological enhancement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall be carried out in accordance with a timetable specified by the local planning authority.
- 8) No development shall take place until a construction management plan and method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall include measures to mitigate the impacts of vehicular activity and to manage the drainage of the site during construction. The approved plan and method statement shall be adhered to during the construction of the dwellings hereby permitted.
- 9) No development shall take place until details of energy consumption and use of water resources have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall be implemented before the dwelling they relate to is occupied.