DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING

Application No:	**H13-0458-25**	**Applicant:**	**Moulton Windmill Project**
Proposal:	Proposed siting of photovoltaic panels on existing roof		
Location:	The Mill High Street Moulton		
Terminal Date:	31st July 2025		

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019

01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
28	The Natural Environment
29	The Historic Environment
31	Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework December 2024

Section 14: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	0	0	0	0
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	0
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OFFICER	0	0	0	1

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the installation of solar panels on the southern roof plane of the former granary building of Moulton Mill. A manufactures specification has been submitted as part of the application and a Heritage Statement and BNG Exemption Statement.

A separate application seeking listed building consent for the work has been submitted under application reference H13-0459-25 and is being considered concurrently.

Site Description

Moulton Mill is a Grade I listed building constructed in 1822, with a three storey former granary building attached dating from the early nineteenth century, with upper floors added in 1985. The Mill is also located within the Moulton Conservation Area.

The list description of the building reads:

MOULTON HIGH STREET
TF 32 SW (east side)
9/105 Windmill (formerly listed 7.2.67 with buildings at 20.10.87 entrance to road)
G.V. I

Tower mill. c.1822, by Robert King, 1895, 1928. Brown brick. Corrugated iron shallow pointed roof of 1928, with finial, and dentillated brick eaves. 8 storeys plus basement, a total of 80 feet in height to the curb. 18 feet, 9 inches in diameter at ground level; 12 feet in diameter at curb. 3 round basement openings, one each to the south-east, south-west and north-west. To the north is a large drive wheel, part of steam engine gearing inserted after 1895 after the sails had been damaged by gales. West side with flanking flights of 8 stone steps on each side that lead up to doorway with cambered head and panelled door. 7 glazing bar casements, one above the other, above; that on the third floor inserted into blocked doorway that originally gave access to reefing stage. North and south sides each with 8 glazing bar casements, one above the other above. East side with a 2 storey granary attached masking the lower 3 storeys, the ground floor of early C19 and rendered, the upper floors of 1895 and in red brick. Both storeys with pivotal glazing bar casements. 5 glazing bar casements rise one above the other, above the roof of the granary. All the windows with cambered heads. Almost all the internal machinery survives intact. The basement contains the engine drive gearing of c.1895 which originally powered the subsidiary shaft rising up to the great spur wheel. The first floor contains an electrically powered Turner Inkoos Mill, a Kibbler and a Hunt's roller mill. The second floor contains storage bins and the third, originally the spent floor with bridge trees and now missing the governor. 2 pairs of French stones remain in place on the fourth floor, one inscribed: 'WJ & T Child.Maker. Hull. 1853'. Pair of grey stones lean against wall. Spur wheel with iron nuts andmorticed wooden cogs, iron hub and rib, with wooden radiating spokes. Small iron nut engages the subsidiary drive shaft. Fifth and sixth floors with bins intact. Upper two floors are empty. Above, the wallower with chamfered and stopped wooden shaft with upper iron section, and an exceptional wooden clasp arm bevel wheel with wooden cogs. Endless chain sack hoist formerly driven from a friction rim on the underside of the wheel. Hexagonal wooden curb frame built into the brickwork, with iron track, inward facing tooth ring and centring wheels running below. The wind shaft no longer exists but the tail bearing housing remains. This is the tallest windmill in the country (not including the tallest complete windmill, including the cap, at Sutton in Norfolk). Source: Dolman, p.23. Buildings at entrance to road now demolished.
Listing NGR: TF3075524035

History

No recent or relevant site history.

Consultation Responses

Responses Received (consultation period between 17th June 2025 and 8th July 2025)

No response received.

Conservation Officer

No response received.

Senior Ecologist

No response received.

Historic Environment Officer

Has reservations about the application in its current form. The proposed installation may result in a degree of harm to the significance of the Grade I listed building and its setting, and the public benefit case has not been robustly demonstrated. It is suggested that alternative design solutions, such as photovoltaic roof tiles, repositioning, or a time-limited consent, could be considered as a way to reduce potential harm while supporting environmental goals.

Highway and Lead Local Flood Authority

No objections.

Historic England

Historic England is concerned that the proposed location of the photovoltaics on the south roof slope would look visually obtrusive and harmfully impact the significance of the Grade I listed mill and that of the Moulton Conservation Area.

Historic England encourage the consideration of alternative ways to generate renewable energy, such as ground-mounted solar collectors, which would be less harmful to the significance of the Grade I listed mill.

Public Representation

The application has been advertised in accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. In this instance, no letters of representation have been received.

Planning Considerations

The main issues and considerations in this instance are:

Principle of Development and Sustainability
Heritage Considerations
Biodiversity Net Gain

Evaluation

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019, forms the development plan for the District, and is the basis for decision making in South Holland. The relevant development plan policies are detailed within the report above.

The policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (updated December 2024) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

Furthermore, where a Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted, this alongside the adopted Local Plan, forms part of the Development Plan for the District, and must be considered when assessing development proposals. In this instance, no relevant neighbourhood plans have been adopted.

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990, concerns

whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting and requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special or architectural interest which is possesses.

Within Conservation Areas, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, requires that special attention is paid in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or
enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

Principle of Development and Sustainability.

The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) December 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It advises that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives; an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective, which are interdependent and should be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) sets out the settlement hierarchy in respect of delivering sustainable development that meets the social and economic needs of the area whilst protecting and enhancing the environment.

Policy 1 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) (SELLP) sets out a spatial strategy for delivering sustainable development across South East Lincolnshire to 2036. Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy) expresses this sustainable framework of settlements, ranking the settlements deemed to be most sustainable in descending order.

The application site is located within Moulton, defined under Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy) as a 'Minor Service Centre'. The Policy advises within the settlement boundary of minor service centres development will be permitted that supports their role as a service centre for the settlement itself, helps sustain existing facilities or helps meet the service needs of other local communities.

Moulton Mill is located within the settlement boundary, the proposal seeks the installation of solar panels on an existing facility. The provision of renewable energy facilities is considered positively by Policy 31 of the SELLP subject to there being no significant harm to several criteria, including heritage assets and their setting and the natural environment.

The principle of the provision of solar panels within the settlement boundary therefore accords with the requirements of Policy 1 of the SELLP subject to the consideration of all other material factors which are assessed in the sections below.

Heritage Considerations

The effect of the proposal on the special interest, including the setting, of the listed building.

The Framework, at paragraph 202, advises heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a matter appropriate to their significance. Further stating, at paragraph 212,"when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation."

Policy 29 of the SELLP advises that to respect the historic legacy, varied character and appearance of South East Lincolnshire's historic environment, development proposals are required to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Policy 29(A1) states:

Proposals to change the use of a listed building or alter or extend such a building will be granted where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposal is in the interests of the building's preservation and does not involve activities or alterations prejudicial to the special architectural interest or its setting.

Moulton Mill is a Grade I listed building, is located within the Moulton Conservation Area, its significance lies in its architectural and historic interest. The proposal seeks planning permission for

the installation of solar panels on the south elevation of the former granary building, attached to the east of the windmill. Although the roof covering of the building is not original fabric, the existing metal covering is simple in form and does not detract from nor compete with the sublimity of the Windmill. In contrast, it is considered that the proposed solar panels ,covering almost the entire roof slope, would have a stark and incongruous appearance which would harm the architectural and historic character of the Grade I listed building.

Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) states that where a proposed development would lead to less that substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The applicant considers that due to the subtle nature of the works, the fact that they are minimal and do not affect important historic fabric and generally can be reversed the harm cause to the significance of the listed building would be less than substantial.

It is acknowledged that the installation of solar panels would give rise to benefits in terms of renewable energy, and whilst no evidence has been presented on the contribution these would make to operational costs of the building or if such an extensive area of panels is needed to meet the energy requirements of the site, the installation of the panels are nonetheless a public benefit in accordance with paragraph 167 of the Framework. However, this benefit is considered modest and does not outweigh the significant harm to the listed building.

The proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of Section 66(1) of the Act and provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The proposal is also contrary to Policies 29 and 31 of the SELLP as there would be harm to the heritage asset including its setting, nor is the local planning authority satisfied that that the proposal does not involve alterations prejudicial to the special architectural interest and setting of the listed building.

Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Moulton Conservation Area.

Policy 29(B) of the SELLP states:

Proposals within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or our of a Conservation Area should preserve (and enhance or reinforce, as appropriate) features that contribute positively to an areas character, appearance and setting.

Moulton Mill retains a high degree of legibility in its form and function, contributing meaningfully to the historic identity of Moulton and the wider Conservation Area. Moreover, the southern elevation of the structure is highly visible when viewing the Mill from the south. It is considered that the panels would create an incongruous addition to the roof slope and would be intrusive in a manner that would detrimentally detract from the visual quality of the area, failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Moulton Conservation Area.

Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) states that where a proposed development would lead to less that substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The installation of solar panels would give rise to benefits in terms of renewable energy, which although unqualified, are a public benefit in accordance with paragraph 167 of the Framework. However, this benefit is considered moderate and does not outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

The proposal is there contrary to the requirements of Section 72 of the Act and provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The proposal is also contrary to Policies 29 and 31 of the SELLP as there would be harm to the heritage asset and the proposal would not would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Moulton Conservation Area.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is required under a statutory framework introduced under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) and requires developers to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain using standardized biodiversity units measured by statutory biodiversity metrics. This is often referred to as the mandatory requirements

for Biodiversity Net Gain.

The effect of Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition". The effect of this "biodiversity gain condition" is that development granted by this notice must not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan, or
(c) the development is exempt from the biodiversity gain condition.

For applications that are submitted prior to the introduction of this requirement, the development would exempt from the mandatory 10% requirement and as such, the Biodiversity Gain Condition would not apply. However, this application was submitted following the introduction of this legislation. As such, unless comprising development that is exempt from this mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (10%), a condition would be required, as mandatorily set.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Exemption Statement has been submitted as part of the application. This considers the development is subject to the 'de minimis exemption' as the development:
a) does not impact a priority habitat and
b) impacts less than 25square metres (5m by 5m)of on-site habitat that has a biodiversity value greater than zero, and less than 5m of on-site linear habitat.

In justifying the exemption the agent states the proposal seeks the addition of PV panels to the existing roof, no new development is proposed. It is considered the development meets the requirements of the exempt development and is not required to provide Biodiversity Net Gain.

Planning Balance

As detailed above, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2024, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal involves the installation of solar panels, a source of renewable energy which is also considered a public benefit, to which moderate weight is attached. However, the solar panels would create a stark and incongruous addition to the southern roof slope, which ,when viewed in the context of historic character of the Grade I listed building such installation would adversely affect the architectural and historic character of Moulton Mill. Moreover, the solar panels would be highly visible in views of the Windmill from the south which detrimentally detract from the visual quality of the area, failing to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Moulton Conservation Area, to which significant weight is attached.

The proposal is contrary to the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2019, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024 when viewed as a whole. In this instance there are no material considerations that weigh in favour of the proposal and as such the planning balance is against the development.

Conclusion

Taking the above considerations into account, the proposal is considered to be contrary to policies 29 and 31 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019), along with the identified sections contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). There are no significant factors in this case that indicate in favour of the proposal and outweigh the consideration against the proposal and the policies referred to above.

Additional Considerations

Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:
A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).
C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

Human Rights

In making a decision, the Authority should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as South Holland District Council to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority is referred specifically to Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property).

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

Recommendation

Based on the assessment detailed above, it is recommended that the proposal is refused under delegated powers.