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Modern living in an historic environment

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and assessment of ridge and furrow earthworks on land off Barby Road, Kilsby, Northamptonshire

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Summary

Two plots of land at Kilsby proposed for development contain a little buried archaeology under a former plot containing split earthworks of former ridge and furrow plough cultivation. This discrete survival is against a landscape otherwise largely denuded of such remains, having been ploughed out or otherwise lost, leaving the resource not fully coherent on the ground. It also lacks good documentation. Published reconstruction of such earthworks county-wide and contributory research shows that Kilsby is a parish where such remains are very much part of a denuded pre-enclosure landscape, and industry-standard assessment shows that these are not considered for preservation.

Introduction

An outline planning application is to be lodged with Daventry District Council to construct up to 65 new homes on land astride the Barby Road, Kilsby, Northamptonshire in line with growing housing needs identified within the district.

The land is known to have a small area of earthworks derived from pre-enclosure ridge and furrow plough cultivation. This comprises a non-designated heritage asset and has warranted careful consideration, as has archaeology beneath it.

The site comprises two land plots in different ownership, which lie astride the Barby Road on the south-west side of the village at NGR: SP 558 710 (southern plot) and SP 558 710 (northern plot).

The site lies at approximately 135m above Ordnance Datum and is mapped as lying upon Dyrham formation –siltstone and mudstone, interbedded. There may be some superficial Oadby member diamicton till at its east side. (www.bgs.ac.uk).



Fig 1: Site locations (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown Copyright and database right 2014

This report is produced at a time when detailed geophysical survey has already been carried out on both land plots, so by way of archaeological evaluation, a record has been made and a high degree of understanding is already possible of remains on the site without intervention. For this reason, this report primarily addresses the survival and relative importance of the ridge and furrow earthworks on the site.

It is not intended to provide an overview of all the wider archaeology of the area, since the extent of buried remains on the site is already known from the geophysics and their likely context relates to pre-ridge and furrow bedding trenches, not an occupation focus. These have been assessed by the Principal Archaeological Advisor to Daventry District Council, Lesley-Anne Mather, Northamptonshire County Council, who has agreed that their loss in the proposed development can be fully mitigated through a planning condition.

Heritage assets within easy direct sight of the application site are considered, however, both designated and un-designated.

Historic Environment Record

The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (held by Northamptonshire County Council) was consulted for Statutorily Designated Heritage Assets (Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings) within 1km of the application site, along with non-designated heritage assets, and the results of previous archaeological interventions ('events').

There are no Statutorily Designated Heritage Assets on the application site.

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Two Grade II Listed Buildings/structures stand a short distance from the application site as follows (legacy listings):

13/181 The Hollies and attached barn

House. C18. Datestone 1746/Z.F. Coursed squared ironstone and limestone, tile roof, flanking brick stacks. 2 storeys and attic; 4 bays. Windows in outer bays on ground floor have wood lintels and 3-light casements with transom. Similar two-light windows in second bay from right, and second bay from left; 2-light transomed casement windows with wood lintels to first floor. 2 skylights to attic. Coped gable ends with kneelers. Entrance in C20 extension at rear. Interior not inspected. Barn attached to right side at rear. Coursed limestone and ironstone rubble, corrugated iron roof. 3 bays; one storey with loft. Cart entrance in right bay, enlarged C20, has wood lintel and brick jambs. Doorway with wood lintel and plank door with overlight in left bay. Blank stone plaque with moulded hood to right. 3-light opening with wood lintel and wood mullions to left. Interior: old chamfered spine beams to left floors. Floors and roof timbers C20. Listing NGR: SP5593171087

13/182 Wall approx. 2n. SW of The Hollies

Wall. C18/early C19. Cob construction with coursed limestone rubble plinth and tile coping. Listing NGR: SP5593871085

(from www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk)

The Historic Environment Record notes the following entries as on or close to the site (those on the site are in **bold type**):

No	Also known as	Name	Detail	Status
9826/0/20		Ridge and Furrow earthworks		None
9826/0/21		Ridge and Furrow earthworks		None
472	MNN3520	Village of Kilsby		None
472/5		The Hollies		
472/5/1	DNN1852	The Hollies and attached barn	C18th house and barn	Grade II Listed building
472/5/2	DNN1855	Wall 2m SW of The Hollies	Cob wall	Grade II Listed building
472/0/3	DNN1844	Hunt House	C17 house	Grade II Listed building
472/0/8	DNN1858	The Gables and Gailyn	C17-18 houses	Grade II Listed building
472/0/26	DNN1848	Japonica	C18 house	Grade II Listed building

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The following fieldwork is recorded of relevance to the above entries.

Interventions or fieldwork	Type	Contractor	Output	Date
ENN107557	Geophysical survey (north site)	MoLA	Report pending	2014
ENN102275	Listed buildings survey	Clews architects	Listings in Kilsby	1980s

A further geophysical survey carried out in 2014 on the southern site is not yet recorded on the HER.

While the current HER search covered the entire village, only the above are of any relevance to the current application as lying on or within a short distance of the application site. The ridge and furrow is dealt with below as its survival and relative quality warrant particular attention.

The nearest of the Listed Buildings, The Hollies (with its adjacent barn and separately-listed cob wall), is the only one of the local designations which might have been impacted by the current application, in respect of its setting. In fact as a moderating factor, the new development is stood off from the rear of The Hollies (with an undeveloped strip between), which will minimise any visual impact of the prospect from and aspect of the Listed Building. Also existing hedge boundaries between will be maintained and new ones introduced. Impact is therefore considered to be minimal.



Fig 2: Looking south across the southern plot from the Barby Road; Stephenson Court to back, left.



Fig 3: Looking north-east across the northern plot from a roadside gate on Barby Road; 15a Main road in the distance, right.

Recent Archaeological Survey

Two geophysical surveys have recently taken place on both parcels of the current application site. One of them is noted above in the HER (ENN107557, above). This one, to the north of the Barby Road, detected the magnetic anomalies redolent of the ridge and furrow earthworks which are present on the site, while also noting a small concentration of magnetic anomalies of unknown origin or character in the south west of the field (Walford 2014). These have been interpreted as possible cultivation trenches (Lesley-Anne Mather, email on file).

Another recent survey to the south of Barby Road also found an area of magnetic anomalies, consistent with the survival of ridge-and furrow earthworks, together with a probable ditch or drainage gully along the western edge of the same (Stratascan 2014). This is not yet recorded on the HER (see above)

Historic maps and documents

Although the Enclosure Act of 1778 for Kilsby survives, and a list of Enclosure field names is known, they cannot be assigned a place on the ground with any confidence. This is because no enclosure map has survived for Kilsby, which might have indicated the original enclosure field names and (in occasional cases), provided names for the pre-enclosure furlongs and strips which characterised the open fields of the medieval and early post-medieval periods.

The earliest surviving map of Kilsby was made at small scale as part of the drawings made by and for the early Ordnance Survey (between around 1810 and 1820 locally; Fig 4). Although the small scale

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precludes interpretation with any great confidence, the simple (and possibly simplified) field layout may be close to the original enclosure configuration, within about a generation of the act.



Fig 4: The village as mapped for the Ordnance Survey Surveyors around 1817. The application site (arrowed) is discernible to the lower left of village, relative to the dog-leg in the Barby Road

The first properly surveyed map of the village is that of 1848, which may be a Tithe Map (it is certainly of the right period (c1835-50) and exhibits the relevant detail. However, it is not labelled as an enclosure document and there exists no accompanying tithe apportionment to give names to the numbered land plots, amongst which the current application site can broadly be discerned.

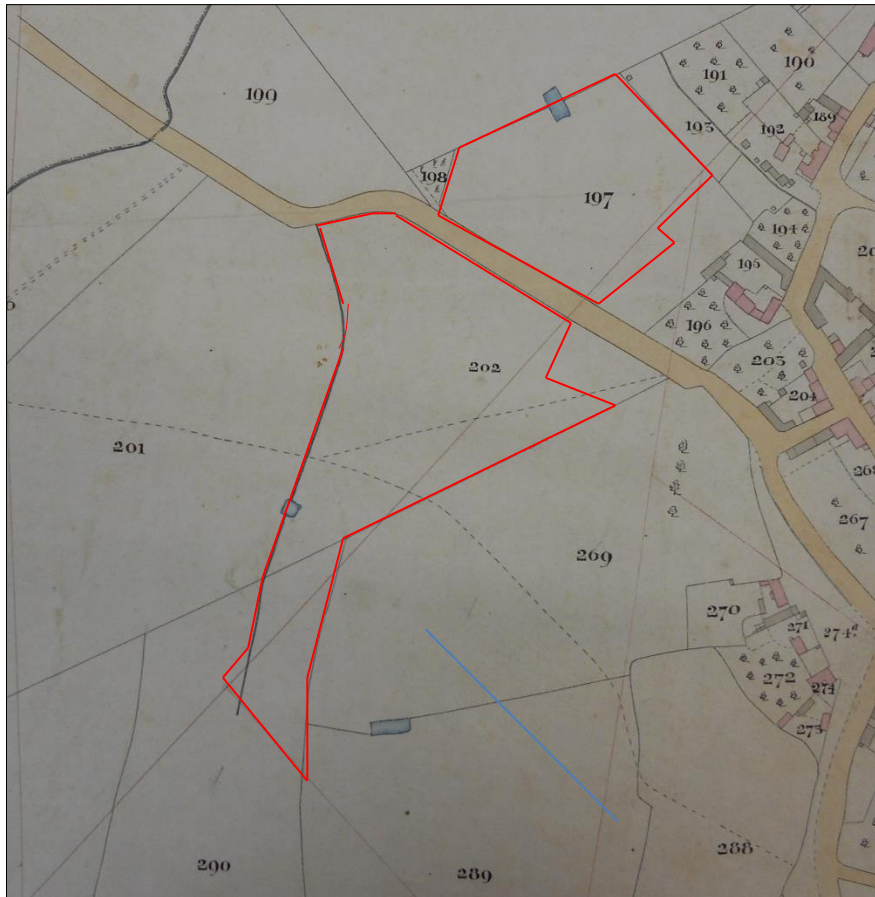


Fig 5: The south-west side of Kilsby and the Barby Road in 1848 (Extract from NRO Map 6480). This map was probably a Tithe Map, but no apportionment survives for it. The two application plots can for the first time be transposed relatively accurately onto this base-map. Since the map was produced, housing has covered all the land plots east of 202 (the southern site), and most of those small plots east of 197 (the northern site). None of the numbered plots have an extant tithe apportionment to name them at this date.

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Fig 6: 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map of Kilsby 1900. This shows the application sites (lower left, arrowed) with little change from 1848 and Fig 5. The numbered plots remain unnamed.

In 1932 primary school children across Northamptonshire were asked to provide a survey for the fieldnames in every parish. The results, often transposed onto an Ordnance survey map of the day or onto a home-made map, were very patchy. Some of the more agriculturally aware schools (with many local farm-children amongst their ranks) are very complete, others less so. The result for Kilsby identified names for less than 25% of the post-enclosure fields of the parish, with none to the south west of the village, one of the poorer results in the area. These today all reside in the Northamptonshire Record Office.

This poor return may simply be because by 1932 many of the farms within the parish were farmed from ownerships outside and the children may not have been generally known at the farms, precluding easy visiting, or that for the same reason, if the relevant farmers had children of primary school age, they did not attend Kilsby but elsewhere. Whatever the reason, 75% of the land went unnamed on the resulting map.

The best scale-coverage of the village's fields was made by the RAF on 13 April 1947, as part of a county-wide survey by systematic overflights (13/4/47; 58 sqdn CPE/UK/1994 Frame 1354; Fig 7). This coverage provides the benchmark for the widest recorded survival of Northamptonshire's ridge and furrow plough cultivation earthworks. It was the basis for much of the reconstruction which has

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been possible for the medieval field systems across the entire county and published in 2012 (Partida et al 2012; map m29 for Kilsby).



Fig 7: RAF Aerial Photograph Frame 1354-detail (NRO X80), showing the ridge and furrow earthworks. This view has red-lined areas to illustrate that the historic village-edge adjacent to the site has been lost since 1900/1947. A great deal of wider cultivation earthworks have been lost to development 1947-2014 and the same (in purple) to the M45 corridor, leaving those on the development site without proper context. The yellow line shows how even the Barby Road cut through the relict earthworks, actually on the site in question.

Although many are taken from 16,000 feet, the aerial photographic prints clearly show the extensive survival of ridge and furrow earthworks across the county at that date. Subsequent changes in farming practice and development, including the entire modern overhaul of our road system has removed the majority of such earthworks. Kilsby too has lost much of its ridge and furrow earthworks, leaving a fragmented survival of disparate plots much of it bereft of coherence.

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Characterising Kilsby in the historic landscape

The Village of Kilsby is set out in the County's Historic Landscape Characterisation as *Type 11 Fragmented Modern Fields*, more particularly HLC Area *11a Nene Valley: Dodford to Onley*. Of this area it notes:

The fragmented nature of the areas means that the patterning of the fieldscapes varies. In places the original parliamentary enclosure layout is maintained, albeit with boundaries having been removed, whilst elsewhere this process of grubbing out hedgerows has created large irregular shaped fields. Modern communication routes and recreational areas as well as more 'pristine' examples of earlier enclosure further break up these fieldscapes.

The settlements that are located within these modern fieldscapes have been subject to a number of processes and changes that have created a mixed picture. Generally the villages have not been subject to extensive 20th-century expansion. Where modern development has occurred, it has largely been in the form of infilling in and around the historic cores.

The growth of Kilsby out to the edge of the current application site illustrates this characterisation perfectly and the current application is considered to be a continuation of this process.

Comparison of more recent Ordnance Survey maps show that the infill development around the historic village core noted above on the west and south-west of the village (adjacent to the current application site) has taken place at regular intervals, in line with the growth of the village population in the years since 1947, when the site was recorded in the aerial photographic coverage (above).

This has taken place as follows (from Ordnance Survey mapping):

Land north of Barby Road

9 Main Road - Developed between 1971 and 1982 (adjoining Grade II Listed 'The Hollies')

15 Main Road - Developed between 1971 and 1982 (adjoining Grade II Listed 'The Hollies')

15a Main Road - Developed between 1982 and 1991 (adjoining Grade II Listed 'The Hollies')

Thus the original setting and context of The Hollies has been lost to relatively recent infill, altering its aspect and outward prospect considerably.

Land South of Barby Road (all directly bordering the current application site)

Devon Ox Road and properties on west - Developed between 1947 and 1960

23 Barby Road - Developed between 1947 and 1960

Land east of Devon Ox Road - Developed between 1960 and 1971

19, 21 Barby Road - Developed between 1971 and 1982

Stephenson Court - Developed between 1981 and 1992

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These developments have incrementally built over the south-western edge of the village core, eventually swelling out to meet the edge of the nearest ridge and furrow (the present site). Most took place before any widespread understanding and survey of the historic environment so the gradual loss went unnoticed. However, it does show that areas which once might have been considered 'back yards' and where vestigial village-edge earthworks might have survived, to provide the historic core with its vital early context and interface have been lost. The patch of ridge and furrow on the site now butts up against modern back gardens without any historic village edge. The original context has been lost, as has the intervening enclosure pattern, the latter only now discernible to a small group of those who can carry out historic map-regression and have an understanding of historic landscape evolution.

Discussion

The two fields which are the subject of the current planning application are the product of Parliamentary Enclosure of the Open fields of the village of Kilsby, which took place in 1777-8. While the Act for the Enclosure survives, and a schedule, no accompanying map has survived so the names of the newly enclosed fields cannot be matched up to a map depiction. This dearth of a map at that time extends to any mapped reference to the Pre-enclosure layout of the fields, of which ridge and furrow cultivation earthworks are the visible reminder.

By chance, contemporary with Kilsby's enclosure, the 1777 Militia List notes that the menfolk of the village (aged 18-45) included at least thirteen farming families (with no account possible of those who had daughters only or whose sons were under-age), while there were eleven wool-combers and 33 weavers, testament to the local dependency on wool (making woollen caps and the inference of using the fleeces of locally-grazed sheep) (Hatley 1973, 47).

By 1822, a full generation after Enclosure, Kilsby is reported as having 20% of its land given over to arable farming (the remainder is split to an unknown degree between pasture –including meadow and woodland) (Baker 1822, II, 400). Baker also notes that the parish is also marked by numerous Marl Pits (with evidence back to the 13th century) and gravel pits.

Farm numbers in the 19th-century declined quickly, dropping by a third between 1849 and 1874, with small farmers dwindling by half in the same period (Hatton 1988, 89).

The disparate farming influences on the village are typified by the number of farms and plots which were increasingly owned by minor landed gentry who lived outside Kilsby elsewhere in the area, leaving them prey to external influences. Such was the experience, for instance, of Llamas Farm and Grove Farm, which were both worked out of the ownership of Ashby St Ledgers Hall. When in 1919 the Hall was sold, the Kilsby farms were sold at auction. Grove Farm was sold again in 1942 (NRO SC604, SC481; for the disparate nature of farms and land-sales in the parish see also D1578 (1832) & SC122 (1902)).

One further possible result of this agricultural fragmentation was that during the 19th century the numbers of inhabitants in the village shrank dramatically, from 700 in around 1822-30 to 480 in 1912 (and presumably dropped further in World War I). It had barely increased to c500 in the early 1950s, but was saved by modern expansion which took it to c1200 in 1988 (Hatton 1988, 68 citing Baker

1822). This was an increase of 41% over the 38 year period c1950-1988, but it had changed little by 2011.

The former open fields and the pre-enclosure agricultural regime of Kilsby was summarised in a county-wide survey published in 1995 (Hall 1995, 303-4).

This same survey played a major part in the recent published two-volume map-reconstruction of the entire medieval ridge and furrow regime of the entire county of Northamptonshire (Foard et al 2009; Partida et al 2013, map M29).

Assessing and ranking the ridge and furrow earthworks

Approach to Measuring Impacts

The categories used to assign a value to cultural heritage assets are drawn from those outlined in the Cultural Heritage chapter of the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (HA 2007; vol 11, section 3). The methods used to calculate the relative value of the ridge and furrow have in this instance been drawn from *Turning the Plough* (Hall 2001).

Importance/Sensitivity

Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework recognises that those heritage assets with the highest level of significance comprise Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens and World Heritage Sites. In paragraph 139 it states that non-designated heritage assets that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments, be considered subject to the same policies.

Table 1: Importance of Resource

Importance	Definition
High	Sites of international/national importance including those that are designated as World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments or those that are considered to be suitable for scheduling, grade I and grade II* listed buildings, registered battlefields, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, sites that have the potential to significantly contribute to national research objectives
Medium	Sites of regional importance may include grade II listed buildings, grade II registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and those sites which are considered to be significant regional examples with well-preserved evidence of occupation, industry etc, sites that have the potential to contribute to regional research objectives

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Importance	Definition
Low	Sites which are of less-defined extent, nature and date or which are in a poor or fragmentary state, but which are considered to be significant examples in a local context; important hedgerows; locally listed buildings
Negligible	Sites with little or no surviving archaeological remains, buildings of no architectural or historical note

Magnitude of Impact

The magnitude of impact is a measure of the effect of the proposed development on known heritage assets. It is assessed without regard to the value of the resource. Any proposed development could potentially have a direct or indirect impact on the archaeological resource. The magnitude of impact may be adverse or beneficial.

Table 2: Magnitude of Impact

Magnitude of Impact	Definition
Substantial adverse	Changes to most or all key archaeological/built or landscape elements such that the resource is totally altered in an adverse manner. Comprehensive adverse changes to the character or setting of the asset
Moderate adverse	Changes to many key archaeological/built or landscape elements such that the site is clearly modified in an adverse manner. Considerable changes to setting that adversely affect the character of the asset
Slight adverse	Changes to key archaeological/built or landscape elements such that there are slight adverse alterations to the site/building or slight adverse changes to the setting
Negligible	Very minor changes to elements or setting
Slight beneficial	Changes to key archaeological/built or landscape elements such that there are slight beneficial alterations to the site/building or slight beneficial changes to the setting
Moderate beneficial	Changes to many key archaeological/built or landscape elements such that the site is clearly modified in a beneficial manner. Considerable changes to setting that beneficially affect the character of the asset

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Magnitude of Impact	Definition
Substantial beneficial	Changes to most or all key archaeological/built or landscape elements such that the resource is totally altered in a beneficial manner. Comprehensive beneficial changes to the character or setting of the asset

Significance

The significance of the impact on the Historic Environment is assessed by combining the value, or sensitivity, of the heritage asset with the predicted severity of the impact. Where a choice of two impact significance descriptors is available, only one is chosen. A likely significant effect on a cultural heritage feature is considered to occur when a major impact is predicted or when moderate impact is predicted for an asset of high sensitivity. Significance of effects can be both adverse and beneficial. These are discussed fully within the text.

Defining the significance of the effect seeks to take account of the magnitude of impact and the relative importance of the receptor, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Significance of Effect

Importance of resource	Magnitude of Impact			
	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible

Description of monument

The ridge and furrow earthworks are present across both fields of the proposed development site, although due to varied grazing, are only visible in the northern third of the southern site. The earthworks in the southern field appear to be in good condition; they have a relatively high profile and seem not to have been ploughed. At the time of the site visit, the northern field was relatively overgrown and the condition of the ridge and furrow difficult to determine. However, the earthworks on the northern side of the road seemed not to be so high. The ridge and furrow earthworks in the southern field and those in the southern part of the northern field are all aligned north-south, suggesting that not only were they part of a single furlong, but that they predate the current alignment of the Barby Road, which has cut across them. Part of a second furlong of ridge and furrow earthworks aligned north-west to south-east is present in the northern part of the north field.

Aerial photography indicates that there was extensive survival of ridge and furrow across the parish until 1947, but that subsequently many of the surrounding fields have been ploughed, and in many

cases the earthworks have been ploughed flat. Low earthworks may survive in the field directly to the north-west of the northern field, but these have been ploughed at least once (Google Earth shows the field under cultivation in 2004). Development out from the village since 1947 has accounted for most settlement-edge earth works, and the M45 Motorway has cut across the landscape, engendering differing agricultural regimes to either side.

Assessment of the monument

The township of Kilsby was not identified as a priority township for preservation in *Turning the Plough*. A more extensive list of ridge and furrow areas suggested for preservation was put forward in the 1993 management document *The Open Fields of Northamptonshire*. Kilsby was not identified within this list either (Hall 1993, 32-39).

Although the earthworks lie on the western edge of the historic settlement, there is extensive modern development to the south-east and scattered development to the east (out from the historic core), severing the historical connection between the ridge and furrow and its parent settlement. There are no earthworks relating to the medieval village within the site to provide the settlement-edge context which it otherwise lacks, the relevant zone having already been developed.

No maps survive which might be deployed to link the ridge and furrow to named furlongs, nor even to the subsequent post-enclosure field-layout. In each case where a schedule exists, it is unaccompanied by a map; conversely each map carries no accompanying schedule of fields.

The geophysical surveys have not identified any likely anomalies that relate to adjacent medieval settlement. While there are parts of two furlongs present within the two fields, no other associated features were apparent.

The ridge and furrow surviving within the site represents a small area of survival, largely divorced from other remaining ridge and furrow earthworks and thus does not now form part of a more coherent field system.

It is considered that the importance of the ridge and furrow within the proposed development is *low* - significant only in a local context. In terms of the proposed development, there would be a *substantial adverse* magnitude of impact, with a consequent moderate significance of impact.

In view of this the loss of the earthworks already-recorded by geophysics, noted in aerial photographs (in better days) and taken into account by Hall for his 1993 proposals and 1995 report, may be mitigated by topographical or earthwork hachure-survey, the results deposited for future reference.

Conclusions and recommendation

The two plots of land at Kilsby proposed for development contain a little buried archaeology under a former plot containing split earthworks of former ridge and furrow plough cultivation. This discrete, happenstance survival is today a small part of a patchwork of survivals which largely lack coherence, the majority of similar earthworks having been denuded, ploughed out or otherwise lost. Published reconstruction of such earthworks county-wide, and contributory research shows that Kilsby is a parish where such remains are very much part of a denuded pre-enclosure landscape, not considered a priority for preservation.

The site contains earthworks of former ridge and furrow plough cultivation. The medieval agrarian landscape has been addressed in the regional resource assessment (Lewis in Cooper 2006, 2007-8). That assessment was carried forward into a research agenda (item 7.2), of which the relevant objective is 7 (I) (Knight et al 2012, 94-5). In order to address this, the best examples of earthworks are needed for study, such as those across Northamptonshire, which in 2014 English Heritage chose to Schedule as Ancient Monuments under the 1979 Ancient Monuments Act. These comprise the best preserved complexes in the county, many of which had already been identified by the foregoing survey and list of priority sites in Hall (1993). The Kilsby example has not been identified as worthy of preservation when the entire resource was looked at.

Set against the wider county resource the Kilsby survivals have been previously left out of the county lists for preservation, assessed as being of *low* importance. Although this is so, the effects of the development would nevertheless be *substantial adverse*; therefore in accordance with the industry-standard assessment of *Turning the Plough* and *Highways Agency* assessment (above), their loss may be sanctioned, but mitigation put in place for their loss, which *should be by record*. This will facilitate what limited contribution they may still make to the regional research agenda in Cooper (2006) and Knight et al (2012).

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