



## ENGLISH HERITAGE

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Our refs: P00159511  
AA 030770/2

23 JUL 2012

19 July 2012

Dear Mr Moore

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990  
Environment/DCMS Circular 01/2001  
Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995

**PLANNING PERMISSION TO ERECT A BUILDING FOR THE USE OF COMPOSTING MATERIALS (RE-SUBMISSION PARA/2011/1529),  
OLD CEMENT WORKS, GAINSTHORPE ROAD, GAINSTHORPE, HIBALDSTOW,  
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE**

**Application No WD/2012/0591**

Thank you for your consultation of 28 June 2012 notifying us of the application for planning permission relating to the above site. We have considered the proposal and, following the agreed extension of time for our response, offer the following advice.

#### Summary

The proposed development would significantly impact on the setting of the highly important designated heritage asset of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village, a Scheduled Ancient Monument in the care of the State and open to the public. In English Heritage's view the application significantly underestimates the potential impact of the development on the setting and heritage significance of the Gainsthorpe monument. In our view, the proposals do not enhance or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset. We consider that the development will have a harmful impact on the setting of the site, and on its heritage significance and public value as a heritage asset. The application has not demonstrated that the harm it would bring to the heritage asset of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village is outweighed or justified by any public benefits of the proposed development. For these reasons the proposal is contrary to national and local planning policy on the historic environment and English Heritage objects to the application. We recommend that a joint approach by the applicants, the council and English Heritage be pursued to explore the possibility of less



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harmful options for development here, and which take full account of the need to sustain the historic environment and heritage assets.

#### **English Heritage advice**

[Please note that our response here focuses on the impact of the proposed development on the setting and heritage significance of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village. For other aspects of the development we refer you to the advice provided by your archaeological, conservation and landscape specialist advisors.]

Information in support of the application has been provided in the form of a Design & Access Statement, and a separate Heritage Assessment by Pre-Construct Archaeological Services, dated May 2012, which identifies heritage assets close to the site and assesses the potential impact on their setting and significance. Unfortunately the Heritage Assessment does not adequately assess the potential heritage impact on the setting and significance of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village.

#### Significance of affected heritage assets

The deserted rural settlement of Gainsthorpe is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). The formal designation title of the scheduled monument is 'Gainsthorpe rural settlement, including village remains, paddocks and a manorial complex with a fishpond and two dovecotes', national monument number 23313, registered asset number 1007509. For brevity it is referred to here as Gainsthorpe Medieval Village.

Gainsthorpe was first recorded in the 1089 Domesday survey, and was largely deserted by the end of the Middle Ages. It is renowned for being one of the clearest and best preserved of the 2000 or so deserted village sites in England. The site occupies a pasture field on the dip-slope of the Lincoln Edge limestone ridge. To the east is the Roman Ermine Street (now the A15), the Vale of Ancholme and the distant Wold escarpment; to the west the ground rises gently to the wooded crest of the limestone ridge with its ancient ridgeway to the west (now the B1398). The former village survives as buried remains and well-preserved earthworks, with former streets represented as sunken 'hollow ways', flanked by properties with their roadside 'tofts' (frontage plots once containing buildings and sunken yards) and their garden 'crofts' stretching behind.

For clarity of its building remains, Gainsthorpe is regarded as probably the best example of a deserted medieval village in England. The former buildings - mostly one- and two-roomed houses and barns - survive as low turf covered foundations, many with doorways clearly visible. In some places the properties were later combined into larger units around courtyards, a sign of piecemeal desertion and conversion to sheep or cattle farming in the later medieval period. The well-enclosed paddocks and the stock-pond visible here were also part of this shift from arable to pastoral farming. Groups of former buildings ranged





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around courtyards in the south west area probably represent the manor homestead and its home farm, with a rectangular fish pond in the corner and the footings of two circular dovecotes. The village has two distinct sections, each centred on an east-west street and linked by a third street. The northern part was a planned extension taking in some of the crofts and field strips of the earlier village. Beyond the earthworks, parts of the former village may have been levelled by later cultivation, but this does not diminish the significance of the surviving earthworks.

In 1697 the local antiquary Abraham de la Pryme noted "the foundations of about two hundred buildings, and beheld three streets very fare". His estimate seems rather generous, though some buildings may have since been lost through ploughing and stone-robbing. He also mentions a local folk tradition (that was still current last century) that the village had been occupied by robbers and that the surrounding communities responded by pulling down their village. However, as is often the case, the time and the reason for desertion are not known. Some nearby villages suffered from plague, soil erosion and sand-blowing, others by deliberate depopulation in the Tudor period, when villagers were forced out by landowners converting the land to more lucrative sheep pasture. The last documentary reference to Gainsthorpe being occupied comes less than fifty years after the Black Death had swept through the country in the 1340s, and it is likely that the settlement did not survive for long afterwards.

Gainsthorpe Medieval Village is also significant as the first archaeological site in England to be photographed and interpreted from the air (by the leading archaeologist OGS Crawford in 1925), and for its role in the development of the study of archaeology and the study of the history of the English countryside.

The fields adjoining the Scheduled Monument on the north, south and west sides, are believed to contain further buried remains of the former settlement. Although not included in the scheduled area, these buried remains also form part of the nationally important archaeological site of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village, and come within the scope of NPPF paragraph 139, and for planning purposes the area of these remains should be treated as of equivalent significance to the designated scheduled monument. Of most relevance here in connection with the present application is the fact that buried archaeological remains west of the scheduled area lie even closer to the application site, and should also be taken into account in assessing the impact of the proposed development.

#### *Public accessibility*

Due to Gainsthorpe's high quality and importance as an example of a deserted village, the monument is in the care or guardianship of the State, and managed by English Heritage National Collections as a public resource, open to visitors, most of whom are tourists, educational groups and other members of the public.





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The fact that Gainsthorpe Medieval Village is accessible to the public through physical access (the site is open daily throughout the year) and through interpretative and promotional material available in books and on the internet etc., increases the heritage significance and amenity value of the site, and also increases its sensitivity to impacts from new development.

#### *Setting*

The setting of a heritage asset is 'the surroundings within which the asset can be experienced' (English Heritage Guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, section 2.1 and the PPS 5 *Practice Guide* which remains the current historic environment guidance for the NPPF). The setting of the Gainsthorpe monument thus extends into the visible area of the surrounding landscape. Setting also encompasses other senses and perceptions (e.g. noise, smells, dust, etc.), but it is the visual impact that would appear from the application to be the main concern here.

The setting of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village in relation to the surrounding landscape makes a major contribution to its archaeological, aesthetic, historic and social values, and is a very important aspect of its heritage significance. As a Scheduled Monument it has high sensitivity to the effects of new development.

As the Heritage Assessment notes, Gainsthorpe Medieval Village has a rural agricultural setting, albeit with a field pattern largely dating from the post-medieval period of Parliamentary Enclosure. Later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century development to the west developed in association with the railway, and comprises limestone quarries, former lime and cement works buildings and associated workers' housing on Gainsthorpe Road. The 19<sup>th</sup> century development includes two Grade 2 listed buildings (a lime kiln and railway signal box) which are not clearly visible or intrusive in views from the Gainsthorpe monument. However, the larger concrete silo structures of the Old Cement Works are visually prominent and detract from the rural setting of the Gainsthorpe monument. To the east of the monument, the traffic on the modern A15 trunk road (built in the 1980s to replace a minor road on the line of the Roman Ermine Street) also detracts somewhat from the previously more rural setting. Overall, however, the rural agricultural landscape character still predominates, and the surviving elements of the rural setting of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village provide a valuable historic and landscape context for the appreciation and understanding of the monument.

This valuable and important context, and the ability for people to appreciate and understand the monument in its landscape, would be harmed and diminished by further erosion of the setting of the monument through unsympathetic new development of the kind now proposed.





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For planning purposes, assessment of impacts of development on setting is not only restricted to publicly accessible places. However, the ability to perceive a heritage asset from publicly accessible places such as footpaths, roads and properties open to the public is clearly a significant factor in terms of public appreciation and enjoyment. In this case, Gainsthorpe Medieval Village is a visitor destination freely open to the public and educational groups, and its accessibility to the public increases the heritage significance and amenity value of the site, and also increases its sensitivity to impacts from new development that affect its setting.

#### *Summary of the main factors contributing to Gainsthorpe's high heritage significance:*

- Gainsthorpe is one of the clearest and best preserved of the 2000 or so deserted village sites in England. In terms of the level of preservation and clarity of its building remains, it is probably the best example in the country.
- The clarity of its earthwork remains, and of its context in the landscape, gives the monument a very high level of significance in terms of public appreciation and understanding.
- Its significance for its role in the development of the study of archaeology and the study of the history of the English countryside.
- Its high communal or social value:
  - its status one of the small number of select monuments nationally to be in State guardianship (and only one of two in North Lincolnshire, along with Thornton Abbey) increases its significance.
  - its accessibility as a visitor destination open to the public and educational groups increases the heritage significance and amenity value of the site, and also increases its sensitivity to impacts from new development.

#### *Key considerations for the setting of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village:*

- The principal significance of Gmv is the archaeological value of its buried and earthwork remains within a relatively unchanged setting in a rural agricultural landscape.
- The setting of the monument in relation to the surrounding landscape makes a major contribution to its archaeological, aesthetic and historic values, and is a very important aspect of its heritage significance.





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- The views from the village site into the surrounding landscape are essential to the understanding and appreciation of the siting and context of the monument, and of its form and layout.
- The clarity and visibility of the historic site's location in relation to the surrounding landscape topography and geology, enhances the importance of its setting and the importance of views of the village site in its setting.
- The rural and largely agricultural character of the landscape around the historic site, maintains a strong link with its history and enhances the importance of its setting and the importance of views of the village site in its setting.
- Views looking west along the main east-west axis of the village towards the application site are important to the setting and heritage significance of the monument, and are key views for viewers/visitors to the site.
- Views from the manorial courtyard earthworks in the south west (the area of the monument closest to the application site) are key views for viewers/visitors to the site.
- Buried remains of the former settlement in the adjoining fields, not included in the scheduled monument but forming part of the nationally important archaeological site, and equivalent in significance to the Scheduled Monument, lie even close to the application site, and should also be taken into account in assessment of impact on setting.

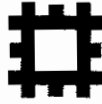
These factors increase the sensitivity of the site to impacts from new development in its setting.

The high heritage significance and amenity value of the monument, its high public value, and its high sensitivity to impacts from new development, mean that the level of justification in terms of public benefit that is required for developments that harm the heritage significance of the monument is especially high.

#### Assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development

The area of the application site presently carries two main groups of prominent cement works structures in the form of groups of concrete towers or silos. The proposed new building is to be sited on currently unoccupied ground to the south of the easternmost group of towers. The new building would significantly extend to the south the visible spread and mass of industrial buildings on the east side of the former quarry site, directly facing the monument. This impact would be all the more visible as the building is located in that part of





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the applicant's property which lies close to the Gainsthorpe Medieval Village monument. At its closest the proposed building lies only 150m from the SAM, and lies even closer to nationally important archaeological remains in the intervening field.

The photomontages in the Heritage Assessment show views from selected viewpoint positions in the site. They indicate that, in the views looking west from the village site, the proposed development would increase the mass and spread of industrial development, and that the new building would be prominently visible. The application admits that 'the existing modern buildings located on the site of the Old Cement Works appear prominent when viewed from the scheduled ancient monument' (Heritage Assessment para 3.3), but assesses that the proposed development when viewed from the monument would create 'additional but insignificant distant aspect' on the western skyline, and 'at closer range it would form part of a much more harmonious group of buildings, as opposed to the current view' and 'would not be overly detrimental' to the setting of the monument,(10.11.4) and would have only a 'slight adverse impact' on its significance (11.3).

However, in our view the Heritage Assessment significantly underestimates the potential impact of the proposed development on the setting of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village. Site inspection confirms that the proposed building and any associated bunding would in fact be more prominent than the Heritage Assessment suggests. The development would form a prominent part of the middle-distance 'backdrop' to the west and would significantly alter the baseline setting of the monument. The development would be very clearly visible from the approach to the monument from Gainsthorpe Road, and from the monument itself, and would be especially prominent from the upper areas of the site and the raised sections of the earthworks which provide the best views of the monument and are favourite viewing-points for visitors.

A further consideration is the significant impact on 'dynamic' or 'kinetic' views by viewer/visitors moving through the site. This is not assessed by the applicant. The monument is separated from the application site by low hedge and a small single field, and is only 150m away from the proposed building at its closest point. For viewers/visitors approaching the village site, or moving in and around the site itself, the proposed building will form a prominent and distracting visual feature of the western backdrop to the monument, and would intrude in views on repeated occasions.

As mentioned above, buried remains of the former settlement are believed lie in the adjoining fields, and any such remains also form part of the nationally important archaeological site, and have a setting and context in relation to the earthwork site and the surrounding landscape. The archaeological remains in the field to the west of the scheduled area lie even closer to the application site and, taking these areas into account, the adverse impact of the proposed development on the heritage setting of Gainsthorpe medieval village

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as a whole is thus even greater than is indicated by the assessment of the scheduled earthwork site alone.

#### *The Old Cement Works buildings*

The supporting information for the application relies heavily on the presence of the existing Old Cement Works buildings as a justification for the location and appearance of the new building, claiming that the proposed new building would be lower than the existing Old Cement Works towers and that the new building would therefore not be visually intrusive. It is true that the setting of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village is affected by the concrete towers etc, some or all of which are now redundant. (The setting is also affected by dumps and tips of earth etc.)

However, we do not agree that the existing presence of visually intrusive development is an acceptable explanation or justification for further intrusive development. On the contrary, the presence of the Old Cement Works towers increases the visual sensitivity of the site, and increases the potential cumulative impacts of further development. Instead of extending and increasing the visual intrusion of large scale development close to the monument, as is proposed, new development should take the opportunity to reduce visual intrusion, through sympathetic location and design. In our view the present application fails to do this.

A further reason why the new building should not take its lead from the old cement works silos is that the old structures are redundant and are liable at some stage to be demolished, leaving any newer buildings even more prominent. Rather than erecting a building that increases the negative visual impact of the industrial site, the redundancy of the cement works and the re-use of the site provide a positive opportunity for the applicant and the local authority to enhance the setting of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village, in line with NPPF paras 131 and 137 (see below).

Similarly, the naturally high location, cited by the applicant as advantageous for drainage, is the most intrusive and harmful in terms of impact on heritage setting. Again, we do not believe that heritage impact has been properly taken into account.

#### *Mitigation*

The suggested mitigation (Heritage Assessment para 10.12.1), in the form of raised earth bunds carrying tree or hedge planting is not appropriate, as such a feature is not characteristic of the local landscape and would itself have an adverse impact on setting of the monument. The appropriate mitigation in this case would be an alternative location for development which does not harm the setting and significance of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village.





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#### Summary of EH's assessment of the application

In our view the application underestimates the visual impact and the consequent level of harm that would be brought by the development on the setting and significance of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village monument. The existing presence of visually intrusive development (concrete towers, dumps and tips etc.) is not an acceptable explanation or justification for further intrusive development of the kind proposed. The suggested landscape mitigation will itself have an adverse impact on setting and is not acceptable. Appropriate mitigation in this case would be an alternative location which does not harm the setting and significance of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village.

Taking all the impacts into account, the development would have a more significant impact than is presented by the application and its associated information. In our view, the development would significantly materially alter the baseline setting of the monument. The magnitude of impact would be greater than the application states, and the significance of the predicted effect of the development would be correspondingly more significant.

The high heritage significance and amenity value of the Gainsthorpe Medieval Village monument, its high public value, and its high sensitivity to impacts from new development, mean that the level of justification in terms of public benefit that is required for developments that harm the heritage significance of the monument is especially high. In our view, the application has not demonstrated that the level of harm brought by the development is justified or outweighed by public benefits.

We consider that in relation to the importance of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village, the degree of harm brought by the proposed development on the setting and heritage significance of this heritage asset would be very significant. In NPPF terminology, it would be 'substantial'. According to NPPF, 'substantial harm ...to scheduled monuments... should be wholly exceptional' (para 132); 'local authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss'. In the applicant's view the harm is less than substantial, but according to national policy, development having less than substantial harm the application still requires clear justification in the public interest, and the harm should be weighed against the wider benefits of the application (NPPF para 134).

#### *Alternative proposals*

As mentioned above, the presence of the existing concrete towers, dumps and tips etc. is not an acceptable explanation or justification for further intrusive development of the kind proposed. Instead of extending and increasing the visual intrusion of development close to Gainsthorpe Medieval Village, as is proposed, new development should take the opportunity to reduce visual intrusion, through sympathetic location and design. The redundancy of the cement works and the re-use of the site provide an ideal opportunity for the applicant and





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the local authority to enhance the setting of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village, in line with national and local planning policies encouraging development within the setting of heritage assets that 'makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness', and which 'enhances or better reveals the significance' of the assets. (See section on Relevant Policies below.)

For a business associated with environmental sustainability, it is especially important that proper account should also be taken of the sustainability of local landscape character and of the historic environment, and especially of the sustainability of the significance of nationally important heritage assets of such high status and public value as Gainsthorpe Medieval Village.

#### Relevant policies

In view of the importance and sensitivity of the affected designated heritage asset of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village, the impact on its setting and significance is an important material planning consideration.

Relevant policies are NPPF policies relating to the historic environment in paragraphs 126-141. Paras 131-134, relate to impact of development on heritage assets. In this case English Heritage regards that the current development proposal would lead to substantial harm to the designated heritage asset of the Scheduled Monument of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village (NPPF paras 132 and 133 apply: 'substantial harm ...to scheduled monuments... should be wholly exceptional' (132); 'local authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss' (133). Where harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset is less than substantial, NPPF para 134 applies: 'Where development proposal would 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...

Also relevant are:

- NPPF para 131, which states that local authorities should take account of 'the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness',
- NPPF para 137 regarding developments within the settings of heritage assets, where local authorities are advised 'to look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas...and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.'





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In our view the proposed development and its proposed mitigation scheme does not satisfy either of these policies: the proposal does not make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and would not preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the significance of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village, nor would it better reveal the significance of the heritage assets here.

The impact of the proposals on designated heritage assets may also conflict with the requirements of policies in the Local Plan.

#### **Recommendation**

In English Heritage's view the application significantly underestimates the potential impact of the development on the setting and significance of the Gainsthorpe monument. In our view, the proposals do not enhance or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset. We consider that the development will have a harmful impact on the setting of the site, and would substantially harm its heritage significance and public value as a heritage asset. The suggested landscape mitigation scheme would not provide acceptable mitigation for the harm brought by the proposed development. The application has not demonstrated that the harm it would bring to the heritage asset of Gainsthorpe Medieval Village is outweighed or justified by any public benefits of the proposed development. For these reasons the proposal is contrary to national and local planning policy on the historic environment and English Heritage objects to the application and recommends that it is refused.

We recommend that a joint approach by the applicants, the council and English Heritage be pursued to explore the possibility of less harmful options for development here, and which take full account of the need to sustain the historic environment and heritage assets.

Yours sincerely

**Keith Miller**

Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings

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