Online Comment

Application	H13-0458-25
Location	The Mill High Street Moulton PE12 6QB
Proposal	Proposed siting of photovoltaic panels on existing roof

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Name	Historic Environment Officer
Address	Lincolnshire County Council Lancaster House 36 Orchard Street LN1 1XX
Date Submitted	08-07-25
For/Against	Comments

Heritage significance: Moulton Mill is Britain's tallest windmill, and a Grade I listed building of exceptional historic interest. It retains a high degree of legibility in its form and function, contributing meaningfully to the historic identity of Moulton and the wider conservation area. The building's value lies not only in its scale and engineering but also in its strong association with the region's agricultural and industrial development. The installation of traditional PV panels to the south elevation of the former granary building has the potential to affect the building's character and diminish its contribution to the setting, depending on the scale, design, and visibility of the intervention.

Policy considerations:

Designated heritage asset

Moulton Mill is a designated Grade I listed building, representing the highest level of significance. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024): Par. 212, 213 and 214 apply.

While the installation of traditional solar panels may give rise to concerns in relation to the special interest of the listed building and its contribution to the Moulton Conservation Area, the degree of harm would ultimately need to be assessed by the decision maker, taking into account the significance of the asset, the extent of proposed change, and the supporting justification.

Although the application identifies sustainability as a benefit, the public benefit case as currently presented is limited, with no detailed information on projected energy savings or how the proposal supports the long-term viable use of the building.

It is also relevant to consider NPPF Par. 167, which supports the development of renewable energy technologies, including in proposals that would affect heritage assets. The applicant may reasonably argue that heritage concerns should not outweigh climate objectives; particularly where more sensitive design solutions could reduce the extent of harm while delivering sustainability benefits.

Planning balance: The proposal aims to support the sustainability of the site through on-site energy generation. However, this must be carefully balanced against the potential impact on the significance of a nationally designated heritage asset and its contribution to the conservation area. There may be scope for an alternative approach that better aligns heritage and sustainability objectives. For example, photovoltaic roof tiles (designed to resemble slate) may offer a less visually intrusive solution; especially as the existing corrugated iron roof appears to be a later, less sympathetic addition. A temporary permission or alternative siting strategy could also be explored, subject to detailed design and conservation input.

Recommendation: Based on the above, I have 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. However, I suggest 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. Given the site's designation and location within a conservation area, Historic England and the SHDC Conservation Officer must be consulted prior to determination.

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