G R MERCHANT LTD
ARCHITECTURAL & PLANNING CONSULTANTS

4 Wrights Mews
12A Park Road, Holbeach
Spalding, Lincolnshire. PE12 7EE
Telephone: 01406 490800
E-Mail: office@grmerchantltd.com
Web: www.grmerchantltd.com

"NPPF 2026"

This appeal is following refusal of a Planning Application under reference H13-0395-26 dated 23rd June 2026.

The revised National Policy Framework, which was published on 17th August 2026 and the inspector has asked us to comment on this matter in relation to this application.

Under the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), an infill plot located within an established residential area but outside a formal settlement boundary is directly supported by Policy S5(1)(e). This policy explicitly establishes a national decision-making route that allows limited infilling within groups of houses outside settlements. The 2026 framework helps override traditional planning barriers for these specific types of plots in several key ways:

1. Overriding Restrictive Local Plan Formulas
Many Local Plans enforce highly restrictive, arbitrary rules for rural or edge-of-boundary infill—such as requiring a minimum number of existing homes (e.g., a cluster of at least 5 or 10) or a precise continuous street frontage. Policy S5(1)(e) does not include any numerical or frontage-based tests. Furthermore, under Annex A of the 2026 framework, if a council's local infill policy is materially inconsistent with this national approach, it is stripped of its power and carries very limited weight.

2. No Requirement to Prove "Unmet Housing Need"
While other edge-of-settlement housing developments under Policy S5(1)(j) require a developer to prove a local shortfall (like a failing 5-year housing land supply or a sub-75% Housing Delivery Test score), limited infilling is an independent route. You do not need to prove the council is failing its housing targets; the fact that the plot is an infill gap within an established group of houses is enough in principle to justify development.

3. Protection from Being Classed as an "Isolated Dwelling"
Historically, planning departments frequently blocked plots outside settlement boundaries by labelling them as "isolated dwellings in the countryside." Because this plot sits within an *established residential area*, Policy S5 officially recognises it as a "recognisable house group" rather than an isolated site, exempting it from the incredibly strict architectural or operational hurdles reserved for truly isolated homes (Policy HO11).

4. Cleaner Path Even Within the Green Belt
This site does not site within the Green Belt.

Because the NPPF does not explicitly define the exact metric for "limited" or a "group of houses," decisions come down to a matter of fact and degree.

A genuine gap**:** A physical, unbuilt space bound by existing houses on either side.
Completing the frontage: A scheme that reads as completing an established building line or closing a small pocket of land, rather than extending or spreading development out into the open countryside.

This site is a typical infill plot that sites between two existing dwellings. The landscape of the main views from East and West will not be changed. No trees or hedges are being removed for this development to happen. The site will not be at odds with the open countryside. This site is within a 10-minute walk to the village centre, where public transport can be sort for further afield journeys. The access and services are all suitable and are in order for this to be offered on the open market for a self-build project for a local couple to build their dream home in a quiet unique location.

G R Merchant Ltd
October 2026