

Heritage Asset Review Group

Notes of the meeting held on 15 December 2023

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Present

Harry Blathwayt – in the Chair, Stephen Bolt, Mark Collins, Bill Dickson, Peter Dixon, Tim Jickells, Kevin Maguire, and Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro.

In attendance

Kayleigh Judson – Heritage Planning Officer, Kate Knights – Historic Environment Manager and Lorraine Taylor - Governance Officer.

1. Notes of HARG meeting held on 08 September 2023

The notes of the meeting held on 08 September 2023 were received. These had been submitted to the Planning Committee on 10 November 2023.

2. Historic Environment Team progress report

The Historic Environment Manager and the Heritage Planning Officer presented the report providing an update on progress with key items of work by the Historic Environment Team between the end of 09 September and 15 December 2023.

Conservation areas – update

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) provided an update on the conservation area review and said the work had been started on the Neatishead Conservation Area (NCA) appraisal. The HEM explained that the area was partly in North Norfolk District Council and partly in the Broads Authority area. The area was first designated as a conservation area in 1975 and was last reviewed in 2011 and was therefore due to be updated.

The HEM went on to describe the architecture of the NCA. Buildings in the centre of Neatishead had been constructed with a limited palette of materials, including soft local red brick pantiles, occasional flint work and rendered buildings. In terms of the settlement pattern, it was close-knit with buildings often positioned directly onto the street. In addition, it was possible to see a Grade II listed wall which originally formed the entrance to the old stable block at Beeston Hall to the west of the village – itself a registered park and garden and partially within the NCA.

At the edge of the village, and the edge of the conservation area, a change of character could be seen. The development was more sporadic with a range of building types, including historic farmsteads, agricultural buildings and modern houses/bungalows.

Once the work on the NCA had been completed, a report would be drafted to be published in Spring 2024, and then go out to public consultation.

A Member asked whether a building close to the staithe in Neatishead was listed. The Heritage Planning Officer (HPO) checked some maps and confirmed that they did not think that the building was listed. The HEM confirmed that in the process of looking at that area in more detail, they would have a closer look at that building.

Listed buildings

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) provided an update on the ongoing quinquennial survey of listed buildings. Since the last meeting, the Historic Environment Team (HET) had visited Horstead House close to Coltishall. The Grade II listed house had a number of outbuildings, many of which were included in the listing. In addition, a wall close to the house was also Grade II listed. The HPO said that the wall had some unusual features, including marks called skintlings from when the bricks were moulded which indicated that the wall predated 1780. The wall, however, was in poor condition in parts and some of the bricks were heavily spoiled. The HET had spoken to the owner and the advice was to adopt a low intervention approach in order to retain as much as possible of the historic fabric and its historic character.

The HET had also visited the St James' hospital chapel which was a Grade II* listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, built in the 14th century and converted to a barn in the late 18th century. It was the last pilgrimage stop on the way to St Benet's Abbey and connected via a causeway. At the time of the last quinquennial survey, the chapel was in a poor condition, however following a grant from Historic England for repairs, it was in a good state.

The Heritage Planning Officer (HPO) provided an overview of the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary in Burgh St Peter. She pointed out the unusual design of the tower, rebuilt by Samuel Boycott in 1793 after the original had been destroyed. The church was in good condition generally, although there was a lean on the south wall, but it was thought that this was historic with no evidence of recent movement, and the thatched ridge would need to be replaced. Within the graveyard, there was a Grade II listed headstone made from limestone. At the bottom there was an inscription which was hidden by moss and lichen; therefore the HET would be contacting the diocese to recommend a specialist cleaning.

The redundant church of St Nicholas in Strumpshaw, managed by the Redundant Churches Trust, was in good condition, however there were some damp issues which need to be addressed, although there were signs of some damp investigation work having taken place. Within the graveyard there was a separately listed WW1 memorial which had some WW2 additions made to it. Apart from some slight lamination on the stonework, the memorial was in good condition.

In Mettingham there were three listed buildings. The first, a Grade II listed cottage which, although in good condition and well-looked after by the owner, needed its thatch replaced. The owner was finding it difficult to find funding for this work and the HET had recommended some possible funding streams.

The second was Benstead Farmhouse, a Grade II listed property which had a barn clad in modern timber and a corrugated iron roof. Once inside, it was possible to see that the barn was of a much older build with some plastering still visible between the timber frames and on the centre aisle section.

The third was the Grade II listed Mettingham House. A Georgian property which had permission for an extension a few years ago. Although the original planning application was objected by the Georgian Society the amended plan, which saw the reduction in size of the build, enabled the occupants to have a large extension which blended in well with the existing property.

A Member asked whether the brickwork on the upper storey of Mettingham House on the front elevation was an addition to the property due to the bricks looking slightly different to the rest of the property. The HPO said that it wasn't easy to tell, however, it did look like it could have been a slightly later addition.

The HEM provided an update on waterside chalets following a number of buildings having been put forward for listing. Historic England (HE) had continued their assessment and had visited all of the buildings. HE had sent some draft reports, however they did not include any recommendations. The HET hope that they would hear something shortly as to whether any of the applications had been successful.

Water, Mills and Marshes - update

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) provided an update on the Water, Mills and Marshes (WWM) project. The project at Mutton's Mill was almost finished, however, the millwright had been unable to complete some of the work within the timescale that was

required. This meant that the WWM team had hired a cherry picker to reinstate the backstays on the sails. Three of the sails were completed, with one left to do which should be completed by Wednesday 20 December when the cherry picker was due to leave the site. Work still outstanding included redecoration on the sails, installation of new parts to the rollers, and some work on the brake. The HEM confirmed that the main lightening conductor had been installed as well as those on the sails.

The HEM reported that the WWM team had received two awards for their work on Muttons Mill at the Norfolk & Norwich Design and Craftsmanship Awards, run by the Norwich Society and the Norfolk Association of Architects.

At Strumpshaw, the work on the drainage structure had been completed. There were a few snagging jobs which would be completed in the Spring when the water levels would be lower.

A Member asked whether there would be an information panel installed to tell people what the structure was and what it did. The HEM confirmed that was the intention. The Member added that it would be good if a guide could be produced that would encourage people to visit these types of structures within the Broads, as well as those public buildings which were listed. Several of the Members present supported this approach, due to the historic nature of the architecture in the Broads area, right down to the type of bricks used in buildings and walls. The HEM said that this was something that could be looked at and suggested that she talk to the Head of Communications to see what could be done.

A Member asked whether the Broads Authority could publicise before and after photographs to show the work that had been carried out at Strumpshaw. The HEM said that this could also be looked into.

Historic Environment Record

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) gave an overview on the Historic Environment Record (HER). HER was a depository or archive of information relating to the historic built environment and was a useful resource for both the public and professionals in managing the historic environment, and a useful tool to find out information on historic buildings and places. The Broads Authority had maintained a HER for many years, provided by Norfolk County Council through a service level agreement that the Authority paid for. Through the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website, information could be found on a number of places using keywords, site details, dates and maps.

As part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, it would become a statutory duty for all local planning authorities to keep a HER. The Authority was pleased about this as it would ensure that the status of the HER was properly recognised, retained and resourced into the future.

A Member asked whether the information about the Norfolk Heritage Explorer website could be placed in the next edition of the Broadcaster as they thought it would be a good resource for visitors.

St Benet's Abbey and Burgh Castle Fort

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) provided an overview of the issues affecting both sites. The Norfolk Archaeological Trust (NAT) did a great job of looking after a number of historic sites throughout the county including St Benet's Abbey and Burgh Castle Fort which were within the Broads Authority's executive area.

The HEM had visited both sites with the director of the NAT and provided Members with images of the various structures. At St Benet's Abbey, she noted that the mill was unusual having been built within the gatehouse partially using the footings of that building.

St Benet's faced a number of problems, including anti-social behaviour through graffiti and damage from the public climbing on the buildings/remains. In addition, the fabric of the structure was being eroded due to the cattle that grazed around the Abbey rubbing against the walls. Although the Abbey was repaired frequently, there were signs of further erosion since the last repair one and a half years ago.

A further issue was the erosion of the riverbank. Historically there were Abbey buildings and outbuildings along the riverbank and despite flood defences being erected, the bank was continuing to erode. NAT were currently talking to Historic England (HE) and other bodies, as well as carrying out research, to enable them to get a project underway to get the area properly protected.

Burgh Castle was a good example of a Roman military installation that was built to defend the coast from Saxon invasion. Constructed in the 3rd century AD between 225 and 285, three of the four walls still survived. The scheduled area was much bigger than the fort itself. It included the remains of a civilian settlement below ground to the north, a Roman and Pagan cemetery to the east and the remains of an 11th/12th century mott and bailey castle constructed within the walls of the fort.

Although the site was owned by NAT, there was a management agreement in place with English Heritage who were responsible for its maintenance in terms of the historic fabric. The site was subject to a number of anti-social behaviour issues, such as dogs off leads disturbing ground-nesting birds despite signs asking owners to keep their dogs on leads at all times, people climbing the masonry and picking off pieces of flint or taking larger pieces and throwing them to the ground. Signs asking people to keep dogs on leads and not to climb were either removed or vandalised.

A Member commented that the new GI Rams scheme offered the potential of some funding to tackle this type of anti-social behaviour.

The HEM added that the wall at the southern end of the site was leaning dramatically for many years, however, after some social media interest Great Yarmouth Borough Council became concerned. Historic England did not think that it had moved recently and that the wall was supported by some pins inside the fabric. As a precaution, the wall was fenced off and the site was being monitored for at least a year to check whether it was starting to move again.

At the other end of the fort there were some very large cracks that ran all the way down and all the way through the masonry. In addition, there had been quite a lot of falling masonry, hence Heras fencing had been installed to keep the public away from it. The Broads Authority understood that repairs to this area were on Historic England's schedule of works for next year.

Potential Article 4 for thatched buildings

The Historic Environment Manager said that, following on from the last meeting, there had been more research undertaken. The team continued to log examples of unlisted thatched buildings within the Broads area and that they now had a database which enabled them to map all buildings.

The Nebb, Flixton, Suffolk

The Heritage Planning Officer (HPO) provided an overview of the Grade II listed building in Flixton. The listing was completed in 2020 by Historic England, originally one farmhouse which had been divided into two properties before being returned to one property. The owners applied for planning permission to do a number of internal and external alterations and install some solar panels in a natural clearing in a wooded area. During the application stage there had been some amendments made and the Authority was happy that the owners would retain the historic character of the property but brought it up to modern standards. The HPO said that they would visit the property in the New Year and provide an update at the next meeting.

The Chair thanked the Historic Environment Manager and the Heritage Planning Officer for their informative presentation.

3. Any other business

There was no other business.

4. Date of next meeting

The next HARG meeting would be held on Friday 08 March 2024.

The meeting ended at 11:04am

Signed by

Chair