

Ditchingham Dam conservation area

1. Introduction

Why have Conservation Areas?

A review of policies relating to the historic environment carried out by English heritage on behalf of the Secretary of States for Culture Media and Sport and the Environment Transport and the Regions was published in December 2000 under the heading 'Power of Place'.

The Report which reflected views now held generally by the population at large, confirmed 5 main messages

- i Most people place a high value on the historic environment and think it right there should be public funding to preserve it.
- ii Because people care about their environment they want to be involved in decisions affecting it.
- iii The historic environment is seen by most people as a totality. They care about the whole of their environment.
- iv Everyone has a part to play caring for the historic environment. More will be achieved if we work together.
- v Everything rests in sound knowledge and understanding and takes account of the values people place on their surroundings.

In summary we must balance the need to care for the historic environment with the need for change. We need to understand the character of places and the significance people ascribe to them.

The concept of conservation areas was first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act 1967, in which local planning authorities were encouraged to determine which parts of their area could be defined as "Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

The importance of the 1967 Act was for the first time recognition was given to the architectural or historic interest, not only of individual buildings but also to groups of buildings: the relationship of one building to another and the quality and the character of the spaces between them.

The duty of local planning authorities to designate conservation areas was embodied in the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, Section 277. Since then further legislation has sought to strengthen and protect these areas by reinforcing already established measures of planning control which is now consolidated in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Unlike listed buildings, which are selected on national standards, the designation of Conservation Areas in the main is carried out at District level based upon criteria of local distinctiveness and the historic interest of an area as a whole. However, in the past, the criteria adopted by different local authorities in determining what constitutes a special area have tended to vary widely. For example, although public opinion seems to be

overwhelmingly in favour of conserving and enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene, what is familiar to many, may only be cherished by some.

Over the last 30 years this approach has changed significantly. Much greater emphasis is now placed on involving the local community in evaluating 'what makes an area special', whether it should be designated and where boundaries should be drawn.

It is now recognised that the historical combination of local architectural style and the use of indigenous materials within the wider local landscape creates what has been termed 'local distinctiveness'. Distinctiveness varies within the relatively restricted confines of individual counties, which in turn are distinct in terms of the country as a whole.

Conservation Area designation for settlements and wider areas which embody this local distinctiveness may afford them protection against development which bears no relation to the locality either in terms of the buildings within it or landscape surrounding it.

The historical development of such settlements and their surrounding landscape are the 'journals' through which the social and economic development of the locality can be traced. The pattern of agricultural and industrial progress of settlements (their social history) is by definition expressed in the architecture and landscape of any area.

It is not intended (nor would it be desirable) to use Conservation Area designation as a way of preventing or restricting development, the expansion of a settlement or preventing contemporary innovative design. Logically in the future new development should add to, rather than detract from the character of an area and will in turn help to chart historical development. However, all development should seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

2. Aims and objectives

The Ditchingham Dam conservation area was originally designated in 1981 and was last reviewed in 1998. This re-appraisal examines the historic settlement and special character of Ditchingham Dam, reviews the boundaries of the conservation area and suggests areas for change.

The appraisal will provide a sound basis for development management and encourage development initiatives which endeavour to improve and protect the conservation area as well as stimulating local interest and awareness of both problems and opportunities.

3. Planning Policy Context

There are a range of policies which affect Conservation Areas within the Broads Authority area, originating from both national and local sources. The latest national documents in respect of historic buildings and conservation areas are The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010, Planning Policy Statement No. 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, (2010) and PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide March 2010. The Broads Authority endorses the contents of these documents and decisions made will reflect the various provisions contained in them.

In line with government policy, the Broads Authority are currently reviewing and revising local policies which will be published in a new Local Development Framework (LDF). In the meantime the more specific local policies included in the Broads Local Plan (1997) are still relevant.

To support these policies, the Broads Authority provides further advice and details in a series of leaflets, which are currently being reviewed and expanded as part of the LDF process. A list of those currently available is attached in Appendix 2.

4. Summary of special interest

The character of the conservation area is largely formed by its setting in the surrounding landscape. Ditchingham Dam is a linear settlement along a man-made causeway across a flood plain of the River Waveney, with a short road (Falcon Lane) branching off north eastwards nearer the river. Its setting on low lying ground allows open views across the surrounding countryside in all directions apart from to the south, where Bungay on higher ground, forms a dramatic backdrop.

5. Location and context

The parish of Ditchingham is situated in the south of Norfolk approximately 13 miles from Norwich with the River Waveney defining the southern boundary. The parish is within the South Norfolk District Council area and development is divided into two areas, with Ditchingham village in the north and Ditchingham Dam within the river valley to the south. Ditchingham Dam is effectively a small suburb of Bungay, from which it is separated by the River Waveney which forms the county boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk. The two are linked by Falcon Bridge. Ditchingham Dam conservation area is entirely within the Broads Authority area.

General character and plan form

Though separated only by Falcon Bridge, the character of Ditchingham Dam is quite different from that of Bridge Street, Bungay. While Bridge Street is narrow, winding and tightly built up on both sides, the Dam is wider, with gardens or glimpses of gardens and - once past Holly House - a view through trees of the beck and meadows beyond. The Dam is a man-made causeway across the flood plain and, until the building of the Bungay bypass, was the main route into the town from Norfolk. The contrast between the town, set on a higher ground in a tight loop of the river, and low-lying Ditchingham Dam, is dramatic. To east and west the settlement is hemmed in by the now drained flood plain. The settlement has a linear form, enclosed by historic buildings of two or three storeys, following the causeway, with nearer the river, Falcon Lane branching off the road north eastwards in a short spur towards Chainbridge Beck.

Geological background

The geological formation of the Waveney river valley has given it a very distinctive form within the wider landscape. The cretaceous chalk deposits below the whole of East Anglia were subject to a smoothing glacial action resulting in a more subdued topography than in other parts of Britain, and these were subsequently overlain with a series of sands, muds and gravels known as 'Craggs'. These processes have created valleys with a distinctive u-shaped profile; in the Waveney valley, large scale open valley landscapes with broad flat flood plains north and south of the river, beyond which rise the tree covered escarpments of the Norfolk and Suffolk boulder clay plateaus. A large meander in the river has allowed the formation of a narrow spur of land which rises above the flood plain, on which the adjacent town of Bungay is situated.

Landscape setting

Generally, views within the Waveney valley can be quite long range and open, but become more intimate close to river crossings such as at Falcon Bridge. The landscape surrounding Ditchingham Dam is distinctly green. Approaching Ditchingham Dam from the north, the causeway is noticeable as it crosses the flood plain of the River Waveney. On higher ground to the south, Bungay is an obvious presence across the low lying verdant water

meadows with long rush-filled ditches and clumps of willow and alder; St Mary's Church an almost constant feature. The rear of the buildings on Falcon Lane can be seen across the marshy land to the south east.

6. Historical development

Archaeology and development

The Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service compiles records of known archaeological activity, sites, finds, cropmarks, earthworks, industrial remains, defensive structures and historic buildings in the county. These records are known as the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER). The NHER contains 112 records for the parish of Ditchingham, with evidence of human activity in every period since the Mesolithic. The Neolithic long barrow on Broome Heath (to the north of Ditchingham Dam conservation area) is evidence of prehistoric settlement and the discovery in 1864 of Roman urns in the village suggests that there was some settlement here during the Roman occupation. However, most of the recorded 'finds' are outside the Ditchingham Dam conservation area boundary and there are no scheduled monuments within the conservation area.

In Domesday Book (sometime after 1086) Ditchingham is referred to as *Dicingaham*. Late twelfth century references are to Dicingeham and Dikingeham. The name is Anglo-Saxon in origin and is thought to derive from *the* ham (homestead or village) [*of the*] inge (people) of either *Dicca* (a man's name) or [*of the*] *dic* (ditch or dyke) – thus 'homestead of Dicca's people' or 'homestead of the dwellers of the dyke'

After the Norman Conquest, the village of Ditchingham was held by the Crown, until, during the twelfth century, it was granted to Hugh Bigot, on his being made Earl of Norfolk. It then passed in turn, by inheritance or marriage, to the Brothertons, the Mowbrays and the Howards, each being granted the earldom of Norfolk in succession.

Until the mid-sixteenth century there were two manors in what was known as the town of Ditchingham : Ditchingham itself and Pirnow. Old Ditchingham Hall, demolished in 1727, was a grand symmetrical house with mullioned and transomed windows and corner turrets. The present Ditchingham Hall dates from 1730, was built by the Bedingfield family and later owned by the Carr family, with landscaping, including a serpentine lake, attributed to Capability Brown. Pirnow Hall, situated on the south side of Stone Street just west of the turning to Yarmouth, was a relatively modest house, but by the early twentieth century almost nothing of it remained.

The River Waveney was improved for navigation under an Act of Parliament obtained in 1670, and included the construction of three locks, at Geldeston, Ellingham and Wainford, to extend navigation as far as Bungay Staithe. A special version of the traditional Wherry was in use on the Waveney, with boats measuring no more than 70 by 16 feet. However, with the decline in the use of wherries for commercial trade on the rivers prior to the Second World War, navigation ceased on several stretches of the Broads, including the 4.2 mile section of the river from Geldeston to Bungay, where navigation rights were removed in 1934. The current limit of navigation is at Geldeston, although Wainford and Ellingham locks have since been converted into sluices to allow canoes and unpowered craft to use this section of the waterway.

Although the parish has a rich and varied history, there is little documented history about Ditchingham Dam itself, apart from early references to funds being granted for the maintenance of the Dam, evidence that its situation on a route to a strategic river crossing at Bungay should not be underestimated, the elevated position of the town making it easily defensible, and the river forming a natural boundary. On the south side of the river, Bridge

Street was a major route to the river crossing with shops, workshops, inns and beer houses, a staithe and a tannery to the south west of Falcon Bridge.

Maps prior to 1800 show a handful of buildings on Ditchingham Dam. The majority of development appears to have taken place in the 19th century, when commercial activities such as the artificial silk mill at Wainford, at its peak employing 500 workers, the maltings and the extension of the Waveney Valley Railway Line brought prosperity and an increase in population of the village. The new line included a station at Ditchingham, to the north of the Dam, which like most of the others, was built in the fashionable Italianate style. In its heyday it was used to transport coal, textiles, malt and grain. Passenger services ceased in 1953 and the line finally closed in 1965, when shortly afterwards the present bypass was constructed on the line of the former railway.

Farming and related industries would also have provided employment for the local population, but agricultural employment declined dramatically with increasing mechanisation after the Second World War.

The population of the parish has grown steadily during the second half of the twentieth century from 1059 in 1961, to 1614 in 2001, the majority now made up of commuters and retired people, with 20th century housing development on Ditchingham Dam largely on infill plots.

7. Spatial analysis

Approaching from Bungay, the rear wing of the former public house on the right, hard onto the road and onto the bridge itself, echoes the urban townscape of Bungay. Then however, the space levels and opens out into a broad triangle, 'over-seen' by the north-facing front of the former public house. On the right hand (east) side, Nos. 8 to 12 continue the built up frontage, but beyond them and on the opposite (west) side the development is more haphazard, with garden walls or fences, front gardens, trees and grass verge. At the north end of the Conservation Area, the space becomes more open still, with views out over the flood plain.

Falcon Lane is a traditional 'back lane', on the one side, giving access to outbuildings, the back entrances of houses on the Dam and a couple of small cottages (and recently also some new houses) : while on the opposite side being open to the meadows, except for Waveney Lodge. The entrance to the Lane is tightly squeezed between buildings before opening out into what appears at first sight to be a large back yard and then continuing, in a different direction, as an almost private lane: this sort of townscape - informal and 'low key' - is an important element in historic settlements, but is very vulnerable to the pressures of modern development, road improvement and dereliction.

8. Character analysis

Use and activity

The majority of the buildings are small to medium sized houses; there is little commercial activity left in the Ditchingham Dam conservation area, although evidence of previous activities remains in some of the names, for example Forge Gardens near Falcon Bridge ; others previously in commercial use have been converted to residences.

Of the larger buildings the former public house adjacent to Falcon Bridge is the most prominent. The Limes, largely hidden from view behind a high wall on Ditchingham Dam and Waveney Lodge on Falcon Lane are also of note.

Overview of streets, buildings and architecture

Ditchingham Dam: east side

The former public house is the most important building in the townscape of the Conservation Area: it lines the approach to the bridge, providing a link with the urban character of Bridge Street; it 'presides' over the large triangular space formed by the junction of the Dam and Falcon Lane; it is seen full-face as one approaches Bungay along the Dam and its gable end dominates the smaller space at the start of Falcon Lane. It is really two buildings; one aligned north-south, the other east-west. Typical of many small country town buildings, its Georgian façade conceals an older 'vernacular' building beneath. It has good examples of Victorian iron work: a 'clenched-fist' lamp bracket and 'barley sugar stick' rail posts.

The outbuilding at the entrance to Falcon Lane, the west gable end of Ivy Cottage and Nos. 8, 10 and 12 form an almost unbroken frontage to the east side of the Dam. *Ivy Cottage* is an attractive mix of painted brick and black boarding. *Nos. 8, 10 and 12* appear to be originally a seventeenth century house, with steep roof and axial off-centre chimney and, almost certainly, a timber frame. It has been spoilt by unsympathetic replacement windows, but traditional windows survive at first floor level in No. 10, which also has an original door case. Evidence of old shop windows survives in Nos. 10 and 12.

In complete contrast, *Nos. 14 and 16* are suburban in character: a pair of small Victorian semi-detached houses built in 'white' Suffolk bricks, with good brick details, low pitched roof and original sliding sash windows with margin lights. The original iron railings to small front gardens complete the picture. Then a high wall, important in the townscape, screens *The Limes*. The house is barely seen, but there are several mature trees in the garden. It is followed by a wide opening to a drive with attractive gate piers and railings: this appears to have been at one time the rather grand entrance to *Waveney Lodge* in Falcon Lane (see below). The drive has wide grass verges and some mature trees on the south side. It now leads, past *No. 20*, to a small house of painted brick with a slate roof - probably the original gate-lodge - to *Nos. 18A and 18B*, new red brick houses in the modern 'vernacular' style which make good use of their mature setting.

Chasseur Lodge marks the boundary of the Conservation Area at this point. It is Victorian, red brick with painted stone dressings to openings. Window openings are triangular headed and the south gable has a Kentish hip to the roof, which is covered with black pantiles which may perhaps, have replaced the original pin tiles. Its picturesque details suggest that it could have been originally connected with *Waveney Lodge*. Unfortunately, the replacement windows are not in keeping with the rest.

Ditchingham Dam: west side

Compared with the firmly built-up bridgehead on the opposite side, the west side appears weak: only a low garden wall of modern brick marks the frontage, behind which is a tarmac forecourt and a house, possibly converted from a nineteenth century industrial building, but stripped of its chimneys and with modern windows and roof tiles. A long and narrow brick and tile building has recently replaced an earlier outbuilding which may have been the old forge of the former *Forge Gardens* next door, now redeveloped with a modern house and garage, with a low picket fence beside the road. Then *Waveney Cottage*: at first sight a modern house, part two - part one and a half - storeys, but further inspection suggests part of it may be older, probably nineteenth century, but much extended with replacement windows in heavy mock timber.

The buildings on this side of the road end with the most important: *Glencoe (No. 7)* and *Holly House (No. 9)*. These are a semi-detached pair of substantial Georgian houses. They have a low pitched roof of blue glazed pantiles, and all but one of their original sash windows, door cases and doors survive. They are of red brick, but unfortunately the walls of *Glencoe* have been painted over. The western boundary of the Conservation Area follows the line of

Chainbridge Beck which runs behind these properties, and then north of Holly House, swings eastwards to run alongside the road. The small triangle of land so formed ends the Conservation Area.

Falcon Lane

This is a traditional back lane, until recently giving access to the backs of properties on the Dam itself or, with the important exception of Waveney Lodge, to a few small cottages. Access to the lane is through a narrow 'gateway' adjoining the former public house. The space then suddenly broadens out onto what must at one time have been virtually the pub yard. On both sides are outbuildings, that on the south side appears to be a small timber framed barn, and in poor condition, stripped of its roof tiles and cladding and surrounded by hoardings, but it could look particularly attractive with the water meadows behind it.

The lane then swings north-eastwards. On the southern side a large area of neglected former allotments is followed by Waveney Lodge : an interesting building, now divided into three houses, it has a wealth of nineteenth century details, including numerous gables, pointed arches, sash windows with pointed arched glazing bars incorporating sections of stained glass and within the wall above - spandrels of leaves and flowers in either carved stone or moulded brick. The brickwork is painted to Falcon Lane, although the northern elevation a slightly different character with white 'Suffolk' bricks and red window arches, and a red pantiled roof on contrast to the slates at the front. This could indicate that the elaborate Victorian façade fronted an earlier house. Adjacent to Falcon Lane brick piers divide sections of unusual and elaborate railings. Beyond the house, and forming an important part of the scene, a high brick wall screens a garden, in which are several fine trees.

Opposite Waveney Lodge, a small area of land has unfortunately been left unattached to either of the adjoining properties. On it has been built a garage, but the site is neglected and piles of old building materials appear to have been abandoned. Together with two properties immediately to the south (*Nos. 18A and 18B Ditchingham Dam* - see above), this site appears to have once been part of a formal entrance drive from the Dam to Waveney Lodge (see above): the surviving gate piers and railings match those of Waveney Lodge. (N.B. It is proposed that the boundary of the conservation area be extended to include his site.)

Continuing on the same side, a high wall, cement rendered, marks the back of the Limes. This is followed by Falcon Cottage, hard on the edge of the road, which has somewhat unsympathetic window replacements. Then follows a pair of flat roofed garages, whose design is out of keeping with the traditional character of the area. Then a pair of well designed vehicular access doors, another high wall, a small forecourt and an attractive house, Ivy Cottage, with simple railings, which faces south over the meadows towards Bungay. Outbuildings complete this frontage: though of no particular architectural merit, they are an important element in the 'gateway' between the Dam and Falcon Lane.

Architectural styles and materials

The Conservation Area contains no buildings on the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, but a large proportion of buildings in the area, though not Listed, are considered to be of townscape significance, and some of these may be eligible for Listing.

The most important building in this small Conservation Area is the former public house. As townscape, it plays a vital role in the view across the bridge from Bungay in the approach to the bridge and to the town from the north, and in relation to the triangular space onto which it faces and the less significant buildings around it. As architecture, it is a happy mix of classical and vernacular. Important in a very different way is Waveney Lodge, a rambling

confection of Victorian details. Other buildings are a mixture of vernacular, Georgian, Victorian and modern.

Examples of most of the building materials traditional to South Norfolk and the Broads area can be found within the Conservation Area.

Clay pantiles are the prevalent material, both blue or black glazed (as on Nos. 8 to 12 and 7 to 9) and red. No. 20 (behind Chasseur Lodge) has a slate roof. There is no thatch in the Conservation Area.

Most of the pre-Georgian buildings are rendered and painted. Many of these are likely to be timber framed: for example, the former public house by the bridge and Nos. 8 to 12; others may be clay lump underneath the render. Later buildings are of brick: mostly red, such as No.9 (Holly House) and Chasseur Lodge; but Nos. 12 and 14 (a semi-detached Victorian pair) are of white brick, weathered to grey.

Ground surface materials and street furniture

Public road and pavements are of tarmacadam. There is a small gravelled forecourt to the former public house.

Standard modern street lighting is used along the Dam only. Street signs and overhead cables are not over-obtrusive. The former public house has some very unusual and attractive Victorian ironwork : stout barley-sugar stick posts supporting square sectioned rails enclosing the forecourt and a bracket ending in a clenched fist designed to hold a (now missing) lantern over the front door. There is a letter box on a post in front of the garden wall of Ivy Cottage (No.6).

Trees, hedges and significant open spaces

There are a number of sites where trees play an important visual role in the Conservation Area. These are marked on Map 1 and listed below.

- i Between the Dam and Chainbridge Beck, north of Holly House (No. 9).
- ii In the grounds of The Limes.
- iii South of the shared driveway to Nos. 15A and 15B.
- iv In the grounds of Waveney Lodge.
- v In the garden by the north-west abutment of Falcon Bridge.

In the main these sites provide significant open space within the settlement, albeit that they are in private ownership. The most significant open space in the public realm is the area in front of the former public house to the north of Falcon Bridge. Sensitive landscaping could enhance the character of this area. The open nature of the surrounding countryside also contributes positively to the setting of the conservation area.

Boundary treatments

The majority of the traditional buildings in the conservation area front onto the back of the pavement, leaving no room for front boundary fences. However, the following are good examples of traditional boundary treatments;

- i. Railings to nos. 14 & 16 Ditchingham Dam
- ii. Railings and gate to Chasseur Lodge, Ditchingham Dam
- iii. Walls to The Limes and adjoining modern houses
- iv. Railings to 18a and 18b Falcon Lane
- v. Walls, railings and gate piers to Waveney Lodge, Falcon Lane
- vi. Former entrance gate piers to Waveney Lodge on Northern side of Falcon Lane

Elsewhere more modern boundary treatments such as timber picket fencing, ornate brickwork or rendered walls are less sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

9. Issues, pressures, threats and opportunities for improvement

Buildings

Generally the buildings and gardens are very well maintained. However, the outbuildings on the corner of Falcon Lane would benefit from some repairs and a beneficial use.

The small timber framed barn on Falcon Lane to the rear of the former public house appears to be in the process of being repaired, but has been in this state for a number of years and is becoming an eyesore in the conservation area. It too would benefit from restoration for a beneficial use and could make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

The special character of conservation areas can easily be eroded by seemingly minor, and well intentioned, home improvements such as the insertion of replacement windows and doors with ones of an inappropriate design or material, (for example hinged opening lights in lieu of sash windows and UPVC instead of painted timber). This is a particular issue with unlisted buildings that have been identified as contributing to the character of the conservation area. In line with current legislation, all complete window replacements are required to achieve minimum insulation values, but recognising the affect that inappropriate replacements can have, Local Authorities are empowered to relax that requirement when considering the restoration or conversion of certain buildings within conservation areas, and advice should be sought from the local Planning Department at an early stage.

As the area around Ditchingham Dam is low lying and liable to flood, there is likely to be little pressure for new development. Proposals for extending or altering existing properties should be carried out with due regard to the effect on the character of the conservation area.

Streetscape issues

The traffic safety measures on Falcon Bridge are intrusive and inappropriate for the character of the conservation area. The appearance of the bridge could be improved, should the opportunity arise in the future.

The area in front of the former Falcon Public House on the corner of Falcon Lane appears to be partly in private ownership and partly in public ownership. Sympathetic low-key landscaping could help to unify this area as an identifiable 'space' in the conservation area.

10. Changes since last appraisal

Due to the low-lying nature of the area, changes since the last appraisal within the conservation area boundary are largely limited to subsidiary extensions to existing buildings.

11. Recommendations for suggested improvements

- Consider sympathetic landscaping to the area in front of the former Falcon Public House
- Consider visual Improvements to the traffic safety measures on Falcon Bridge when appropriate
- Consider a revised design of street lighting fittings
- Encourage the repair and restoration of the small barn and adjoining site on the south side of Falcon Lane

- Encourage the tidying up of site to the north of Falcon Lane and removal of dilapidated garage. (See below - this site is suggested as an extension to the conservation area)

12. The conservation area boundary

The Conservation Area was designated in 1981. It is effectively a small extension of the Bungay Conservation Area. Its boundary follows the river Waveney for a short distance either side of Falcon Bridge. It then turns northwards from the river to follow Chainbridge Beck to a point where it runs alongside the Dam. It then crosses the Dam and goes eastwards north of Chasseur Lodge to Falcon Lane. It then sweeps round to include the grounds of Waveney Lodge, before finally following the line of a drain to return to Falcon Lane and the Waveney. The Conservation Area includes properties on both sides of the Dam, the grounds of Waveney Lodge and a small area of river meadow east of Falcon Lane. It excludes properties on the east side of the Dam north of Chasseur Lodge.

Suggested amendment to the conservation area boundary;

- Extend the boundary on the north side of Falcon Lane to include the currently unused area of land opposite Waveney Lodge. This land contains two brick gate piers and a section of flint and brick walling (incorporated into a former garage) which may have been connected to Waveney Lodge.

13. Public consultation

This appraisal was subject to public consultation during 2012. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted Broads Authority local development policies, and other detailed guidance.

Appendix 1

Policies

Please note: The Broads Authority and South Norfolk Council are currently reviewing and revising local policies, which will be published in a new Local Development Framework (LDF). The Broads Authority and South Norfolk District Council have already adopted Core Strategies containing general policies. The Authority has recently adopted its Local Development Plan Document (DPD). Some of the specific saved local policies included in the Broads Authority Local Plan (1997) and in the South Norfolk Local Plan (1998) are still relevant.

Appendix 2

Broads Authority Guidance Leaflets

- Keeping the Broads Special
- Do I need Planning Permission?
- How do I apply for Planning Permission?
- Building at the Waterside – A guide to design of waterside buildings in the Broads Authority area
- Environment and Landscape – How do I plan and manage trees and scrub alongside rivers?
- Development and Flood Risk in the Broads
- Riverbank Protection Works – A guide for riparian landowners
- Sustainability Guide – Sustainable development in the Broads

Appendix 3

Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

There are no listed buildings within the conservation area boundary.

Appendix 4

Buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Whilst the following buildings, boundary walls and railings within the conservation area and do not merit full statutory protection, they are considered to be of local architectural or historic interest, and every effort should be made to maintain their contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Ditchingham Dam

2 & 4, Old Falcon Inn (Former public house, now two houses)

Outbuilding south of Ivy Cottage

Ivy Cottage (west part)

Nos. 8, 10 (Bridge House) & 12

Nos. 14 & 16

The Limes

Garden wall to The Limes

Chasseur Lodge

Railings to Chasseur Lodge

Cottage to the east of Chasseur Lodge

Nos. 9 (Holly House) and 7 (Glencoe)

Falcon Lane

Outbuilding on S side of lane

Waveney Lodge

Piers and railings to Waveney Lodge

Garden wall to Waveney Lodge

Gate piers opposite Waveney Lodge and railings to rear of Nos. 18A and 18B Ditchingham Dam

Rear wall to The Limes

Falcon Cottage

Ivy Cottage (east part).

Appendix 5

References and sources of information (this re-appraisal)

A Popular Guide to Norfolk Place names, James Rye, The Larks Press, 1991

The Buildings of England, Norfolk 2: North-west and South, Nicholas Pevsner and Bill Wilson, 1999

English Heritage: Guidance on conservation area appraisals, 2006

English Heritage: Guidance on the management of conservation areas, 2006

Broads Landscape Character Assessment – draft local character area 2 Waveney Valley, 2006

Faden's Map of Norfolk 1797

OS 1st edition maps

Heritage Environment Record, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, Gressenhall

White's Gazetteer and Directory 1845

Kellys Directory 1883

Appendix 6

Contact details and further information.

The Broads Authority

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Tel: 01603 610734

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South Norfolk Council

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Long Stratton

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Tel: 01508 533633

Website: www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology

Union House

Gressenhall

Dereham

Ellingham Mill conservation area

1. Introduction

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- iii The historic environment is seen by most people as a totality. They care about the whole of their environment.
- iv Everyone has a part to play caring for the historic environment. More will be achieved if we work together.
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In summary we must balance the need to care for the historic environment with the need for change. We need to understand the character of places and the significance people ascribe to them.

The concept of conservation areas was first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act 1967, in which local planning authorities were encouraged to determine which parts of their area could be defined as "Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

The importance of the 1967 Act was for the first time recognition was given to the architectural or historic interest, not only of individual buildings but also to groups of buildings: the relationship of one building to another and the quality and the character of the spaces between them.

The duty of local planning authorities to designate conservation areas was embodied in the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, Section 277. Since then further legislation has sought to strengthen and protect these areas by reinforcing already established measures of planning control which is now consolidated in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Unlike listed buildings, which are selected on national standards, the designation of Conservation Areas in the main is carried out at District level based upon criteria of local distinctiveness and the historic interest of an area as a whole. However, in the past, the criteria adopted by different local authorities in determining what constitutes a special area have tended to vary widely. For example, although public opinion seems to be overwhelmingly in favour of conserving and enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene, what is familiar to many, may only be cherished by some.

Over the last 30 years this approach has changed significantly. Much greater emphasis is now placed on involving the local community in evaluating 'what makes an area special', whether it should be designated and where boundaries should be drawn.

It is now recognised that the historical combination of local architectural style and the use of indigenous materials within the wider local landscape creates what has been termed 'local distinctiveness'. Distinctiveness varies within the relatively restricted confines of individual counties, which in turn are distinct in terms of the country as a whole.

Conservation Area designation for settlements and wider areas which embody this local distinctiveness may afford them protection against development which bears no relation to the locality either in terms of the buildings within it or landscape surrounding it.

The historical development of such settlements and their surrounding landscape are the 'journals' through which the social and economic development of the locality can be traced. The pattern of agricultural and industrial progress of settlements (their social history) is by definition expressed in the architecture and landscape of any area.

It is not intended (nor would it be desirable) to use Conservation Area designation as a way of preventing or restricting development, the expansion of a settlement or preventing contemporary innovative design. Logically in the future new development should add to, rather than detract from the character of an area and will in turn help to chart historical development. However, all development should seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

2. Aims and objectives

The Ellingham conservation area was originally designated in 1976 and was last reviewed in 2002. This re-appraisal examines the historic settlement and special character of Ellingham, reviews the boundaries of the conservation area and suggests areas for change.

The appraisal will provide a sound basis for development management and encourage development initiatives which endeavour to improve and protect the conservation area as well as stimulating local interest and awareness of both problems and opportunities.

3. Planning Policy Context

There are a range of policies which affect Conservation Areas within the Broads Authority area, originating from both national and local sources. The latest national documents in respect of historic buildings and conservation areas are The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010, Planning Policy Statement No. 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, (2010) and PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide March 2010. The Broads Authority endorses the contents of these documents and decisions made will reflect the various provisions contained in them.

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To support these policies, the Broads Authority provides further advice and details in a series of leaflets, which are currently being reviewed and expanded as part of the LDF process. A list of those currently available is attached in Appendix 2.

4. Summary of Special Interest

Ellingham Mill conservation area is a quiet enclave within the River Waveney valley. There is a pleasant contrast between the more tightly knit development around the mill and the looser pattern around the church. The character of the area is enhanced by the landscape of the river valley, its water meadows, trees and extensive views. The curves of the roads, the changing gradients, the presence of trees and hedges all add to the quality of the area.

5. Location and context

Ellingham is a parish on the north banks of the River Waveney, which forms the border between Norfolk and Suffolk. It is located between Broome and Geldeston two miles north east of Bungay and four miles south of Loddon. The conservation area lies to the south of the main village of Ellingham, and the majority of it is within the Broads Authority area, apart from a small area to the north which is within South Norfolk District Council.

General character and plan form

The area extends from the old railway line in the north to the River Waveney in the south including the mill and its associated buildings, and the church and former rectory in the east.

The conservation area lies within the River Waveney valley and the development it contains divides into two parts – the mill and its surroundings and the area around the church.

At the lower level, the river and particularly the sluices are a noisy reminder of the former watermill. The roadway takes a tortuous route around the sluices before it straightens out in front of the mill and its adjoining buildings.

A gently curving road rising up to connect the lower level to higher level where the area around the church is quieter with more sporadic development.

Geological background

The geological formation of the Waveney river valley has given it a very distinctive form within the wider landscape. The cretaceous chalk deposits below the whole of East Anglia were subject to a smoothing glacial action resulting in a more subdued topography than in other parts of Britain, and these were subsequently overlain with a series of sands, muds and gravels known as 'Craggs'. These processes have created valleys with a distinctive u-shaped profile; in the Waveney valley, large scale open valley landscapes with broad flat flood plains north and south of the river, beyond which rise the tree covered escarpments of the Norfolk and Suffolk boulder clay plateaus.

Landscape setting

The geological formation has resulted in views within the valley landscape generally to be long range and open, but these become more intimate close to river crossings such as at Ellingham. Views out of the valley are restricted although the valley landscape can be viewed from the surrounding higher areas and landmarks such as church towers are features of the Waveney valley.

From the south Ellingham conservation area is approached across Ellingham Marshes in the wide valley floodplain of the River Waveney, which extends north westwards towards the main village of Ellingham on higher ground. The sluices and river crossing are almost entirely surrounded by this low lying marshy land, allowing long views over the river valley. To the north however, long views of the Mill and associated buildings on slightly higher ground beyond are masked by extensive tree cover. Approaching from the north views of the conservation area are hidden until the brow of the bridge over the former railway line is reached, where St Mary's church and the former rectory are the prominent features. The church tower is similarly visible from the west along Geldeston Road. The landscape is relatively open here and becomes more enclosed as the gradient drops gently towards the river. The surrounding landscape is distinctly green with cattle grazing predominating.

6. Historical development

Archaeology and early development

The Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service compiles records of known archaeological activity, sites, finds, cropmarks, earthworks, industrial remains, defensive structures and historic buildings in the county. These records are known as the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER). The NHER contains 66 records for the parish of Ellingham, although most of these are outside the conservation area boundary.

The name of the village is Old English and means 'homestead of Ella or Eli'. A brief mention in the Domesday Book of 1086, suggests that the settlement may have Saxon origins, and the NHER records indicate human activity here from the prehistoric period onwards. The earliest finds are worked flints, but their locations make it difficult to identify any possible areas of settlement. The excavation of a possible prehistoric enclosure and ring ditch in the grounds of Ellingham Hall suggests that occupation was concentrated on river terraces by the Waveney. Other finds indicate human activity during the Iron and Bronze Ages. Roman pottery kilns outside the conservation area at Diary Farm indicate that at least five potters worked here, but are unusual as the relatively few objects found from this period indicate that this was not an area of dense occupation or activity except for the kilns.

Earthworks on the Geldeston marshes to the east of the conservation area are indications that there was once a medieval settlement here. St Mary's Church was built during the medieval period in the 13th century and extensively remodelled in the 15th century when all the windows were replaced.

Later developments

Outside the conservation area, Ellingham Hall and its unusual icehouse, was built around 1802, but not all post medieval buildings survive; two brick kilns have been demolished as was the windmill which was built on a small mound.

The waterside location of Ellingham was fundamental to its later development. The River Waveney was improved for navigation under an Act of Parliament obtained in 1670, and included the construction of three locks, at Geldeston, Ellingham and Wainford, to extend navigation as far as Bungay Staithe. A special version of the traditional Wherry was in use on the Waveney, with boats measuring no more than 70 by 16 feet. However, with the decline in the use of wherries for commercial trade on the rivers prior to the Second World War, navigation ceased on several stretches of the Broads, including the 4.2 mile section of the river from Geldeston to Bungay, where navigation rights were removed in 1934, and the current limit of navigation remains is at Geldeston, with Ellingham positioned between the

two. Wainford and Ellingham locks have since been converted into sluices but canoes and unpowered craft can still use this section of the waterway.

Within the conservation area boundary, little is known about the history of Ellingham Mill. Dating from the 18th century, it was a flour mill and one of only two Norfolk watermills on the Waveney. From references in early documents, it may have been constructed on the same site as much earlier mills. The mill was built on an artificial semicircular cut made to the north west of the river Waveney, which allowed the mill to retain its head of water while the nearby lock on the main river controlled the levels for the Bungay Navigation. The Waveney was fully navigable for many years using a series of locks, one of which was next to Ellingham mill, and thus grain and flour were both transported to and from the mill via Wherry as well as road. It appears to have been in active use until about 1933 when the River Waveney above Geldeston Lock was closed to navigation. It was then taken over by Vitovis Limited who developed it as a factory for animal feed and built a warehouse adjoining that was used in various guises until it was demolished in the 1980s. The mill came onto the market in the early 1960s and was restored and converted to residential use with part used as an art gallery by the Ellingham Mill Art Society. The bridge outside the mill dates from 1910.

The most modern archaeological site is a World War Two pillbox on the boundary of the conservation area that protected the former railway bridge close to the church.

In the latter part of the twentieth century, the old warehouse south of the mill was demolished and replaced with a house. A temporary measure has been introduced to ease the traffic problem of the mill which effectively prohibits the passage of large vehicles.

In 1854, the population of the parish was recorded as '426 souls' occupying 92 houses. By 1881, the population had reduced to 340. The latest census figures of 2001 record 532 residents in the parish, most of these outside the conservation area.

7. Spatial analysis

Two contrasting forms of development are found in the conservation area. At the lower level long views across the marshes contrast with the mature trees and the network of sluices which give way to a group of buildings with the mill as its focus. On slightly higher ground, the church and the former rectory are set in a more open landscape. Between these two areas, modest houses and cottages are found on the gently curving roads, where the marshes to the west are still visible, and to the north and east the church and former rectory can be seen.

[(image 1444) Views out – from road as it rises up to railway past 1 & 2 Old Station Lane to marshes below]

8. Character analysis

Use and activity

Historically activities centred on the river, the sluices and the Mill; the uses in the area now are almost entirely residential.

Overview of streets, buildings and architecture

The Conservation Area can be divided into two parts.

- the mill and its immediate surroundings
- the area around the Church.

The Mill

The random arrangement of the buildings and the dominance of the mill are important to the charm of this area. The informal nature of the ground surface also contributes to its character.

The concrete bridge over the river has a hard appearance that does not blend into the landscape. The views from the bridge are quite extensive both east and west.

The mill is a traditional timber frame and weatherboarded structure built on a stone base. The rear of the mill has been extended and altered while the south gable has been rebuilt in brick. It has a lopsided central gable to reflect the difference in eaves level.

The attractive Mill House adjoining has fine Gothic windows. It is a timber frame building probably dating from the late mediaeval period although re-fronted in the early 19th Century.

The new house to the south of the mill has fitted in reasonably well with materials which echo those of its traditional neighbours.

Opposite the Mill House, Mill Pool Cottage has been converted from a group of single storey buildings. Their modest scale serves to further emphasise the dominance of the mill. From the bridge there are extensive views, framed by trees, across the river to the meadows beyond. The outlook is however spoilt by the traffic regulation measures.

The barn to the north of the cottages has been sensitively converted although its contribution to the group is minimised by the hedges and trees which screen it. The choice of bricks for Mill Orchard opposite is somewhat assertive and is unsuited to its important position. It has been extended to form a sizeable dwelling but its impact is partly softened by the hedge to the east.

The conversion of the granary has successfully retained its character. Its attractively landscaped gardens are typical of this area.

As the ground rises up towards the former railway line a pair of traditional cottages, their brickwork now colour washed, is set below Old Station Lane. Another pair of cottages, one of which has been recently extended, flanks the road as it forks to the right to lead to the church and Old Rectory.

The Church and Old Rectory

This area is dominated by the landscape, and although some of the buildings are significant, they are very much secondary elements. Trees and hedges serve to define and enclose spaces and views as well as providing a natural background to the buildings.

The church is set back from the road and surrounded by trees. It is basically of 13th century date although refashioned in the 14th and 15th centuries. Its informal character is echoed by the unregimented churchyard and the weathered brick wall which partly surrounds it. The open meadowland to the west is a valuable amenity in this area.

The large former Georgian Rectory lies in extensive grounds which slope down to the river. The site retains some good individual trees and a single storey outbuilding which is of some interest although in need of some repair.

The former railway bridge is of interest, so too is the concrete bunker. The position on the crest of the hill affords commanding views towards the village.

Architectural styles and materials

Except for thatch, most of the materials traditional to South Norfolk and the Broads area are found in the Conservation Area. There is flint, brick and render to the church which also has a mixture of pantiled, plain tiled and lead roofs. There is a predominance of red pantile and black/white weatherboarding as seen on the mill, but also reflected on many of the adjoining buildings. Slate survives as Millfield and on the outbuilding to the west. Apart from the mill, the buildings are domestic in scale, generally two storey with pitched roofs.

Ground surface materials and street furniture

Most of the surface materials are either tarmac or grass. Gravel is used for the path to the church and to several private driveways. Modern concrete pavements have been used on one or two vehicle accesses.

Given the character of the area, the presence of modern "street furniture" stands out. The concrete bollards near the church, and the seemingly, permanently temporary traffic arrangement next to the mill are particular examples.

Trees and hedges

The character of the area relies heavily on trees, hedges and the extensive views that can be enjoyed in all directions. Trees in the churchyard include fine old yews and a Scots Pine. The group of trees south of the old railway line and west of Mill Cottages are the most significant. Elsewhere, the trees are clustered in small groups or individually along the river. (*Tree near river (image 1449)*). There are also good trees around Millfield. There are also a number of hedges delineating field boundaries which help retain the intimate and modest character north of the river.

Boundary treatments

The churchyard is bounded by an old red brick and brick and flint wall with a bold half round coping. The entrance to the churchyard has at some time been narrowed with brick piers. There are timber gates here and to the extension to the burial ground.

Elsewhere in the conservation area, boundaries are formed with hedges, and in some cases timber paling fences, such as that in Old Station Lane

A low chain link fence opposite Old Station Lane protects a newly planted hedge; unfortunately this appears to be *leylandii* rather than more indigenous species which would be more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

Just outside the conservation area, land on Geldeston Road used for industrial storage purposes detracts from the setting of the Church and the conservation area. A landscaping scheme would soften the appearance of this site. The conservation area boundary currently includes part of Geldeston Road adjacent to this site.

9. Issues, pressures, threats and opportunities for improvement

Buildings

Buildings in the conservation area are well maintained. However, the special character of conservation areas can easily be eroded by seemingly minor, and well intentioned, home improvements such as the insertion of replacement windows and doors with ones of an

inappropriate design or material, (for example hinged opening lights in lieu of sash windows and UPVC instead of painted timber). This is a particular issue with unlisted buildings that have been identified as contributing to the character of the conservation area. In line with current legislation, all complete window replacements are required to achieve minimum insulation values, but recognising the affect that inappropriate replacements can have, Local Authorities are empowered to relax that requirement when considering the restoration or conversion of certain buildings within conservation areas, and advice should be sought from the local Planning Department at an early stage. Several cottages in Ellingham have replacement windows of upvc in unsuitable designs.

Streetscape issues

The solution to the traffic problem around the Mill may have been successful but visually it is unattractive, and a more sympathetic treatment of the centre of this Conservation Area should be promoted.

There are opportunities for additional hedge and tree planting. The choice of new planting or fencing should be carefully considered to retain the character of the area. "Suburban" choices such as leylandii hedging or chain link fencing are not sympathetic to the character of the conservation area and their replacement with indigenous species should be encouraged.

The replacement of the concrete bollards outside the church with ones of a more suitable design and material would be a great visual improvement to the area. The removal of the telegraph poles outside church would also be of benefit to the character of the conservation area.

Although just outside the conservation area boundary, the storage site on Geldeston Road is unsightly and it's appearance would be improved with a suitable landscaping scheme.

10. Recommendations for suggested improvements

- Consider sympathetic landscaping/traffic calming measures to the area around the Mill
- Consider the replacement of the concrete bollards outside the church with ones of a more sympathetic material and design
- Encourage additional hedge and tree planting using indigenous species
- Encourage a sympathetic landscaping scheme to improve the appearance of the industrial storage site on Geldeston Road (outside the conservation)

11. The Conservation Area Boundary

The southern bank of the River Waveney forms the boundary to the south. To the west the boundary crosses the mill cut, following its northern boundary for a short distance until it meets a field drain. It runs along the eastern edge of this drain then turns in a north easterly direction to follow the northern bank of a further field drain and a garden boundary until it reaches Old Station Lane. It then follows a farm track north westerly to the boundary of Station House, then turns to the east back to Old Station Lane and along the western edge of this road to Station Road which forms the northern boundary. Then it turns southwards across the old railway bridge and along the northern side of Geldeston Road, past the church to extend eastwards in a finger beside the industrial storage site. Finally the eastern boundary encloses part of the playing field, follows the eastern boundary of the former rectory and a field drain to meet the River Waveney.

Suggested amendments to the conservation area boundary

- Exclude the finger of Geldeston Road on the north east corner of the conservation area; this appears to be superfluous to the conservation area
- Extend the northern boundary to Station Road to include Station House and adjoining land to the north west; the former railway and station is part of the history of the area and the line of the platform is visible in the garden of Station House.

12. Public consultation

This appraisal was subject to public consultation during 2012. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted Broads Authority development plan documents, and other detailed guidance.

DRAFT

Appendix 1

Policies

Please note: The Broads Authority and South Norfolk Council are currently reviewing and revising local policies, which will be published in a new Local Development Framework (LDF). The Broads Authority and South Norfolk District Council have already adopted Core Strategies containing general policies. The Authority has recently adopted its Local Development Plan Document (DPD). Some of the specific saved local policies included in the Broads Authority Local Plan (1997) and in the South Norfolk Local Plan (1998) are still relevant.

Appendix 2

Broads Authority Guidance Leaflets

- Keeping the Broads Special
- Do I need Planning Permission?
- How do I apply for Planning Permission?
- Building at the Waterside – A guide to design of waterside buildings in the Broads Authority area
- Environment and Landscape – How do I plan and manage trees and scrub alongside rivers?
- Development and Flood Risk in the Broads
- Riverbank Protection Works – A guide for riparian landowners
- Sustainability Guide – Sustainable development in the Broads

Appendix 3

Listed buildings within the conservation area (All grade II except where noted)

Church of St Mary Grade I
Ellingham Mill
Mill House

Appendix 4

Buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area

Whilst the following buildings, boundary walls and railings within the conservation area and do not merit full statutory protection, they are considered to be of local architectural or historic interest and every effort should be made to maintain their contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Millfield, outbuildings to the west
Churchyard walls
Mill Barn
Mill Pool Cottage
Former railway bridge
Station House

Appendix 5

References and sources of information

A Popular Guide to Norfolk Place names, James Rye, The Larks Press, 1991
The Buildings of England, Norfolk 2: North-west and South, Nicholas Pevsner and Bill Wilson, 1999
English Heritage: Guidance on conservation area appraisals, 2006
English Heritage: Guidance on the management of conservation areas, 2006
Broads Landscape Character Assessment – draft local character area 2 Waveney Valley, 2006
Faden's Map of Norfolk 1797
OS 1st edition maps
Heritage Environment Record, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, Gressenhall
White's Gazetteer and Directory 1845
Kellys Directory 1883

Appendix 6

Contact details and further information.

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Website: www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

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Geldeston conservation area

1. Introduction

Why have Conservation Areas?

A review of policies relating to the historic environment carried out by English heritage on behalf of the Secretary of States for Culture Media and Sport and the Environment Transport and the Regions was published in December 2000 under the heading 'Power of Place'.

The Report which reflected views now held generally by the population at large, confirmed 5 main messages

- i Most people place a high value on the historic environment and think it right there should be public funding to preserve it.
- ii Because people care about their environment they want to be involved in decisions affecting it.
- iii The historic environment is seen by most people as a totality. They care about the whole of their environment.
- iv Everyone has a part to play caring for the historic environment. More will be achieved if we work together.
- v Everything rests in sound knowledge and understanding and takes account of the values people place on their surroundings.

In summary we must balance the need to care for the historic environment with the need for change. We need to understand the character of places and the significance people ascribe to them.

The concept of conservation areas was first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act 1967, in which local planning authorities were encouraged to determine which parts of their area could be defined as "Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

The importance of the 1967 Act was for the first time recognition was given to the architectural or historic interest, not only of individual buildings but also to groups of buildings: the relationship of one building to another and the quality and the character of the spaces between them.

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The appraisal will provide a sound basis for development management and encourage development initiatives which endeavour to improve and protect the conservation area as well as stimulating local interest and awareness of both problems and opportunities.

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To support these policies, the Broads Authority provides further advice and details in a series of leaflets, which are currently being reviewed and expanded as part of the LDF process. A list of those currently available is attached in Appendix 2.

4. Summary of special interest

Geldeston is medium sized village in a rural setting, which derives much of its character from the river valley landscape and its industrial and residential history. The form of the village has two distinct character areas, one eighteenth century in origin, the other twentieth century. There is a mixture of cottages and larger houses in generous grounds along the principal roads of the historic village, and where the land slopes gently down to the river valley, the more densely populated area of Big Row gives way to marshland around Geldeston Dyke. Remnants of historic waterside activities are evident throughout the conservation area. In contrast on higher ground to the west of Geldeston Hill, there is a more suburban planned character with mid 20th century public housing by the award winning architects Tayler and Green. Open water meadows to the south of the village are

complemented by the wooded areas to north and the east and specimen trees in the older part of the village contribute to its special character.

5. Location and context

The parish of Geldeston is on the Norfolk and Suffolk border, about ten miles (16 kilometres) south west of Great Yarmouth and 2.5 miles (4 kilometres) north west of Beccles. It is situated on an acclivity on the River Waveney which defines its southern boundary.

The village is within South Norfolk District Council area, but the south of the conservation area is also within the Broads Authority area, as indicated on the map. The Broads Authority is responsible for all Planning related matters in this southern area, South Norfolk Council for the remainder.

General character and plan form

The form of Geldeston is that of a compact eighteenth century maltings village at the edge of the Waveney valley. However, the character of village is unusual as it does not conform to a familiar village type or pattern. In part, the absence of the huge maltings buildings which generated so much of its present form and appearance explains this. Another factor is the riverside location which is at and partly upon the bank of the Waveney River valley but set back from the river itself.

The earlier mediaeval village was on higher ground (and outside the conservation area), and appears to have been passed by in the economic development of the present one so the current village centre is notable for its lack of a parish church, which is now some way out of the village centre. Several unobtrusive twentieth century suburban developments have been added to the historic core of the later settlement and, a large area of award winning low density public housing has been constructed on higher ground above the flood plain. As a result, the village form can be described as nucleated and having two elements, one eighteenth century in origin, the other twentieth century, although the shape of the village has not been spoiled by these additions which are well integrated with the older fabric.

The character of the village and the conservation area is one of a very high quality of environment. In the older part of the village the buildings are dominated by the trees, which are of large size and dwarf the buildings in scale. The newer part of the village is far more open in character but shares with the old a high quality of design and detail. Both parts of the settlement have small areas within them of unexpected special character which invite exploration and make the conservation area special. At the Kells estate, these take the form of the greens and footpaths, in the older village the staithe and Big Row. Both parts of the settlement also enjoy the presence of significant mature trees which inform and enclose its spaces.

Geological background

The geological formation of the Waveney river valley has given it a very distinctive form within the wider landscape. The cretaceous chalk deposits below the whole of East Anglia were subject to a smoothing glacial action resulting in a more subdued topography than in other parts of Britain, and these were subsequently overlain with a series of sands, muds and gravels known as 'Craggs'. These processes have created valleys with a distinctive u-shaped profile; in the Waveney valley, large scale open valley landscapes with broad flat flood plains north and south of the river, beyond which rise the tree covered escarpments of the Norfolk and Suffolk boulder clay plateaus.

Landscape Setting

The landscape setting of the conservation area is that of a settlement placed at the edge of a river floodplain.

South of the village the views are of open water meadows, crossed by drainage ditches and with vestiges of the railway still visible; the former railway station building now stands isolated in the water meadows and outside the conservation area. The western side of Station Road is wooded with houses concealed beneath the trees, while on the eastern side the gardens behind the hedges soon give way to open water meadow and open landscape edged to the east by the mature poplars and willows of the Old House garden. This is a delightful landscape, the openness of the meadows contrasting with the close enclosure of the woodland.

To the north the village is partly hidden from view by its tree screen and the contours of the slope at the edge of the valley.

The trees, which form such an important part of the landscape setting of the village, are of species appropriate to these two types of topography. Around the southern edge of the village are black poplar, alder, willow and carr species. Some of the individual trees are very large and this gives a sense of antiquity to the setting.

The northern edge of the village conserves some of the features and flora of its previous heathland status. This is still visible in Heath Lane where thorn hedges and sweet chestnut grow and where, at the northern end, large pines form a copse with broom and heather undercover.

Between these two habitat types the eighteenth and early nineteenth century landowners planted specimen trees around their new dwellings and gardens, many of which survive to contribute to the character of the area.

6. Historical development

Archaeology

The Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service compiles records of known archaeological activity, sites, finds, cropmarks, earthworks, industrial remains, defensive structures and historic buildings in the county. These records are known as the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER). The NHER contains 49 records for the parish of Geldeston, although most of these are outside the conservation area boundary.

Evidence of human activity in the parish in prehistoric times is the form of various flint tools, including a Palaeolithic flint axe discovered on land opposite the Wherry public house. A few artefacts from the Roman period have also been found, but no real evidence of any substantial settlement in the area. The early settlement appears to have been on the high ground near the medieval parish church of St Michael and All Angels, which is the earliest surviving building in the parish. The round tower dates from the 12th century, the rest of the building being 14th and 15th century, and it was much remodelled in the 19th century. Other medieval buildings have disappeared, although there is evidence of a moat and some traces remain as fragments of later rebuilds, but all this is outside the conservation area.

There are no scheduled monuments within the parish.

Early development in the conservation area.

The name Geldeston appears in a document of 1242 as "Geldestun", the name deriving from an Old English personal name, "Gyldi" and the work "tun". The meaning was a single and enclosed agricultural settlement, farmstead or village belonging to Gyldi. The village appears at first to have been secondary to Stockton as the primary settlement.

It is notable that the site of the present village is well away from the mediaeval church which stands to the north of it upon the plateau.

The River Waveney was improved for navigation under an Act of Parliament obtained in 1670, and included the construction of three locks, at Geldeston, Ellingham and Wainford, to extend navigation as far as Bungay Staithe. A special version of the traditional Wherry was in use on the Waveney, with boats measuring no more than 70 by 16 feet. Thus it was only in the late seventeenth century that the construction of the navigable cut from the River Waveney (Geldeston Dyke) and Geldeston locks, allowed the commercial development of the village and its local importance to grow.

From the early eighteenth century river traffic could reach the centre of the village using the new cut and this new accessibility led to the construction of two great maltings. One of these stood at the staithe, the other, including a brewery, behind the Wherry Inn. For one hundred years the village as a result enjoyed considerable commercial prosperity, as the surviving Georgian houses testify. In 1788 the Dowson family, on acquiring a malting business in Geldeston, moved to the Old House in the village. Subsequently they moved to Greenbank, now Geldeston House, which had been built by their business partner, N U Rathbone of Liverpool. In 1824, they were the benefactors of the village school.

White's Directory, published in its second edition in 1845, recorded "... 386 souls and 819 acres of land, mostly the property of John Kerrich Esq, the Lord of the Manor who resides at the Hall, a modern white brick mansion, in a pleasant and well wooded park". Many of the cottages in the conservation area date from this period and the sites of the two great maltings and the brewery are still prominent.

The advent of the railway and the building of the station in 1864 did not bring further prosperity. Instead the new means of transport led to a decline of the waterborne maltings traffic in favour of newer buildings elsewhere with their own rail sidings. Coal wherries were undercut by the railway and by 1914 the staithe maltings were closed and subsequently demolished in 1922. The brewery had closed in 1858 but the remaining maltings carried on business until the 1930's, when the economic depression finally killed them off.

With the decline in the use of wherries for commercial trade on the rivers prior to the Second World War, navigation ceased on several stretches of the Broads, including the 4.2 mile section of the river from Geldeston to Bungay, where navigation rights were removed in 1934. The current limit of navigation is at Geldeston, although Wainford and Ellingham locks have since been converted into sluices to allow canoes and unpowered craft to use this section of the waterway.

The population declined with the fortunes of the maltings and by the year 1921 was 305. Little new building was undertaken during this period. However the village hall was built by benefaction in 1923. This is one of a number of such buildings to be found throughout Norfolk reflecting a deliberate movement to revive rural communities after the First World War had decimated their male populations.

After the Second World War, the process of obsolescence took the Waveney valley railway in its turn and Geldeston became once more a quiet backwater, free of industry and trains. Since the 1950's it has been essentially a dormitory village of very high quality environment with most notably a fine local authority scheme dating from the 1950's designed by Tayler and Green, the celebrated architectural partnership. The population of the village was recorded as 398 in the 2001 census.

Today the cut provides access for leisure craft to the river; there is a quiet caravan park and the pub is unspoiled and consequently sought out. Leisure has replaced malting as the basis for the economy of the village.

Later developments in the conservation area

Built in what was once the lower garden of Hill House (formerly The Knowle) is a mid to late twentieth century house screened and dwarfed by the spectacular group of conifers to its south west. The house is unobtrusive, if not of traditional design and layout. Across the Street from this is a modern bungalow.

The Kells estate is a major element in the conservation area. Built in phases between 1947 and 1971, the estate was designed by the celebrated local architectural practice of Tayler and Green. Although the layout of this public housing in the modest terraces and groups of houses is familiar, their innovative approach to their design, detailing and use of materials has resulted in a quality environment. The four elements which make it up relate closely to the topography and the landscape of the site to form a clear sense of place. The estate is built close to the edge of Geldeston Hill, which leads down to the crossroads at the corner of the old village, and in this way compliments the existing village without compromising it.

In Big Row, a number of the cottages have been sensitively extended in the late twentieth century.

7. Spatial analysis

The position of Geldeston conservation area on a slope beside the Waveney and the extensive tree cover around and within it means that it is all but hidden from both the river and the surrounding landscape. Views of the village from the higher ground on the north and from the open marshland to the south are restrained by this tree cover, although the Kells estate can be seen over the farmland from the west.

The conservation area contains two distinct areas of development. The earlier eighteenth and nineteenth century grouped around The Street, running east to west, and the twentieth century Kells estate to the west of the earlier development adjacent to Geldeston Hill.

Gently curving from Geldeston Hill, The Street runs along the higher level of the conservation area and it is here that the large houses eighteenth century houses are found, set in generous grounds which are significant features. The grassed areas behind and around the Wherry public house are also important elements in the streetscape. Views from The Street are restricted by buildings and mature trees, until after The Old School, when a view south over Big Lane opens up. Dropping down to the water meadows, the smaller buildings in Big Lane date mainly from the eighteenth and nineteenth century and although they roughly follow the line of the street, there is informality in their layout. At the lowest level, the water meadows in front of the former Garden House public house provide a contrast to the arrangement of buildings in Big Lane and, the Staithe and then the river are hidden from view by the topography and plentiful tree cover. Once at the water's edge of the cut the scene opens out once more in front of the former maltings buildings.

In contrast the Kells estate is more open, terraces of single storey and two storey houses, following the topography of the site and grouped around a series of open spaces and footpaths making good use of mature trees.

8. Character analysis

Use and activity

The construction of the new cut providing a link to the Waveney and the staithe in the eighteenth century, promoted the majority of the development in the conservation area. Two large maltings and a brewery were constructed and the consequent commercial prosperity enabled the construction of the Georgian mansions of Greenbanks (Geldeston House) and the Old House. Many of the smaller cottages also date from this period. Following the decline of the waterborne maltings and coal traffic in favour of the railway, the maltings and the brewery were demolished, although their sites are still prominent. The cut and waterside are now utilised for waterborne leisure uses and the current buildings reflect this. The addition of the Village Hall and a few mid twentieth century houses interspersed among the older properties have not changed the shape of the heart of the village, which now essentially provides housing for families mainly working away from the village. Overall the village has a calm, quiet air.

Overview of streets, buildings and architecture

This overview starts at the cross-roads at the foot of Geldeston Hill.

The Street.

The Knowle a mid twentieth century house, is built in what was once the lower garden of a house of the same name (now Hill House) and is screened by the spectacular group of conifers to its south west. Part of this tree group is the remains, grown to maturity and beyond, of a pine tree belt perhaps belonging to a nineteenth century planting scheme. Although not of traditional design and layout, its setting means that the house does not intrude into the streetscene.

Across the street is a modern bungalow which is largely screened from view behind mature hedges and stands beneath young trees, oaks included.

Next door to this dwelling is one much older, Old House Cottage. This is a late eighteenth century estate cottage and has retained its low roof line and single central stack. Glimpsed through the gate opening in its protecting boundary hedge it reveals a true cottage garden foreground with ancient buttressed wall, box path edging and rose arch on either side of the gravel path to the dark painted front door. The roofslope, of shallow pitch, is broken by only one broad dormer with triple casement, repeating the form of the window below. The walls are built of traditional red brick with white lime mortar pointing. This building is unlisted and contributes greatly to the character of the conservation area.

Between this cottage and Old House is a listed crinkle crankle wall which follows the curve of The Street. This is a delightful element in the streetscape and particularly unusual since such walls are usually set within garden grounds and seldom form their boundaries. A simple spike topped iron railing encloses the remainder of the mature grounds.

The Old House stands to the south of The Street and is screened from it by mature trees. Its western garden is similarly protected from the public gaze by the crinkle crankle wall described above. The house dates from the eighteenth century with possibly an earlier core. It is of red brick with pantiled roofs which are hipped at the north end. It has two storeys at its north end, and two and a half storeys at its southern end. The house is an excellent example of the so-called double pile plan in which a central division, usually surmounted by a valley gutter, separates two ranks of rooms. The Old House's east façade is in two sections which probably represent two phases of building. The left of the façade is two and a half storeys high and is two windows wide. These have sashes with glazing bars and rubbed brick arches over the window openings. The ground floor has a canted bay window with a large cross-casement with glazing bars and has a lead flat roof behind its parapet.

There is a half-glazed panelled entrance door with semi-circular fanlight with decorative glazing bar; this has a square-headed door surround with panelled pilaster-strips and

console brackets. A later elliptical roofed trellis porch has polygonal columns. The house has a wooden modillion eaves, an early eighteenth century feature. There are two attic dormers with sashes and cambered roofs. There is an off-centre chimney stack astride the ridge.

There is an external stack on the north wall. The north elevation is the only one readily visible from The Street and has three first floor sashes with glazing bars; one blind opening and one lunette at ground level. There is a small hipped slated single storey projection here. The whole composition is pleasantly presented to the passer by. The rear elevation has two flat roofed attic dormers, with two and three light casements with glazing bars. These are visible from The Street.

Not so visible but dating the house is a water pump with the inscription 1784.

The gardens of the Old House are fine, mature examples of the kind of tree planting favoured for the surroundings of a house of quality at the end of the eighteenth century. Most notable among them are a cedar and two large London planes, all of which are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders. The house is largely screened for the north and east by these trees and their companions.

North of the Old House is the small triangular green which used to carry the village sign, but at the time of this survey, this was missing. A large stone incised with 'Geldeston 2000' is positioned near the road. The trees of this green are notable for their unusual combination of species; a single mature Scots Pine reminds the viewer that the village stands on the edge of former sandy heathland. Its companions are a Turkey Oak and an evergreen prunus species of considerable size. The village sign was a carved and painted wooden bas relief depicting a maltings wherry approaching the eighteenth century village and its cut. It is hoped that this will be repositioned in the near future, as it was finely executed and well conserved. The hedge enclosed green is a worthy element in the townscape of the village and an unusual and enjoyable space at its centre.

Next on the north side of The Street is the Wherry public house, the sole surviving part of one of the two great maltings complexes built in the eighteenth century in the village. The building is unlisted but of considerable charm, it stands gable end to the street and is of diminutive scale. There is a single gable stack below which a good painted hanging sign swings above a little lean to roof over a single storey outshut. To the north, a single storey wing with broad low-pitched roof stretches out towards the garden. The materials of the pub are as in the majority of the older village buildings, red Norfolk brick with red clay pantiles. The beauty of the building lies largely in the weathered patina which these traditional materials have received and its relationship to the green at the rear. The pub car park is not as obtrusive as many such since it broadens from a relatively narrow opening to the Street and thus does not break the enclosure of it. A small and attractive lawn surrounds the pub front. The rear of the building is open to the Street as a small courtyard like triangle of roadway giving onto the original back door entrance. Weathered picnic tables on a small lawn do not intrude into the character of the area.

The only detrimental parts of this whole scene is the obtrusive telephone pole which is planted on the street next to the gable of the building, a poorly positioned glass recycling container, refuse paladin, Calor Gas tank and cooler/air-conditioning units at the rear of the pub, and a very tall metal flue on the north wing.

Opposite the pub is the lane leading to the staithe. Next on the Street adjacent to the pub is a group of buildings and dwellings including the former village shop. These are of varying dates with a modern house addition to an older white rendered building, a domestic garage and the Victorian shop included. The arrangement of the buildings is irregular and enclosed

in an informal courtyard like way, by the pub to the west and the monopitch of the two storey former shop building to the east. The frontage is walled by a red brick wall with modest gate piers with finials. This group would appear incoherent were it not clear that it has taken the place of the former buildings, parts of which have survived within it. Most notable of these is the massive buttressed wall of the former maltings fronting the street.

The former shop (now a house) with its monopitched roof has been mentioned above. It has been unsympathetically altered in the recent past with flat roofed extension and 1970's style square windows on the ground floor. At the time of the last review the Victorian sash windows were retained at the first floor. However these have been replaced with mock sash windows in upvc, which have not enhanced its character.

Across The Street from this is the fine Village hall mentioned above. This, if not a part remodelling of older buildings is a finely attuned addition to the eighteenth century fabric of the village. It is built with its length running along The Street and takes advantage of the fall in ground level at its western end to include a set of steps up to a broad front door and porch. This is single storeyed with canted walls and a shaped gable carrying a plaque with inscription. Above this the west gable proper rises with superimposed concave and convex parapets forming its profile. Two more, albeit simpler shaped gables grace the street frontage which has a single storey with broad domestic type sash windows in arched openings below dormers. The roof is of red pantiles and the brick is identical with that of the older buildings nearby. The joinery is painted black with white windows. The hall is a handsome early twentieth century addition to the streetscape of the village.

Tucked in the angle of the porch and west gable wall of the hall is a red K6 telephone kiosk. Although many K6 boxes across the country are listed, this one is not and would be worthy for consideration.

East of the village hall, the Street is fronted by a low brick wall beyond which is a white rendered two storey house with a large red brick gable stack (the Old School House). This has a low pitched roof of pantiles and small first floor lanced framed cast iron casements, one two light and one three light. A single casement of two lights is set next to a panelled, black painted door. An adjacent doorway to the previous half of the cottage has been blocked and the matching ground floor casement suppressed.

East of this, the row of buildings continues with the Old School. This is the Dowson family's village school, built at their expense in 1824 by remodelling what had been former stables to Geldeston Brewery on the Street. The Old School is a single storey mansard roofed building with pronounced shaped gables to east and west. It is built of soft red Norfolk brick and is covered with red pantiles. To the Street, the building displays a face with two domestic doors at either end and only one window with a half dormer set just within the western gable. The building is joined to its rendered neighbour to the west by a small low pitched roofed annexe into which the right hand door opens. The east facing gable of the building is open to view and displays its first concave and then convex profile well. It is broad in proportion and has a wide four light window with a segmental headed central pair of lights below a segmental brick arch. A pantiled lean-to is set below the cill of the window and lies below street level. At the time of this survey, works were being carried out to the Old School and the windows renewed. The windows would benefit from a painted finish rather than the current apparent stained finish.

Beyond the Old School the wall to the street edge is missing and leaves an unsightly gap. It is not clear from the work being carried out whether a wall is to be built in this area.

From the point in the Street east of the Old School, a panoramic view of the cottages of Big Row, lying below at the edge of the river valley escarpment is visible. This is attractive,

since they are irregularly arranged in a picturesque fashion among their eighteenth century garden plots, with a backdrop of magnificent mature trees edging the Staithe.

Opposite this to the north of the road is the almost concealed curved brick splay of the entrance to Geldeston House. The house itself is largely screened from the road and its contribution to the conservation area scene is through its fine tree planting and modest early nineteenth century splayed entrance. This is constructed in white gault brick with knapped flint panels and has a rounded section white brick coping. York stone capped white brick piers complete the design with attractive wrought iron gates. Mature yews flank the entrance.

The house, partly visible from the road, dates from the late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century. It is built of gault brick and red brick, partly colourwashed with hipped roofs of black-glazed pantiles and slate. The house has two storeys and attics. Geldeston House has a fine sloping frontispiece flanked by mature trees. Notable among these and set to either side of the grassed slope in front of the house are a large sweet chestnut and a large oak. The road is edged here by a low rounded hedge with a grass verge at its base.

Further east the conservation area boundary narrows to exclude a row of late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses and bungalows to the south of the Street.

At Heath Road at the extreme eastern end of the conservation area, the boundary includes a hedgerow and enclosed field adjacent to the Geldeston House woodland. This gives a pleasant rural edge to the area.

Big Row

Big Row is a lane of cottages running downhill from the Street opposite the frontage of Geldeston House. At the junction with the Street on the right is a red brick cottage with a low pitched pantiled roof. This is attractively set with its gable and chimney built into the slope of the ground and ancient rounded hedges encircling it. Painted traditional paling gates are set within these. Next to Big Row, a single storey outshut with low pitched roof sits below two small white painted casements to complete a picturesque cottage scene.

Below this, also set among old hedges and above the lane bank are a pair of nineteenth century semi detached villas, Home Port and Lantern Cottage, and spaced at a broad interval along the lane, an older detached cottage, River View. The line of the lane has been disturbed to accommodate car parking for Home Port and River view, but otherwise all three have been sympathetically added to recently and contribute greatly to the character of the conservation area.

Between these two, on the other side of the lane is a cottage recently extended with a long catslide roof with no windows or openings facing the lane, and a two level ridge where a later outshut adjoins the main cottage. This is seen from slightly above eaves level as the observer approaches in the lane. The cottage has also been sympathetically added to on the southern side and makes a good contribution to the character of this special part of the conservation area.

At the turning of the lane is another cottage, once the Old Garden public house, with a good small 20th century detached garage of black stained weatherboarding. The building retains its original windows, the pub name in incised letters in the render on the house wall, as well as a good traditional wrought iron bracket for the former pub sign. The lane at this point is lined on its southern side with fine ancient trees among which are a Turkey oak and a huge black poplar, both standing within the water meadow.

The Big Row lane winds round to the north once more, enclosing Little Row, a further pair of traditional cottages and their gardens within traditional hedging and pale fencing. One cottage retains its small paned casement windows and simple detailing, but the other has replacement upvc windows. Beyond and at right angles is a further detached cottage (Greenbank Cottage).

The whole of this small area, and in particular its informal layout, forms a special enclave of particular character and attraction within the larger area. It is a rare historical survival of eighteenth century cottages and gardens and a place of great beauty.

Below the Big Row lane and almost hidden from the rest of the village by the richness of the mature tree cover at this point at the edge of the marsh meadows, lies the site of the former staithe. Little of its original buildings remain but those which do are of high quality, while the relatively new details of the boatyard sheds are also well designed. The enclave is reached through a traditional five barred gate by a gravel drive from which glimpses of the Old House and its wooded garden can be seen.

The first buildings of the staithe to come into sight are the boatyard sheds. These are closely boarded with narrow boards and have traditional simple greenhouse type windows formed of single vertical lights run together into a row. On the eastern face of the building the post and beam frame is expressed and the row of windows is continuous beneath a plain red pantiled roof. The window frames are painted white. The building has the air of an old working waterside building dating from the heyday of the staithe, now gently transformed and reused as the basis of a new leisure use for the staithe and cut.

From the gravelled area next to the boatyard, a finger post point out into the lush watermeadow habitat below the ancient poplars and willows, while grassy paths follow them. Across the marsh edge the face of the former Old Garden pub is visible between the poplar trunks.

Next to the boatyard building are the remaining eighteenth century staithe-side buildings, now converted to an attractive row of domestic buildings. The larger of these is a two storey cottage with recent but well designed dormers with sash windows. This is linked to a single storey wing of two parts, the further of which has a single tall chimney stack and a black glazed pantile roof. These buildings have a shared grassed forecourt protected by the flank of the boatyard building on one side and by the huge trees of the garden of Old House on the other. The gravel access road of the staithe forms a sweep in front of this group and an attractive low crisscross rustic fence in eighteenth century style protects the green so formed. The resulting composition is very pleasing and creates another delightful surprise in the conservation area.

A low brick wall divides the area around the staithe from the southern part of the Old House garden.

Across the water of the cut, a willow covered promontory provides moorings for leisure craft and is demarcated by an ancient wall to its west. In parts the grass bank rises directly from the water, whilst in other areas timber quay heading trims the waters edge. The whole area is one of high quality and contributes greatly to the character of the conservation area as a whole.

Station Road

Station Road starts from the Geldeston Hill crossroads and curves south into the marshland of the river valley. The view of the open meadows is closed by the trees and hedges which line the edge of the road. It traverses the boundary of the conservation area before reaching the Italianate former railway station building now isolated in the water meadows. At the

junction with the foot of Geldeston Hill, the road is bordered with substantial hedges with mature trees in the domestic gardens behind. The houses here are hidden behind these visual barriers. The road is closely framed with narrow grass verges at the foot of the hedge at each side. A wider gap in the western hedge reveals a white rendered cottage with a modern brick extension, both tiled with dark pantiles and standing inside a wide gravelled forecourt sheltered from view from the road.

The western side of the road is wooded with houses concealed beneath the trees while on the eastern side the gardens behind their hedges soon give way to open watermeadow and open landscape edged on its eastern edge by the mature poplars and willows of the Old House garden. This is a delightful landscape, the openness of the meadows contrasting with the close enclosure of the woodland. On turning and re-entering the village, the view uphill is of the sinuous road winding uphill into the trees with a corner of the Kells estate in the background.

The Kells estate

The Kells estate is a major part of the conservation area and is equivalent to nearly a half of it. It is particularly striking because of its contrast with the rest of the village which, as the preceding description suggests, is still effectively an eighteenth century environment. Kells by contrast is entirely twentieth century and post second world war. The buildings are the familiar modest terraces and groups of houses which are now the chief evidence of the advent of the welfare state into the English countryside. But unlike the majority of their contemporaries, constrained by utility and the austerity of the period into a cramped ugliness, Kells has the quality of true architecture.

The estate was designed by the celebrated architectural practice of Tayler and Green in the years between 1947 and 1971. Commissioned and built for Loddon Rural District Council, Kells Way (designed in 1947 and built in 1950) was the first development of single storey houses by Taylor and Green. It was followed by terraces of family housing (Kells Walk, Kells Acre and Geldeston Hill 1952 -1971), in line with the Council's policy of integrating pensioners housing within the wider community. This development at Geldeston is an example of where the Taylor and Green housing has served to unite a scattered village and given it a focus.

It is composed of four elements, each of which is carefully related to the landscape and topography of the site and all of which interrelate to form a clear sense of place. The relationship with the pre-existing village is almost tenuous but arranged in such a way as to complement the existing settlement. This is achieved by building close to the edge of Geldeston Hill which leads downhill to the crossroads and the corner of the old village.

The furthest of the elements which make up Kells is a green with single storey houses on two of its sides. The south side of this green is left open to the road which carries vehicles around the back of the houses. This is screened and the composition of the whole southern edge of the estate is framed by a grove of alders and poplars with cut grass below edged with low white painted posts and rails. The same type of edging protects the green from the road and the two terraces of houses are set along the western and northern sides of this. These are white painted with deep eaves below pantiled roofs with simple chimneys. The mature trees dominate the scene. Low evergreen hedges front the gardens of the houses. The eastern side of the green is flanked by the two storey gable of the terrace of houses adjacent. The enclosure of the space is thus achieved in a relaxed and almost casual way, in striking contrast to the crudity of most estate layouts of the period.

The terrace of two storeys is six houses long and has a continuous ridge line above a low pitched roof of pantiles to match those on the single storey houses. The details of the façade of these colour-washed houses are simply achieved and the trellis of their lower

storey is identical with that of the single storey houses so that there is visual continuity between them. The whole is clearly in the local and Suffolk tradition of colour washed clay lump, low pitched roofed cottages. Some of the details have dated in a telling manner, notably the Scandinavian metal railing of the porch to the house carrying the 1951 Festival of Britain award plaque.

East of the terrace and standing uphill from it so as to create a second green are four rows of single storey cottages. The green incorporates and conserves existing large hedgerow willow trees of great beauty. The terraces of cottages here are of a later date than the rest of the estate and show a falling away from the high standards of materials set earlier. The brick chosen for these cottages is a sand faced mix with buff as its base colour. The result is much less warm in its appearance than the earlier buildings and speaks of its date, the early 1970's. The terraces are set at right angles to the road with footpaths between them, creating pleasant supervised spaces belonging to the residents. Each individual house has a small front garden space next to the footpath which has steps down from it leading to the back doors of the terraces below. The Tayler and Green keynotes are still in evidence with fretted bargeboards to the gables and careful attention to the paving and footpath details. A zigzag screen wall against the roads and footpath edge carries a date stone with the architects' names. Individual house owners have planted shrubs in scale with the whole to create a delightful series of planted pedestrian ways.

At the top of the estate is a terrace of houses arranged so as to enclose a further green, sloping gently downhill. This is open to the road on the east and is enclosed by the north wall of the single storey terrace cottages. At the western edge of the green, another short terrace of three houses encloses Kells Walk and creates a short street which closes the vista from the green. The subtle stepping of the terraces on plan and in section and their simple differences of detail make a very satisfactory environment. The attention to the minor detail of ground and landscape treatment, with low rails, bollards and mature trees retained as key features, is strikingly in contrast with later examples of local authority housing. The materials of this part of the estate are more noticeably local, with red brick walls, clay pantiled roofs and one house picked out in white gault brick. The houses clearly belong in this part of Norfolk.

Behind this upper part of the estate is a footpath zig-zagging back to the rear of the single storey cottages which began this description. The footpath links house, backland and allotment gardens in true imitation of the traditional form of villages in this part of Norfolk.

However, it is regrettable that in recent years all the original windows have been replaced in upvc and that in Kells Acre two of the open porches (a typical Taylor and Green feature) have been enclosed with glass and upvc framing.

Hill House (formerly the Knowle) is a large house of pre-second war construction, built in the pine woodland to the east of the brow of Geldeston Hill. In its lower garden, the modern later house now the Knowle, has been built. Hill House is well screened from the road and the neighbouring Tayler and Green estate.

Architectural styles and materials

In the older part of the village there is little consistency in the orientation of the buildings; some, such as the Old School and the Village Hall are built parallel to the street, others such as River View are gable onto the lane, but the majority including the group around the Wherry pub and former shop, and the those along Big Row are clustered more informally.

The buildings of Geldeston are consistently of high quality, those of modest scale and detail have been well conserved and new buildings have respected the design and materials traditions of the district.

Larger buildings are distributed among the generality; these are notably the great houses of the maltster families. However, the majority of buildings in the old part of the village are small scale domestic ones constructed in local red Norfolk brick, now weathered to a mellow patina; Old House Cottage is a good example of this. One or two exceptional examples are rendered, such as The Old School House and Sunny View, and a few have painted brickwork. The grander buildings are also in the main of red brick with the exception of the white gault bricks used at Geldeston House. Their roofs are of the local clay pantiles, also now weathered and mostly low pitched. Chimneys are constructed in red brick and have largely been conserved so that the roof lines appear authentic.

Architectural detail is notable on the Street where shaped gables are applied for effect to the Old School and probably in imitation of it, to the village hall. The Old House has a wooden modillion eaves, an early eighteenth century feature.

Generally window designs reflect the age and status of the buildings, with casement or cross mullioned in smaller houses, such as the cottages in Big Row, and sliding sash in medium sized and larger houses, such as the former Garden House pub, Geldeston House and The Old House, and also in the former maltings buildings on the Staithe and the villas on Big Row. Many houses retain their original timber design, but a few have been replaced with unsympathetic designs in upvc. The Old School House has unusual lancet framed cast iron casements.

Twentieth century additions to the older part of the village have generally been sympathetic to the earlier styles; the boatyard sheds are closely boarded with narrow boards and have traditional simple greenhouse type windows formed of single vertical lights run together in a row. On the eastern face of the building, the post and beam timber frame is expressed and the row of windows is continuous beneath a plain red pantiled roof. The garage to the former Garden House pub echoes this waterside feel with the use of dark stained boarding, as do extensions to the villas and cottages in Big Row.

In the twentieth century part of the village, the architecture of the Kells estate is based upon a true understanding of what is loosely called vernacular architecture. The architects Tayler and Green took this to mean that their new scheme should be based on local traditions of building and that simplicity of design would best accord with those. This is reinforced by the layout of the estate which is semi-formal with terraces and groups of houses around green spaces and footpaths. Private gardens provided for each dwelling, contribute to the open feeling of the area.

Wall materials for the earlier part of the estate are painted brick, reflecting the Suffolk tradition of colour washed clay lump, whilst in the later phases, a mixture of buff, cream red brick predominate with one house picked out in white gault brick; the whole is co-ordinated with the use of low pitched pantiled roofs, and chimneys with the Tayler and Green hallmark canted cappings.

The details of the façade of the colour washed houses of the Kells estate are simply achieved and the trellis of their lower storey is identical with that of the single storey houses so that there is a visual continuity between them. Metal railings of various designs and fretted timber bargeboards are used throughout the estate. Some of the details have dated in a telling manner, notably the Scandinavian metal railing of the porch to the house carrying the 1951 Festival of Britain award plaque. In the northern part, open porch canopies are a feature (two now enclosed) and some gables have chequered brick patterns, one using two different coloured bricks to achieve the pattern and others raised three dimensional effects. Shallow arched or canted brick lintols have also been used in this part of the estate. These houses from the evidence of their materials and details clearly belong in this part of Norfolk.

Ground Surface Materials

Public roads and pavements are, without exception, of tarmacadam, and footpaths have been kept to a minimum, on one side of Geldeston Hill and The Street and none at all in Station Road and Big Row. Otherwise the edges of public roads tend to be relatively informal with grass verges below rounded hedges, and this restrained treatment adds greatly to the character of the conservation area.

The car park to the Wherry public house and the access road to the Staithe are gravelled as are many private driveways and this is an appropriate material for the conservation area. Gravel is also used for the front path to the Old House Cottage, which with its wicket gate, box hedging, and rose arch, is a typical cottage garden.

It is of great benefit to the character of the conservation area that virtually no modern paving has been introduced. Instead, grass is used to great effect, for example to the rear of the Wherry, in front of the former staithe buildings and opposite the Garden House where a wildflower meadow habitat is maintained below the ancient poplars and willows. All this helps to preserve the verdant feel of the village.

Whilst more formally laid out than the rest of the village, the grass verges, private gardens and grassed public spaces on the Kells Estate echo the feel of the older village.

Street Furniture and signs

Fortunately the village has little street furniture to disturb its green character, but there are several signs in the village providing reminders of its history.

On the green behind the Wherry Inn, a large inscribed stone commemorates the Millennium and a green milepost celebrates the creation of the National Cycle Network of the same date. Also on the green the village sign is a carved and painted wooden bas relief depicting a maltings wherry approaching the eighteenth century village and its cut.

A traditional painted hanging sign advertises the Wherry pub. At the time of the survey, this was looking a little neglected, and in need of repainting.

The village hall carries a stone plaque with inscription, commemorating the gift of the hall by Elizabeth Dowson to the village in 1923 and the long association of the family with the village.

A wrought iron hanging sign bracket and the incised name at Garden House are reminders of it's former use.

In the Street, a familiar red K6 telephone box in cast iron following the design of Sir Gile Gilbert Scott is sited in the angle of the porch and west gable wall of the village hall. Many of this style of telephone box are statutorily listed in other parts of the country.

On the water meadows next to the boatyard, inscribed timber finger posts point the way to public walks.

On a house in the Kells estate a circular plaque commemorates a merit award from the Festival of Britain in 1951, and the architects of the scheme are acknowledged on the date stone on Geldeston Hill.

Trees hedges and significant open spaces

There are a number of sites where trees or hedges play an important visual role in the village. These are marked on Map I and listed below.

- Hill House and The Knowle – conifers to the south west and the remains of a nineteenth century pine belt
- The modern bungalow on the corner of Station Road and the Street – mature hedges and young trees including oaks
- The Old House – mature trees throughout the grounds, including poplars, willows, a cedar and two large London Planes, many of these protected by Tree Preservation Orders
- The green to the north of the Old House and west of the Wherry – hedges and a mature Scots pine, Turkey Oak and a large prunus
- Geldeston House – many mature trees including two large yews, a sweet chestnut and a large evergreen oak
- Hedging and tree planting to the north east of Greenbanks
- Big Row – mature hedges along the lane
- Water meadows – mature trees including poplars, willows, a Turkey Oak and a large black poplar
- The staithe and the Dyke – willows
- The Kells Estate – mature trees and low evergreen hedges in the front gardens

Conservation area designation affords protection to trees within the boundaries. However there are a number of trees and groups of trees within the village which are additionally subject to Tree Preservation Orders. Advice should be sought from the Broads Authority or South Norfolk Council before any work is undertaken to trees in the conservation area.

Boundary treatments

Red brick boundary walls are found in the Street; the impressive crinkle crankle wall at the Old House, the solid former maltings wall and the more modest treatment in front of Archway Cottage and beside the Old School.

Also in the Street, the early nineteenth century splayed entrance and wall to Geldeston House is constructed in white gault brick with knapped flint panels and a rounded section white brick coping. The white brick piers are capped with York stone, between which is a set of attractive wrought iron gates.

On Geldeston Hill the zig-zag screen wall against the footpath edge carrying a concrete date stone with the names of the architects of the Kells estate makes a twentieth century contribution to the street scene.

Simple iron railings form the boundary to part of the Old House grounds and the cottage on the corner of the Street and Big Row. Timber gates and fencing are also used to good effect; post and rail along Station Road, picket gates on Big Row and Old House Cottage, and more unusually, the attractive low crisscross rustic fence in 18th century style in front of the houses on the Staithe.

However, as noted above, hedges play the major part as boundaries in the conservation area, and their retention and maintenance is an important factor in preserving its character

9. Issues, pressures, threats and opportunities for improvements

Buildings

Generally the buildings and gardens are very well maintained.

The special character of conservation areas can easily be eroded by seemingly minor, and well intentioned, home improvements such as the insertion of replacement windows and doors with ones of an inappropriate design or material, (for example hinged opening lights in

lieu of sash windows and UPVC instead of painted timber). This is a particular issue with unlisted buildings that have been identified as contributing to the character of the conservation area. In line with current legislation, all complete window replacements are required to achieve minimum insulation values, but recognising the affect that inappropriate replacements can have, Local Authorities are empowered to relax that requirement when considering the restoration or conversion of certain buildings within conservation areas, and advice should be sought from the local Planning Department at an early stage.

Streetscape issues

The lack of parking near individual dwellings is an issue in closely built traditional villages such as Geldeston. This is particularly noticeable in Big Row, where access is very restricted, and on the Kells estate where some front gardens have been utilised for parking, resulting in the loss of the original fencing and disturbance to the design of the area.

As mentioned earlier in this document, there are several intrusive elements connected to the operation of The Wherry public house.

The telegraph pole adjacent to The Wherry which carries telephone wires to properties in all directions is also visually intrusive to the street scene.

10. Recommendations for suggested improvements

- Consider nominating the K6 telephone box for listing
- Consider interpretation panels at The Staithe to record the history of the river and its trade
- Encourage the undergrounding of telephone wires in The Street
- Encourage a more sympathetic waste management regime adjacent to The Wherry public house

11. The conservation area boundary

Beginning at the brow of Geldeston Hill, the boundary runs west behind the Kells estate house gardens and turns with them south as far as the single storey cottages at its south western corner. It then runs east on the south side of the road enclosing two older buildings before turning south once more to run behind the gardens and properties to the west of Station Road. At the edge of the woodland enclosing these it turns to follow the line of the field drain south east as far as the woodland belt south of Old House. Here it curves north easterly to enclose the staithe. It crosses the water in a line running north easterly to include the ancient water meadow and its trees south of Big Row. It then turns south east to include the gardens of the cottages to the east of Big Row and continues north to reach the Street at the south east corner of the Geldeston House woodland. Here it runs east to Heath Road turning at which it sets north. At a point, level with the northern edge of the Geldeston House woodland, it turns west to enclose the field and wood. It then turns south to the boundary of the Knowle property whose northern edge it skirts before reaching Geldeston Hill and completing the circuit.

Suggested amendments to the conservation area boundary

- Extend the north western boundary to include Rose Cottage, 21 Kells Way. Rose Cottage is an example of a 19th century dwelling that remains largely intact and part of the history of the village
- Extend the south western boundary to include Station House. The former station building is largely intact and it and the railway are part of the historical development of the village.

- Omit area of land to East of Geldeston House bordered by the street to the South and Heath road to the East and by the tree belt (remaining in the conservation area) to the West. Considered superfluous to conservation area as now outside Development boundary.
- Extend the eastern boundary to include the land between Station House and the existing boundary and include the tree plantation behind the houses on Station Road. These linked areas contribute to the setting of this part of the village.
- Extend the south eastern boundary to include the semi-detached 1920's houses on The Street. This pair is a good example of the period which makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

12. Public consultation

This appraisal was subject to public consultation during 2012. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted Broads Authority planning policy, and other detailed guidance.

DRAFT

Appendix 1

Policies

Please note: The Broads Authority and South Norfolk Council are currently reviewing and revising local policies, which will be published in a new Local Development Framework (LDF). The Broads Authority and South Norfolk District Council have already adopted Core Strategies containing general policies. The Authority has recently adopted its Local Development Plan Document (DPD). Some of the specific saved local policies included in the Broads Authority Local Plan (1997) and in the South Norfolk Local Plan (1998) are still relevant.

Appendix 2

Broads Authority Guidance Leaflets

- Keeping the Broads Special
- Do I need Planning Permission?
- How do I apply for Planning Permission?
- Building at the Waterside – A guide to design of waterside buildings in the Broads Authority area
- Environment and Landscape – How do I plan and manage trees and scrub alongside rivers?
- Development and Flood Risk in the Broads
- Riverbank Protection Works – A guide for riparian landowners
- Sustainability Guide – Sustainable development in the Broads

South Norfolk Council Guidance leaflets

1. Building Materials and Details
2. Extensions and Alterations to Houses
3. Shopfronts and Advertisements
4. Windows and Doors in Historic Buildings
5. Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions
6. Alterations and Repairs to “Tayler & Green” housing
7. Walls, Railings, Fences & Hedges
8. Prevention is better than cure – a guide for owners of historic buildings
9. Conservation Areas and the design of new buildings
10. Individual Dwellings and Small Groups

Appendix 3

Listed Buildings in the conservation area

The Old House – Grade II

Crinkle Crankle wall to the NW of The Old House – Grade II

Appendix 4

Buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Whilst the following buildings, boundary walls and railings within the conservation area and do not merit full statutory protection, they are considered to be of local architectural or historic interest, and every effort should be made to maintain their contribution to the character of the conservation area.

The Street

Old House Cottage
The village sign
The Wherry Public House
The buttressed wall of the former maltings adjacent to the former shop
The village hall
Red K6 telephone box
The low brick wall adjoining cottage gardens to Big Row
Old School House
The Old School
Brick and flint wall and entrance gates to Geldeston House
Geldeston House

Big Row

The cottages in Big Row
The former Garden Public House
The boatsheds
The remaining eighteenth century staitheside buildings
Low brick wall dividing the area around the staithe from the southern part of the Old House garden

Station Road

The white rendered cottage with modern brick extension

Kells Way

Rose Cottage, 21 Kells Way

The entire Kells estate.

Appendix 5

Buildings subject to additional planning controls under an Article 4 Direction.

Geldeston Hill	2, 4 - 11, 13 – 21 (odd)
Kell's Acres	1 – 9
Kell's Walk	1 – 5
Kell's Way	6 – 24 (even)

Appendix 6

References and sources of information (this re-appraisal)

A Popular Guide to Norfolk Place names, James Rye, The Larks Press, 1991
The Buildings of England, Norfolk 2: North-west and South, Nicholas Pevsner and Bill Wilson, 1999
English Heritage: Guidance on conservation area appraisals, 2006
English Heritage: Guidance on the management of conservation areas, 2006
Broads Landscape Character Assessment – draft local character area 2 Waveney Valley, 2006
Faden's Map of Norfolk 1797
OS 1st edition maps
Heritage Environment Record, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, Gressenhall
White's Gazetteer and Directory 1845
Kellys Directory 1883

Appendix7

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