

Stalham Staithe Conservation Area Re-appraisal.

Introduction

Why have Conservation Areas?

A review of policies relating to the historic environment carried out by English Heritage (now Historic England) 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 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 in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and now reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

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/or enhance the character and appearance of the area.

Aims and objectives

The conservation area at Stalham Staithe was originally designated in 1991. This appraisal examines the historic settlement and special character of Stalham Staithe, reviews the boundaries of the conservation area and suggests areas for potential enhancement.

If adopted, 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 stimulate local interest and awareness of both problems and opportunities.

Planning policy context

The majority of the land and buildings in the Conservation Area are within the Broads Authority Executive area and the Broads Authority is responsible for all Planning matters in these areas. North Norfolk District Council is responsible for Planning matters in two areas of the existing conservation area, to the west and northwest of Mill Road.

There are a range of policies which affect Conservation Areas both within the Broads Authority and North Norfolk District Council areas, 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. The National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, and Planning Practice Guidance for the NPPF 2014, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Broads Authority and North Norfolk District Council consider the various provisions contained in them in plan making and decision making.

Locally, in line with government policy, the Broads Authority and North Norfolk District Council are currently reviewing and revising local policies which will be published in the Local Plan (formerly the Local Development Framework (LDF)).

The Broads Authority has an adopted Core Strategy (2007) and Development Management Policies DPD (2011) and adopted Sites Specifics DPD (2014).

To support these policies, the Broads Authority provides further advice in a series of leaflets, which are currently being reviewed and expanded as part of the Local Plan process. A list of those currently available is attached in Appendix 3.

North Norfolk Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (adopted 2008) – relevant policies are:

- **Policy EN 8: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment:** - Specifies that development proposals should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of designated assets (which includes conservation areas), other important historic buildings, structures, monuments and their settings through high quality, sensitive design.
- **Policy EN 2: Protection and Enhancement of Landscape and Settlement Character:** - Specifies criteria that proposals should have regard to, including the Landscape Character Assessment and distinctive settlement character and views into and out of conservation areas.

- **Policy EN 4: Design:** - Specifies criteria that proposals should have regard to, including the North Norfolk Design Guide.
- **North Norfolk Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2008)** - Provides guidance to those involved in the management of the built environment and with the objective of improving design quality.
- **North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2009)** - Provides an assessment of the landscape character of the District with an objective of informing development proposals.

Summary of special interest

Stalham Staithe is a small settlement to the south of the town of Stalham. In contrast to the densely developed edge of the town to the north of the A149, the early development at Stalham Staithe is more informally sited around the historic staithe, which is bordered by a number of boatyards in a network of inlets and mooring basins at the head of Stalham Dyke which is connected to the northern part of the Broads via the River Ant. The Conservation Area contains many mature trees and is fringed by trees and alder carr giving it a verdant setting. Some large scale boatyard buildings outside the Conservation Area contrast with the generally domestic scale buildings of the historic settlement.

Location and setting

The parish of Stalham is situated in North Norfolk at the head of Stalham Dyke, which runs north-eastwards from the upper River Ant in the northern part of the Broads waterway area. Stalham Staithe is a small settlement to the south of the town of Stalham, but separated from it by the A149 which connects Wroxham and Hoveton to Ludham. It is approximately 15 miles (24 km) north east of Norwich.

General settlement character and plan form

The Conservation Area of Stalham Staithe is roughly triangular in shape with the main part of the settlement grouped around the historic staithe on Staithe Road and extending to the west to include the cottages on the north side of Mill Road. The historic development in the conservation area is mainly of a domestic scale, although some buildings formerly in commercial use are larger. Apart from the cottages on Mill Road, the buildings are grouped around the Staithe and the network of inlets and mooring basins associated with the neighbouring boatyards. The boatyard developments outside the Conservation Area include some large industrial type buildings which are of a different scale to the historic buildings and although their physical form does not contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, the activities associated with them contribute to the vibrancy of the area. Quiet in winter, the area is busy in the summer months with visitors in holiday mood as they come to hire boats for their time on the Broads.

Landscape setting

Stalham Staithe is set within the gently undulating shallow valley of the River Ant. This part of the Broads is known for being the least saline influenced of the Broadland fens and consequently the most diverse.

The historic development at Stalham Staithe is not easily seen from outside the settlement, hidden by mainly 20th century development from the A149 on the north-eastern edge; views from the south and west are terminated by trees and carr woodland. From the waterways, the boatyards and mooring basins dominate the views until the traditional buildings around the staithe are reached.

The Conservation Area is bordered to the north-west by a large arable field fringed by mature trees to the south and east marking the settlement around the staithe. Carr woodland around the water's edge to the east and west of the Conservation Area boundary lend a green fringe to the setting of the Conservation Area and mature trees within the Conservation Area contribute to its verdant character.

Historical background

The Parish of Stalham

The Norfolk Historic Environment Service compiles records of known archaeological activity including sites, finds, cropmarks, earthworks, industrial remains, defensive structures and historic buildings in the county, in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER), and an abridged version can be accessed through the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website at www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk. Records for Stalham parish date from pre-historic times with every period represented in some way.

The name Stalham may derive from the Old English meaning 'homestead by a pool' or 'homestead with stables'.

The parish of Stalham has a long history and was well established by the time of the Norman Conquest. Its population, land ownership and productive resources were detailed in the Domesday Book of 1086 which recorded that the parish contained rich agricultural land and valuable woodland, which suggested that during the medieval period the area around Stalham was a thriving farming community.

This is borne out by the enclosures and field boundaries recorded in the NHER suggesting that the land around Stalham was fertile and suitable for farming from the Roman period through the medieval to post medieval periods. Other records relating to the medieval period attest to the religious, social, domestic and commercial activities in the parish, including peat and turf cutting for fuel. By the post medieval period surrounding marshes were being drained by two windmills and a smock mill, and there was at least one corn mill in the district. Records also show that bricks were being made locally.

The opening of the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway in 1880 which ran between Melton Constable & Great Yarmouth brought better communications with local towns for trade which gradually had a detrimental effect on commercial water borne traffic. However, it also heralded the heyday of the tourist trade on the river and Broads navigation channels which benefitted the town. Following the closure of the railway in 1959, the A149, which bypasses Stalham, was built along its line and the Stalham Station buildings were dismantled and rebuilt at the new Holt Station as part of North Norfolk Railway.

Stalham Staithe

Staithe (or landing places) were the local focal points of an area's economy before and after the coming of the railways. Although little is known about the early history of Stalham Staithe, it is likely that it was being used for water transport by 1810, when the Enclosure Map indicates a long dyke, divided in two at the end, with two small buildings to the south side on land that was the Poor's Allotment, where the Museum of the Broads is situated now. By 1841, the Stalham Tithe map shows two larger buildings replacing the original ones by the water. The land is marked on the map as belonging to Samuel Cooke, who had a new dyke cut into it and a tall brick building constructed at the end, now The Old Granary, where a date stone bears his initials, SCS and a date of 1808.

Only a small number of the records in the NHER are within the Stalham Staithe Conservation Area boundary. These include the Old Granary on Staithe Road and the remains of an early 19th century brick tower mill in Mill Road.

The Old Granary is the only listed building in the Conservation Area (Grade II) and is recorded in the list description as an 'excellent example of a rare industrial building'. The building operated as a wherry granary, with the river staithe running underneath the building to allow wherries to moor and load or unload grain through hatches from the building. The building is now a private house.

The mill and adjacent mill house on Mill Road were constructed around 1817. The mill had a 3 storey tarred brick tower with a Norfolk boat shaped cap and patent sails. It powered a flour mill via two pairs of stones. First known as Staithe Mill and later as Burton's Mill, it had fallen out of use by 1937, the upper part of the tower was demolished and during World War II the remaining lower storey was converted to an air raid shelter, with a reinforced concrete roof. The original mill formed part of a well

known local scene that was photographed in the late 19th century by all the eminent Broadland photographers, including PH Emerson, Payne Jennings and George Christopher Davies.

Two small cottages, known as Utopia and Arcadia also featured prominently in late 19th century photographs. Built of flint, and probably dating from the 18th century, the cottages were extended and altered using brick at some time during the 19th and again during the 20th century. Still in existence at the time of this survey, albeit in a very poor condition, Planning Approval was granted following an appeal in 2013, for their demolition and replacement with two semi-detached dwellings.

The settlement of Stalham Staithe grew up around the staithe and waterborne trade and the Burton family was instrumental in its development during the 19th and early 20th centuries. One of the buildings housing the Museum of the Broads, on the south side of Staithe Road, is dated 1820 with the initials RB. Although rendered and colour-washed now, it is constructed of Norfolk red brick, probably manufactured in the brick field and kiln on the north side of Staithe Road which is shown on maps as late as the mid 20th century. Goods such as malting barley and later sugar beet were stored for transportation in the building and the smaller brick building behind, from which they could be loaded directly onto wherries through doors on the dyke side. It is likely that the RB on the date stone is Robert Burton as there are members of the Burton family recorded as living at the Staithe from the early 1800s. It is also probable that they constructed and lived in The Staithe House on which a date stone is inscribed RB 1813. The land called Poor's Staithe (the site of the Museum) was leased from the Poores Trust, the rent collected going to the poor of the parish. Robert Burton at one time also owned the corn mill in Mill Road.

Kelly's Directory of 1883 records that '*The river Ant affords facilities for landing coal, corn, malt and all other kinds of merchandise*' and '*Water conveyance to Yarmouth from Mrs Sarah Burton's wharf*'.

In 1891, members of the Burton family were recorded as trading from The Poor's Staithe as Coal, Corn and Oil Merchants, using small wherries built in the area, at least one of which was constructed especially narrow to allow it to pass under the old Wayford Bridge to travel to North Walsham via the North Walsham and Dilham Canal. The Burtons were still leasing the Staithe land living at Staithe House in 1906, when the family was trading as Corn Merchants and Burton's coal yard was operating until shortly before The Museum of the Broads took over the buildings later in the century/1998. The Burton's also owned the former granary buildings now known as Burton's Mill (1909 and 1936) on Staithe Road, now in residential use.

Wherries are inextricably linked to the history of Stalham Staithe. They were the main means of carrying grain and other crops out of the area and bringing in fertiliser and coal. Manned by two men, they were once a common but impressive sight, with masts 40' high and a sail area of 1,200 sq ft. One of the Burton's wherries, the Ceres, was constructed by Josiah Cubitt Teasel, who was listed as a boat builder at Stalham Staithe in 1881, on the site where Moonfleet Marine is now. Josiah had previously worked for prolific wherry builders the Southgate family at Sutton, and he was probably the first boat builder to occupy a site at Stalham. He lived at Stalham until his death in 1906, hiring out yachts, small rowing boats and a wherry from his yard, and is known to have built at least three wherries there. His wife Sarah continued the business for a few years before selling it to the Southgates who ran the boatyard up to the Second World War after which it became Stalham Yacht Services and then Moonfleet Marine continuing the tradition of boat hire from that site.

Other wherries known to have been trading from Stalham Staithe were owned by Robert Cooke, a wealthy local farmer, brick maker, merchant and miller who died in 1881, who must have used his craft to carry bricks, corn and other crops to and from the staithe. Smaller boats carried other local goods such as sedge (known as litter) which was used for stuffing horse collars and thatching.

With improved road and rail transport, the traditional, small scale transport and storage activities dwindled and by the mid to late 20th century commercial activity around the staithe was almost entirely connected to the tourist industry, boat-building firms, boatyards hiring craft to visitors or other supporting businesses. The intensification of this industry led to the construction of large scale industrial type buildings, and although these are mainly outside the Conservation Area, they have had an effect on the character of the staithe providing a contrast in scale between the traditional buildings and the later ones.

The 19th century buildings around the staithe are constructed of local red brick with red or black pantiled roofs. Maps prior to 1950 (but not that of 1957) indicate a kiln and 'brick field' on the site now occupied by C.T. Baker. Although it is known that other brickfields existed in the Stalham area, it is likely that this local site supplied the materials for the earlier houses and cottages.

Although outside the conservation area boundary, Richardson's boatyard has played a significant part in the development of The Staithe as a major centre for Broads holidays. Originally operating a hire fleet from Oulton Broad, the company moved to a larger site in Stalham in the late 1950s. Fifteen years later, the original site had expanded to create the largest boatyard on the whole of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads, with a subsidiary company building fibreglass hire craft. In 1974, the whole of the Stalham boatyard with its fleet of 244 cruisers was sold to the Rank Organisation and the Richardson's boat building operation moved to Catfield, later hiring out boats from Acle. The company bought back the Stalham boatyard from Rank in 1984, the fleet, which had deteriorated badly, was renovated, and the boatyard continues to operate from Stalham, adding to the vibrancy of the area and the waterways, particularly during summer months. In 1998, the Museum of the Broads relocated its premises from Potter Heigham. The museum records and illustrates the history of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and explores how people's lives have shaped the landscape through archive material, exhibits and artefacts including Falcon, a working steam launch which makes regular trips on the river for visitors. Whilst only open to the public during the summer months, activity at the museum continues throughout the year when volunteers maintain and refresh the exhibits. The museum attracts many visitors, not only those who are hiring boats nearby but also those who make a special trip to visit it, which adds to the vitality of the Conservation Area.

In recent years Stalham Staithe has become a popular centre for visitors to stay for holidays to explore the Broads area, for boating and for fishing. This is mainly in self catering accommodation including part of Burton's Mill and some of the cottages. If this trend continues, it will inevitably have an effect on the character of the Conservation Area with activity concentrated in the summer months.

Spatial and character analysis

Staithe Road.

From the A149 to the north there is no visual hint of the historic core of the conservation area as trees and a tall hedge allow only glimpses of the new development at Burton's Mill, a white cottage (Mill View) and the commercial premises of C.T. Baker's builder's merchants yard.

The main approach into Stalham Staithe for vehicles is a relatively recent slip-road from the A149 via Staithe Road, past commercial premises to either side, which tend to give it an industrial feel. The southern side of the road forms the Conservation Area boundary and beyond this a large scale, long span metal clad building of Richardson's boatyard dominates the view, followed by an open storage area for the boatyard. The north-east side of Staithe Road to the A149 is within the Conservation Area; at the entrance to the road on a triangular piece of land, semi-mature trees and a small pond are in the curtilage of the builder's merchants, C.T. Baker Ltd. Baker's yard is open to view via the vehicle entrances either side of their offices in a recently constructed red brick building sited close to the road and designed to echo the form of terraced cottages further into the conservation area. A date stone in the gable of the office building records 'CT Baker 2006' and is reflects other, 19th century date stones in the Conservation Area. Black chain link fencing and gates enclose narrow grassed areas on the perimeter of the Baker's site. Additional planting to supplement the recently planted trees would soften this main entrance to the Conservation Area.

A yew hedge next to Baker's premises encloses the garden area to Mill View, which is set back towards the main A149 road and approached via a loke from Staithe Road. Mill View is a white painted brick house possibly dating from the late 19th century and altered in the 20th century. The 1885 ordnance survey map shows a row of four cottages on this site and on the east side of the loke a block of four small outhouses built of brick and un-knapped field flints may once have served the former cottages.

Beyond the loke, as Staithe Road begins a gentle curve, the 19th century character of the area is more apparent, with on the east side, Cordova Cottages, four late nineteenth century red brick cottages of a traditional terraced design with pantile roofs, the ridge running parallel to the road. Their red brick front garden walls topped with bull-nose red brick copings are an attractive feature. It would appear that the rear gardens to the cottages have been truncated with a variety of fences to form an informal parking area.

Further on, another terrace of four houses of a similar design, Riversdale Cottages, has the same boundary wall treatment. A vacant site between the two terraces was granted Planning Approval in 2013 for four new houses with parking behind, accessed via an arch, which will enclose the street scene in this part of the Conservation Area.

Opposite this site and Riversdale Cottages are a group of traditional buildings backing onto the water – first Staithe Marsh House, a 19th century, two storey rendered house and then The Old Granary, which is the only listed building in the settlement. Both contribute to the character of the area, but the latter is an unusual and striking building and the tallest in the Conservation Area.

Next to The Old Granary and set back from the road is a large timber clad gable of a boat building company. This traditional design is echoed next door in some of the group of buildings that house The Museum of the Broads. A 20th century curved roof open area links earlier buildings, some clad in timber, others in corrugated metal and those on the corner of Staithe Road in local red brick and rendered brick. The building on the corner is gable end to the road with a date stone at its apex inscribed with 'RB 1820'.

Opposite the Museum of the Broads are three red brick buildings known as Burton's Mill linked at first floor level with 20th century timber clad 'bridges'. In contrast to the smaller scale terraced cottages, the two earlier sections of the buildings present their gables to the road and this is echoed, albeit on a smaller scale, in the 21st century addition at the northern end. The two original gables have dates stones in their apex, the first in terracotta inscribed 'HB 1909' and the second a greatly eroded stone which possibly reads 'HB 1936', indicating dates for their construction and that they were part of the Burton family holdings. There is an attractive wrought iron lamp bracket above the former loading door on the later gable. These buildings were converted to residential use earlier this century, and as part of the scheme, additional dwellings were built on the site to the rear, beside the A149, echoing the design form of Burton's Mill, with a series of smaller scale linked gables facing the access road. This is the largest recent development in the Conservation Area and whilst the design and materials are sympathetic to their surroundings, accommodating vehicle access and sufficient parking has produced open areas of hard landscaping. This and the communal gardens could be softened with additional landscaping and planting.

Two late 19th or early 20th century single storey buildings at the northern tip of the site were also converted to residential use and the retention of their scale and materials add to the character of the Conservation Area.

Staithe House, in a prominent corner position overlooking the staithe, is a symmetrically designed early 19th century red brick house with a black glazed pantiled roof. Built to impress, albeit in a modest way, the date stone in the gable reads 'RB 1813' announcing the Burton family residence. Behind the house is a generous garden with mature trees which are a prominent feature and enhance the setting of the settlement as does the high flint and brick garden wall.

Staithe Road divides in front of Staithe House with one section (originally Lower Staithe road) continuing northwards towards the A149 where it is closed for vehicles; the highway now crosses through the historic staithe area to join what was formerly Upper Staithe road then turns into Mill Road to the west. To the north of the staithe and forming a group with Staithe House, a single storey brick and flint building with a prominent gable faces the road. It appears to date from around the same period as Staithe House and may well have been associated with the Burton businesses, but was converted to the Mermaids Slipper Restaurant in the early 21st century.

As the road follows the edge of the staithe, the waterside activities become apparent, boats and boatsheds become visible and southwards, there is a long view along the inlet with a backdrop of trees and alder carr in the distance. The area at the head of the staithe is effectively the main focal point of the conservation area. Burton's Mill, Staithe House, the adjoining Mermaid's Slipper

Restaurant and the traditional buildings of the Museum of the Broads provide some sense of enclosure. Opposite the staithe, there is an area of hardstanding which possibly demarcates the extent of the staithe. This area could be given a more cohesive character if the line of the road was better defined, for example through a change of surface material for the hardstanding. The grassed area in front of the restaurant visually draws together and lends a sense of the whole historic area of the staithe.

To the west of The Mermaid's Slipper, is an area of open space, currently grassed with seats, a picnic bench and planters, it is flanked by a watercourse and mature trees and separated from the road by a low timber rail. This attractive and relaxing space enjoys the long views South along Stalham dyke. Limited hard surfacing to enable it to be used all the year round might be beneficial. The space is ideally situated in the centre of the conservation area.

On the opposite side of the road the twin gabled roofs of 1 Old Yacht Station stand out at the road junction. The corrugated iron cladding, timber bargeboards and the green and cream colour scheme epitomises the working waterside buildings of the Broads. The more recent industrial unit adjacent takes a similar form using modern materials and it sits comfortably within the area, a continuation of commercial activity around the staithe although it does not make the same historic contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

The northern section of Mill Road is a leafy lane with mature trees on either side, becoming a pedestrian access to the A149. A late 20th century house, mid 20th century bungalows to the west differ in character to the rest of the area as does the electricity sub-station immediately adjacent to the A149 and the open field and pumping station further south and to the west of Mill Road.. The Allotments to the North West have been on the site since the early 1900's and following a reduction in size of individual plots and the introduction of mains water they are well used once more. On the east side a 21st century house built in part of the former garden to Staithe House is almost hidden behind a hedge and mature trees. The contemporary design makes an interesting contribution to the character of the area and its timber cladding is in harmony with its surroundings.

At the junction of Staithe Road and Mill Road, a late 19th century red brick and pantile house is orientated to overlook the staithe. Prominent on the staithe, Moonfleet Marine was constructed in the 20th century on the site of an earlier building. Clad in timber with a pantile roof, its straightforward form is reminiscent of traditional waterside buildings and it makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Mill Road.

The character of the Conservation Area becomes more rural as Mill Road curves south-westwards, with traditional cottages backing onto the low lying water side and open countryside to the West. Whilst there is little open water visible from the road, boatyard activities are apparent on the eastern side of Mill Road where lokes leading down to the water enable glimpses of brightly coloured boats in mooring basins. Larger scale boatyard buildings set back from the road behind working and casual storage areas contrast with the neat front forecourts of the smaller scale cottages closer to the road. Two pairs of cottages, both built with roofs running parallel to the road, the first rendered and the second in local red brick are separated by an area of undeveloped land. Whilst the trees here make a contribution to the character of the area, the site also appears to be used for informal storage which at the time of the appraisal detracts from the semi-rural character of the area. Opposite the West side of Mill Road are the open field and pumping station mentioned previously. Mill Road makes a sharp right hand bend to the west on which is Mill House, a long two storey, colour washed brick cottage built at right angles to the road and the remains of the brick tower of the corn mill. Now truncated it was much photographed in the 19th century, at its full height, it would have been a prominent feature in this part of the settlement.

Around the corner, Mill Road becomes a narrow lane enclosed by hedges either side of holly and ivy which are a distinctive feature, enclosing a camping area and marina to the south, **outside the Conservation Area**. On the north side of the road within the Conservation Area are four traditional cottages, the first two detached in large gardens with colour washed brick or rendered walls and pantile roofs. At the western most tip of the Conservation Area is a pair of low two storey brick and pantile cottages. The pent (small lean-to) roofs over canted bays with small gabled porches are a

most unusual feature. Mature trees and traditionally designed garages or outbuildings in this part of Mill Lane add character to it.

Architectural styles and materials:

Although only one building within the Conservation Area boundary is included in the Secretary of State's list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest (Appendix 1), there are a number of buildings which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area which are noted in Appendix 2.

The majority of buildings at Stalham Staithe date from the early 19th century, and although it is possible that the staithe may have been used for local water transport before that date, no earlier buildings survive. With no prevalent architectural style, as would be found for example in planned suburban areas, there is a variety of building designs, with a contrast of scale between commercial and domestic uses. The Old Granary and Burton's Mill, and to a lesser extent the earlier buildings at The Museum of the Broads, are of a larger scale than the cottages on Mill Road and tend to have their gables facing the road to provide height for storage and make the most of narrow plots at right angles to the road. The domestic terraces and pairs of cottages are generally built for ease of construction, with roof ridges following the line of the roads, although there are exceptions, such as Vine Cottage.

It is possible that the Burton family planned the siting of their buildings; certainly Staithe House and Burton's Mill are in prominent positions. The Old Granary is built to take advantage of the waterway of the staithe for loading wherries.

There is some consistency of materials with locally made red or black glazed pantiles and red brick, the latter possibly from the brick field on the staithe until the mid 20th century. Slates were a popular roofing material in the 19th century, but unusually there are none in Stalham Staithe, possibly because they would have been more expensive than locally available materials as they would have had to be brought in from another part of the country. Local flints, trimmed with bricks were also used, generally as a utilitarian material such as those in the the outhouses on the loke to Mill View, the garden wall to Staithe House and the walls of The Mermaid's Slipper Restaurant, which was probably an outbuilding to the house. Earlier watercraft buildings utilise corrugated iron (The Old Yacht Station) and timber boarding (John Williams Boats). More recent buildings have followed the earlier precedents; brick and pantile for the extensions to Burton's Mill and timber cladding to Moonfleet Marine. The most recent building, a new house on the northern section of Mill Lane uses timber in a contemporary manner.

The larger 20th century boatyard buildings are generally outside the Conservation Area and although they often use modern materials of a similar profile to the historic ones, the larger scale spans are out of character with the buildings in the earlier settlement.

Ground surface treatments, private and public realm.

Roads in the Conservation Area are finished with asphalt; the absence of formal pavements adds to the character of the historic Stalham staithe. On private land, gravel is the most usually used and is a sympathetic material for the Conservation Area.

Barriers are limited around the open aspect of the staithe, which is visually pleasing, and the low-key timber rails around the picnic area are unobtrusive.

Grassed verges provide a more rural character within the settlement and generally should be preserved.

Trees, hedges and boundary treatments.

Trees and hedges are significant elements in the Conservation Area and outside it, providing a green backdrop to the settlement. Notable areas in the Conservation Area are:

- Trees in the garden of Staithe House and on the land to the north of The Staithe
- Hedges and trees on land to the west of Mill Road
- Trees beyond the cottages at the west of the conservation area
- Hedges on both sides of Mill Road beyond Mill House

The tall hedge and trees along the A149 soften the appearance of the new development at the rear of Staithe Road.

The removal of hedges and traditional boundary walls, particularly to provide parking in front gardens can have an adverse impact on the setting of buildings and the overall street scene. Additional planting and/or more traditional fences can help to define public and private space and contribute to rural character.

The brick front boundary walls to Riversdale and Cordova Terraces and the flint and brick garden wall to Staithe House contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. The chain link fences around the builder's merchant compound have already been commented on.

Issues, pressures and opportunities for improvements

Generally the buildings and gardens in the Conservation Area are well maintained and there are no structures that would qualify to be on the Buildings at Risk Register. However, redundant structures and storage areas on some sites are negative factors in 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 can be 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 can relax that requirement when considering the restoration or conversion of certain buildings within conservation areas, and advice should be sought from the Local Authority at an early stage.

Suggested areas for improvements:

Staithe Road

- Consider additional planting around Bakers builders merchants site to soften the effect of the chain link fencing and provide some screening of the storage area
- Consider additional soft landscaping to the car parking and communal areas behind Burton's Mill
- Consider the public realm in front of The Mermaid's Slipper Restaurant and an alternative surface material for the hard standing to define the historic area of the staithe.
- Consider the management of informal car parking around the staithe.
- Consider the provision of limited hard surfacing to improve access to the landscaped picnic /amenity area area immediately to the North of the staithe
- Consider improvements to the condition of the dyke wall at the North East end and management of parking and improvement of surfacing along the moorings.

Areas for consideration as part of consultation process..

The boundaries to the Conservation Area are as illustrated on the accompanying map and as described in the text. As part of the consultation process it was suggested consideration might be given as to the retention of the following areas within the conservation area. The 2 single storey dwellings, late 20th century house, field and pumping station to the west of Mill Road. The electricity sub-station at the North East end of Mill road immediately adjacent to the A149. Following consultation the existing boundary of the Conservation Area is considered appropriate and remains unchanged from the 1991 designation.

Public consultation

Consultation with interested parties and organisations was carried out in accordance with the Broads Authority 'Statement of Community Involvement'. A joint consultation exercise was undertaken with North Norfolk District Council as the proposed conservation area boundaries include land in both planning authority areas as defined on the maps included in the character appraisals. A letter and leaflet were delivered to all residents and businesses within the conservation area boundary, and copies of the appraisal documents were made available both online and in hard copy format in the Broads Authority offices. The leaflet included a comments section and consultees were also able to comment on line.

A public exhibition was held on 5 March 2016

Appendix 1

Listed buildings in the conservation area

The Old Granary, Staithe Road. Grade II

Appendix 2

Unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. (Within the Broads Authority executive area unless otherwise noted.)

Whilst the following buildings and boundary walls within the Conservation Area 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 following structures have been identified and are considered as undesignated heritage assets.

Staithe Road:

- Flint and brick outhouses on loke to Mill View
- Riversdale cottages & front boundary walls
- Cordova Cottages & front boundary walls
- Burtons Mill - former warehouses fronting Staithe Road
- No. 21 (Staithe Barn)
- Staithe House, outbuildings & garden wall
- Mermaids Slipper Restaurant
- (Granary – redeveloped in 2008)
- Staithe Marsh House
- John Williams Boats - boatbuilding shed
- Museum of the Broads – boatbuilding sheds
- Museum of the Broads - rendered & colour-washed former storage warehouse
- Museum of the Broads – brick former storage warehouse beside Staithe

Mill Road:

- Green & cream commercial sheds at 1 Old Yacht Station (NNDC area)
- Moonfleet Marine
- Riverside
- Vine Cottage
- 20c corrugated clad boatshed
- Alder Cottage
- Rose Cottage
- 1 & 2 Utopia Way

- Wilkins Cottage
- Goffins Cottage
- Mill House & remains of windmill
- Nightingale Cottage (NNDC)
- Toad Hall (NNDC)
- Briar Cottage & Garage/outhouse to Briar Cottage (NNDC)
- Haven Cottage (NNDC)

Appendix 3

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 4

Contact details and further information:

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 Website: www.northnorfolk.org

Norfolk Historic Environment Service
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 Gressenhall
 Dereham,
 Norfolk NR20 4DR
 Tel 01362 869280
 Website: www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk

Appendix 5

References and sources of information

Publications:

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 - Broads Authority Landscape Character Assessment – Ant Valley – Downstream of Wayford Bridge
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