

[07] Full Planning Permission

N/003/01018/ 24

APPLICANT: East Lindsey District Council

VALID: 11/07/2024 **AGENT:** Stem Architects,

PROPOSAL: Planning Permission - Erection of visitors centre to include cafe & shop with car park, alterations to existing millers cottage, change of use from sail shed to education space and minor works to existing outbuildings which are listed buildings and site landscaping.

LOCATION: ALFORD WINDMILL TRUST, EAST STREET, ALFORD, LN13 9EH

1.0 REASONS FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

1.1 For reasons of transparency in decision making, the application is required to be determined at Planning Committee because the applicant is East Lindsey District Council.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site comprises the wider Alford Windmill site. There are a number of existing buildings around the windmill itself, as well as the existing car parking area, landscaping and access. The site is currently closed to the public but has previously provided a visitor attraction and a single residential dwelling.

2.2 The windmill is Grade I listed, (National Heritage List for England ("NHLE") List Entry Number: 1146936), but it is noted that no works are proposed to the mill itself in this application.

2.3 This application relates to the associated buildings, being the Sail Store, Miller's Cottage, Pigsties and the Engine Shed, which are listed at Grade II for group value (NHLE List Entry Numbers: 1146943; 1063029; 1063030).

2.4 The windmill is on Historic England's Heritage At Risk Register. However, it is currently subject to a programme of conservation and repair which have previously been granted listed building consent, (01226/23).

2.5 Millers Cottage has been in residential use and the other buildings around the site have been used in relation to the visitor attraction, including a café and shop.

2.6 The site is on the edge of Alford, which is categorised as a 'Town' in the settlement hierarchy of the Local Plan.

2.7 The site is within the conservation area of Alford and there are trees protected by Tree Preservations Orders within the site.

2.8 The site is within Flood Zone 1.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 Planning permission is sought for the following:

- Erection of a new visitor centre building including a café located to the north of the site within an area currently used for car parking.
- Refurbishment of the Miller's Cottage to facilitate a two-bed holiday let, along with site office including the bakers oven, which is to be retained, on the ground floor.
- Refurbishment of the Sail Store to facilitate an educational space with historic installations.
- Reuse of the Pigsties as a children's play area.
- Refurbishment of the shop for use as a display for a collection of Millwright tools.
- External works to reform both the soft and hard landscaping throughout the site.

The works are being funded by the Levelling Up Funding.

It is noted that there is a Listed Building Consent application currently being considered for this development - 01019/24 (also on this Committee agenda).

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Set out below are the consultation responses that have been received on this application. These responses may be summarised and full copies are available for inspection separately. Some of the comments made may not constitute material planning considerations.

Consultees

TOWN COUNCIL – supports the application

HISTORIC ENGALND – Supported the proposed new visitors centre in terms of design and location within the site. Requested some amendments to the parking layout to ensure the views across the site to the windmill were not compromised. Amended plans were received to reflect the recommendations. No further comments were received on the amended plans at the time of writing this report.

LCC HIGHWAYS AND LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY – No objections to the proposal.

CONSERVATION OFFICER – requested clarification of some details, and some minor alterations to the original plans. Commented on the amended plans and considered them to be acceptable subject to conditions.

ECOLOGY – Requested some amendments to the BNG information. Further information was provided to establish that the requirement for a 10% BNG is unlikely to be able to be achieved within the site. No further comments were received at the time of writing this report.

NATURAL ENGLAND – No objection to the proposal.

DRAINAGE BOARD – No comments received at the time of writing this report.

ARCHEOLOGIST – No objections to the proposal

Publicity

- 4.2 A site notice and press advert were displayed, and neighbours notified by letter.

Neighbours

- 4.3 No response received at the time of writing this report.

5.0 RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

- 5.1 01226/23 – Listed Building Consent to existing windmill including reinstating the cap, fan and sails, removal of the curb and redecoration of the exterior.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises of the East Lindsey Local Plan (adopted 2018), including the Core Strategy and the Settlement Proposals Development Plan Document; and any made Neighbourhood Plans. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.

East Lindsey Local Plan

SP1: A Sustainable Pattern of Places

SP2: Sustainable Development

SP10: Design

SP11: Historic Environment

SP13: Inland Employment

SP14: Town/Village Centres and Shopping

SP15: Widening the Inland Tourism and Leisure Economy

SP16: Inland Flood Risk

SP22: Transport and Accessibility

SP24: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SP27: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

National Planning Policy Framework

Parts of the NPPF are relevant to this application.

Alford Neighbourhood Plan

Policy 10

7.0 OFFICER ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

Main Planning Issues

- **Principle of development**
- **Impact on Heritage Assets and Visual Impact**
- **Impact of the Development on the Amenity of the Neighbours.**
- **Highway Safety and Capacity**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**
- **Trees**

Principle of development

- 7.1 Policies SP1 and SP2 support development where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 7.2 Policy SP15 relates to the widening of the inland tourism and leisure economy, which is relevant to this application. The proposal would offer attractions and facilities open to the public, as well as educational facilities. This policy supports quality tourism facilities and attractions subject to the criteria set out in SP15 (1);
- Extend and diversify the tourism and leisure economy, and provide additional employment opportunities;
 - Provide opportunities for the enjoyment of the District's wider countryside and historic towns and villages;
 - Do not cause unacceptable harm to the landscape, biodiversity or heritage assets;
 - Are of a scale and intensity compatible with their surroundings.
- 7.3 The proposed development would comply with the criteria set out in SP15 (1) and is acceptable in principle.
- 7.4 The site overall would attract visitors to the District all year round, and could provide various employment opportunities. Creating an ongoing viable use for the site would preserve the various heritage assets. The proposed works to the existing building and the proposed new building are considered to have an acceptable impact on the heritage assets, the landscape and biodiversity. A full assessment of the impact of the works to the listed buildings, and the development of the site overall will be provided later in this report, and in the report for the listed building consent application, including an assessment of the visual impact of the proposed new building.
- 7.5 A holiday let is proposed to be created within the Miller's Cottage. Change of use from the established residential use to a holiday let would currently not require planning permission. The residential use of the site and the use as a holiday let are in the same planning use class. Confirmation was obtained that the residential use has been maintained,

therefore only the physical changes proposed to Millers Cottage require consent. Given that the building has an established residential use, a condition restricting the use of the cottage to holiday accommodation is not considered to be prudent in this instance. If there was a desire to use the cottage as permanent residential accommodation in the future, it is considered that this would be remain an extant use.

- 7.6 Notwithstanding this, it is noted that Policy SP15(2) also supports the provision of new holiday accommodation where it would be in close proximity to a town, subject to criteria set out in SP15 (2), which seeks to protect visual amenities and heritage assets. It is noted that there would be limited external changes required to facilitate the use of Miller's Cottage as a holiday let, but a full assessment of the changes will be carried out in this report. Given the location of the proposed holiday let, it would comply with the requirements of policy SP15(2).
- 7.7 It is therefore considered that the proposals are acceptable in principle, given that they would enhance the existing facilities on the site, which provides tourism and leisure facilities, as well as education and employment opportunities, subject to assessment against all the other relevant policies below.

Impact on Heritage Assets and Visual Impact

- 7.8 SP11 of the Council's Local Plan aims to secure the continued protection and enhancement of heritage assets in the District and support proposals that preserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting and the special character, appearance and setting of conservation areas. This advice is reiterated the NPPF, which provides guidance on considering potential impacts on the significance of designated and non-designated assets. Section 66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 7.9 Policy SP10 of the Local Plan states that the Council will support well-designed sustainable development, which maintains and enhances the character of the District's towns, villages and countryside.
- 7.10 Policy 10 e) of the Alford Neighbourhood Plan states: *"refurbishment of existing heritage assets (both listed and locally important) in poor condition or underused will be promoted as long as it sustains and enhances the historic and architectural significance and possible remediates inappropriate intervention and extension performed in recent times."*
- 7.11 The proposed development includes the addition of a new building forming a visitor's centre, which would be located to the north of the windmill in an area currently used as a carpark. The building is proposed to be single story and would form a T shape.
- 7.12 The proposed citing and design of this building would be acceptable in the context of the Grade 1 listed windmill. Historic England and the Council's conservation officer have been consulted and it is noted that the Historic England officer did not have any objections to the proposed

new building, considering it would be in an appropriate location in relation to the windmill, and designed appropriately in relation to the site.

- 7.13 The Council's conservation officer requested the solar panels be moved, (if viable), from the southern roof slope as this directly faced the Grade 1 listed mill. The solar panels remain on the southern roof slope, along with additional panels on the western roof slope. This is required to increase the solar capacity to achieve 7kWp as required by the SBEM Energy modelling. This is considered to be acceptable to enable the site to generate low carbon energy.
- 7.14 The conservation officer also requested a full schedule of materials, a brick sample panel including mortar mix, and details of the windows and doors to be provided. These shall be secured by condition.
- 7.15 Subject to the above conditions, the proposed new building to provide a visitor's centre would have an acceptable impact on the setting of the Grade 1 listed windmill and the associated Grade II listed buildings and would not result in harm to the character of the area in compliance with Policies SP10 and SP11 of the Local Plan and the advice contained in the NPPF.
- 7.16 On recommendation from Historic England, amendments were sought to redesign the proposed carparking, including alterations to the landscaping in order to protect wider views of the windmill across the site.
- 7.17 Amendments were provided which sought to address the concerns raised about protecting viewings across the site, but also ensure that adequate parking was provided to ensure visitors could access the site. Historic England were re-consulted on the amended layout, but no response was received at the time of writing this report. However, it is considered that the amendments to the parking layout have ensured that the existing lines of sight from the road remain largely intact, with only two parking spaces for the holiday let remaining in front of the windmill.
- 7.18 The scheme includes new uses to the existing buildings around the site as described above. All the proposed uses would be appropriate to facilitate the use of the site as a visitor's centre and education facility.
- 7.19 The physical works to the existing buildings around the site, which are Grade II Listed, are small scale alterations and are acceptable. Some minor amendments were secured as a result of comments and recommendations by the Council's conservation officer. These works will be assessed by the Listed Building Consent application.

Impact of the Development on the Amenity of the Neighbours.

- 7.20 The amenity of neighbouring residents should be considered with all planning applications to ensure that development does not result in a loss of residential amenity. Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that developments should ensure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.
- 7.21 The proposed new building would be located well within the established

site and separated from neighbouring dwellings sufficiently to ensure that there would not be a loss of light or privacy, and the proposed new building would not be overbearing. It is not considered that the enhancement of the facilities on the site would have an adverse impact over and above the established use as a visitor and educational attraction. The access would be via an existing access for the farm. The proposal would therefore not result in harm to neighbour amenity.

Highway Safety and Capacity

- 7.22 SP22 of the Local Plan sets out the criteria for transport and accessibility for development within the district. The proposal utilises an existing access with a more formal parking layout than existing proposed. LCC Highways Authority have been consulted on the original and amended plans and have not raised any objections. The development is unlikely to result in highway safety concerns and adequate parking has been provided. The existing pedestrian gate, which is set away from the vehicular access, will be refurbished and access reinstated, which would improve pedestrian safety.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 7.23 BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.
- 7.24 Information has been submitted setting out the baseline BNG assessment, metric information for pre and post development. The Council's ecologist comments on the information and made some recommendations to improve the credits for the site.
- 7.25 Further information was provided by the agent to address the initial comments in the form of a Biodiversity Net Gain Report Final dated September 2024 and a BNG calculator. However, the report recommended that the required 10% BNG cannot be achieved on site. Off-site credits will therefore be required, which will be secured by condition.

Trees

- 7.26 There are two trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders on the front boundary of the application site. It is noted that the Council's tree officer was consulted on the application but did not provide comments.
- 7.27 A tree constraint report and a tree survey report including an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and an Arboricultural Method Statement, were submitted in support of the application, which included recommendations on the maintenance and protection of the trees across the site. A condition will require the recommendations of these reports to be implemented to protect and enhance the trees during construction and to achieve better health for the longer term.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed scheme would provide enhancements to the site to attract visitors, which would facilitate a viable use of the site, which would help to preserve the heritage assets across the site. Subject to conditions, the works would have an acceptable impact on the heritage assets and the application is recommended for approval.
- 8.2 The BNG off site credits required will be secured by the relevant condition.

9.0 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 Grant permission subject to conditions

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

subject to the following conditions:

1. Full planning permission
The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than [3] years from the date of this decision.

Reason: As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings and other documents [insert plan numbers etc], and any drawings approved subsequently in writing by the local planning authority pursuant to any conditions on this decision letter.

Plan No. 1102 Rev P03	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 1201 Rev P03	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 1102 Rev P03	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 2102 Rev P03	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 2101 Rev P06	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 1100 Rev P06	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 1202 Rev P01	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 2100 Rev P05	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 2200 Rev P03	Received by the LPA on 09/09/2024.
Plan No. 1001 Rev P15	Received by the LPA on 04/09/2024.
Plan No. 2300 Rev P06	Received by the LPA on 05/07/2024.
Plan No. 2301 Rev P04	Received by the LPA on 05/07/2024.
Plan No. 1302 Rev P03	Received by the LPA on 04/09/2024.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 No above ground development shall take place until a schedule of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the visitor centre hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the architectural and historic integrity of the site and the development. This condition is imposed in accordance with Policies SP10 and SP11 of the East Lindsey Local Plan.

- 4 Details and or samples of the type of brick, along with the mortar mix and method of pointing to be used in the construction of the visitor centre building hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any above ground development of the visitor centre building. All new brickwork shall match that approved in terms of the type of bricks used, the method of bonding, mortar colour and pointing style.

Reason: In the interests of the architectural and historic integrity of the site and the development. This condition is imposed in accordance with SP11 of the East Lindsey Local Plan.

- 5 The development shall be completed in accordance with the details contained in the tree reports submitted in support of the application being; Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Tree Constraints report in relation to trees at Alford Windmill, by East Midlands Tree Surveys, dated 24 April 2024. and BS5837@2021 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. AIA, AMS AND TPP in relation to trees at Alford Windmill by East Midlands Tree Surveys, dated 8th May 2024. The measures shall be implemented in line with the recommendations in the reports including timetable and phasing strategy and shall be adhered to for the duration of construction works.

Reason: In order to protect and enhance the existing trees on the site in accordance with Local Plan policy SP24.