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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 October 2025

by **A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/25/3371361**

**Land West Of Malting Lane, Thrapston Road, Ellington PE28 0AE**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
  - The appeal is made by Mr D Biagioni (Rose Homes (EA) Ltd) against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
  - The application Ref is 25/00966/PIP.
  - The development proposed is residential development comprising a minimum of seven and a maximum of nine dwellings, not to exceed a total GIA of 999m<sup>2</sup>.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for residential development comprising a minimum of seven and a maximum of nine dwellings, not to exceed a total GIA of 999m<sup>2</sup>, at Land West Of Malting Lane, Thrapston Road, Ellington PE28 0AE, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 25/00966/PIP, dated 27 May 2025.

### Procedural Matters

2. Planning Practice Guidance confirms that permission in principle is an alternative route to obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The consent route comprises two stages: the first stage (permission in principle) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle, and the second stage (technical details consent) assesses the detailed development proposals. This appeal relates to the first stage only.
3. The scope of the considerations at this stage is limited to location, land use and the amount of development. All other matters fall to be considered at the technical details stage. I have determined the appeal accordingly.
4. In reaching my decision, I have had regard to the statutory duties under sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, insofar as they relate to the principle of development within the setting of designated heritage assets.

### Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, proposed land use and scale, and the effect on the setting of nearby heritage assets.

## Reasons

### *Location, use and scale*

6. The appeal site is part of an undeveloped parcel of land between the built-up area of Ellington and the A14 dual carriageway. To the east and west are new residential developments still under construction. In this context, the site does not strongly exhibit the characteristics of open countryside and is functionally related to the settlement. This is in contrast to the open agricultural fields to the north of the A14.
7. The proposed residential use would be compatible with the prevailing pattern of development in the area. A scheme comprising between seven and nine dwellings would represent a modest scale of development proportionate to the size and character of the settlement. Given the presence of surrounding built form and infrastructure, the site would read as a logical infill rather than an encroachment into the countryside.
8. In the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (HLP) (2019), Ellington is classified as a Small Settlement, reflecting its limited range of services and facilities. However, the settlement strategy allows for a modest level of development in such villages depending on the scale and nature of the individual settlement. The officer's report indicates that Ellington contains a public house, village hall, church, and an industrial estate. There is a bus stop located in the village centre, offering an infrequent weekday service to Huntingdon.
9. The site is well related to the built-up area and benefits from pedestrian connectivity to the village centre and public transport, albeit limited. The proximity of larger service centres such as Huntingdon and Brampton ensures that future residents would not be isolated. Accordingly, the site is suitably located for a modest scale of residential development and would support the vitality of the rural community, consistent with paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
10. Policies LP9 and LP10 of the HLP set out the approach to development in Small Settlements and the countryside respectively. Policy GENP4 of the Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan (2022) supports minor residential development within the built-up area. Although the site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and is therefore in conflict with these policies, its relationship to the existing built form tempers the weight that can be afforded to this conflict, particularly in the context of the district's acknowledged housing shortfall.
11. Policies LP11 and LP12 of the HLP, which relate to design quality and implementation, are concerned with matters that fall to be addressed at the technical details stage. At this stage, and for other reasons set out below, I am satisfied that the site is capable of accommodating the proposed scale of development without prejudicing the settlement strategy or resulting in unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the surroundings.

### *Heritage assets*

12. The Ellington Conservation Area (CA) encompasses the historic core of the village, characterised by its medieval street pattern, timber-framed buildings, and

rural setting. Its significance derives, in part, from its architectural and historic interest as a well-preserved example of a rural settlement.

13. The appeal site lies outside the CA but within its wider setting. It does not form part of the historic core and is visually enclosed by surrounding modern development and infrastructure. Its contribution to the significance of the CA is limited and has been further diminished by recent residential development in the immediate vicinity. Nonetheless, its undeveloped character forms part of the wider rural setting that underpins the historic identity of the village.
14. The change from undeveloped land to built form would noticeably alter the character of the site, diminishing the rural setting that contributes to the appreciation of the CA's historic context. While the visual impact would be largely confined to short-range views and would not materially affect key views into or out of the CA, the change would nonetheless result in a degree of erosion to its setting. This would cause some harm to the significance of the CA.
15. The level of harm would be at the lower end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm. Nevertheless, any harm to a designated heritage asset is a matter of considerable importance and weight.
16. Conversely, the proposal would make a small but meaningful contribution to housing supply in a district with an acknowledged shortfall, and would support the local economy and services. These public benefits attract significant weight and are sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA.
17. Yew Tree Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building located approximately 100 metres to the southeast of the site. Its significance derives from its age, architectural detailing, and its contribution to the historic character of the village. The site is visually separated from the listed building by intervening development and infrastructure, and does not contribute appreciably to its setting. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal would preserve the setting of the listed building and cause no harm to its significance.
18. For these reasons, the proposal complies with Policy LP34 of the HLP and the relevant provisions of the Framework concerning the historic environment.

### **Planning Balance**

19. The Council confirms that it is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently standing at approximately 4.03 years. In such circumstances, paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is engaged. This requires that permission be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.
20. The proposal would result in a modest level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the CA, arising from the erosion of the open character of the site within its setting. However, this harm would be limited and would not materially affect the appreciation of the heritage asset or its historic significance. Additionally,

the site does not contribute appreciably to the setting of the nearby listed building, and its significance would be preserved.

21. The development would provide up to nine dwellings in a district where there is a recognised shortfall in housing land supply. This carries significant weight in favour of the proposal. The site is suitably located in relation to the built-up area of Ellington and is well related to existing and emerging residential development. It would contribute to the vitality of the rural community and support local services, consistent with the objectives of paragraph 83 of the Framework.
22. While there is conflict with Policies LP9 and LP10 of the HLP and Policy GENP4 of the Neighbourhood Plan, the site's relationship to the settlement and surrounding development, together with the extent of the housing shortfall, tempers the weight that can be afforded to this conflict. The proposal is otherwise capable of being brought forward in a manner that would accord with the design and historic environment policies of the development plan and the Framework, subject to detailed matters to be considered at the technical details stage.
23. Overall, the adverse impacts of granting permission in principle would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole. There are no policies in the Framework that indicate the proposal should be refused. Accordingly, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies and permission in principle should be granted.

### **Conditions**

24. As detailed matters will be addressed at the technical details stage, no conditions are imposed on this permission in principle. For clarity, the appellant is advised that, in accordance with Article 7(b) of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended), the permission is valid for three years from the date of this decision.

### **Conclusion**

25. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed and permission in principle granted.

*A Caines*

INSPECTOR