

HE.1.2 North Kesteven District Council Historic England

ES Chapter 10 [APP-063] includes a setting assessment of the Grade I listed Kyme Tower and it is concluded at paragraph 10.5.22 that there would be no harm to its significance. NKDC in their LIR [REP1-033] disagree, stating at paragraph 16.26 that 'no views of the tower, or away from the tower, should be classed as "incidental"' and they assign a negative impact on its significance.

ii) Can Historic England provide comment on both the Applicant's and NKDCs assessment of harm to Kyme Tower?

Historic England Advice

Kyme Tower is a Grade I listed building designated on the basis of its exceptional historic and architectural interest. As explored in the list entry it is a fortified tower of mid 14th century date with additions, removed c.1725. Built for Sir Gilbert de Umfraville in coursed limestone ashlar it comprises a 4-storey, square tower 77 ft high, with square projecting stair tower at the south-east corner which rises slightly higher than the main tower. The south, entrance front, bears scars on the ground and first floors of the later attached house which has since been removed.

The tower and associated moated site are included within a wider complex of archaeological earthworks designated as a Scheduled Monument on the basis of its national importance: 'Remains of medieval monastery, moated manor house, fishponds and post-medieval garden'. The attached house was demolished between 1720 and 1725. This tower is the earliest of a series of fortified towers built in this part of Lincolnshire, it is the only one built of stone, the later ones like Tattershall Castle, The Tower on the Moor at Woodhall Spa, the Hussey Tower at Boston and Rochford Tower at Skirbeck are all built of brick.

The tower was built both to see from and be seen in the wider landscape as well as offering a defensive refuge it was a statement of lordly power, status and cultural capital, and may have served as a viewing point for deer hunting / coursing. The significance of the tower derives in part from this landscape setting which whilst altered by agricultural improvement and drainage retains aspects of its former character. Parts of the historic landscape setting of the Grade I listed and Scheduled tower inevitably make a greater contribution to its significance than others. The closer setting of earthworks, manor and church, the village of South Kyme, the Kyme Eau and the former wetlands to either side; comprising South Kyme Low Ground to the north (containing place names such as Park and Lawn Hill Farms - indicative it would appear of a former deer park) and South Kyme Fen to the south are clearly important. Views to, from and across the monument in juxtaposition with Tattershall Castle and more distantly Lincoln Cathedral and Boston Stump are also important to understanding the Tower in the evolving medieval landscape.

Views from south of the Heckington Eau, within and across the proposed solar development will still have the capacity to contribute to significance, but arguably to a much lesser degree. The applicant assesses views affected by the development as incidental whilst the local planning authority stresses that they make a contribution to significance and can hence be regarded as entailing a degree of harm. Such harm can occur via loss of agrarian appearance / obstruction of views through the development. Impacts of the development upon the significance of the Tower would appear to fall below the level of a reportable significant effect in terms of Environmental Impact Assessment. From a planning policy perspective in which all harm to the significance of designated assets requires clear and convincing justification and to be set against public benefits, a low level of less than substantial harm might still be identified and taken into the ExA's consideration.