

Heritage Asset Review Group

Notes of the meeting held on 16 June 2023

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Present

Tim Jickells – in the Chair (Apologies received from Harry Blathwayt), Bill Dickson, Peter Dixon, Tony Grayling, Keith Patience & Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro

In attendance

Jason Brewster – Governance Officer, Kayleigh Judson – Heritage Planning Officer and Kate Knights – Historic Environment Manager

1. Notes of HARG meeting held on 10 March 2023

The notes of the meeting held on 10 March 2023 were received. These had been submitted to the Planning Committee on 28 April 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 11 March and 16 June 2023.

Conservation areas – update

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) provided an update on the Halvergate and Tunstall Conservation Area appraisal public consultation. The HEM explained that the drop in event at

Halvergate village hall had been well attended. The public consultation had concluded and the Historic Environment Team would now review the feedback and incorporate into an updated draft of the appraisal. The draft version would be available for review at the next HARG in preparation for approval at September's Planning Committee.

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 had visited buildings in Hoveton, Oulton Broad and Hickling (photographs of some of the following buildings were included in the presentation).

The HET had visited various buildings within the Hoveton Estate including:

- **Greengates** a Grade II* two-storey brick and plain tiled property circa 1700 with a grand door surround of brick pilasters, a pediment and plank door. The building was generally in a good condition apart from some minor cracking on one of the gables; recommended that this was monitored by the owner.
- **Hoveton House** a Grade I listed house built circa 1680 for Thomas Blofield a former Mayor of Norwich and the city's representative in Parliament. The building was very grand with the photograph showing a two-storey and dormer attic brick building in 11 bays. The HEM noted that the building appeared to be in good condition and drew attention to detailed plasterwork on the gable that depicted various carved vegetables.
- **Walled garden to Hoveton House including Ha-Ha** Grade II listed. The Ha Ha was in need of repair although it was noted that it had been in quite poor condition on the last inspection indicating that it had not deteriorated greatly in the intervening period. The need for repair had been reported to the estate manager.

The HET had visited Potter Heigham bridge, a scheduled monument and a Grade II* listed building dating from 13-14th century. The bridge road surface had now been repaired by Norfolk County Council, in liaison with Historic England, and had re-opened to traffic. The structure was in pretty good condition with some areas requiring repointing and the removal of vegetation growing on the stone/brick work.

The HET visited Oulton Broad and surveyed the summerhouse at Lavengro, a simple timber framed and weatherboarded Grade II listed building with an historic association with George Borrow; the summerhouse was his study and was where he wrote the novel "Lavengro", published in 1851. The original main house, in the grounds of which the summerhouse was situated, was demolished after 1885 and replaced with a new house called Lavengro (not included in the listing).

While at Oulton Broad the Grade I listed church of St Michael was also visited. Parts of this building date back to the 12th century including the base of the tower and the nave. There had been a series of work throughout the 13th, 14th, 15th and 18th centuries with a major restoration in 1862. The building was deemed to be in good condition.

The team visited two drainage mills within the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's (NWT's) site at Hickling. The first was Stubb Mill, a Grade II listed windpump that had been repaired by the Authority in conjunction with NWT over 10 years ago; this repair included the provision of a traditional boat shaped cap and was facilitated under the aegis of a Millwright Bursary Scheme. The building was found to be in sound condition with some areas of repointing required. Internally, some brickwork had deteriorated due to damp and these would need to be replaced at some point. The wooden treads to the stairs were also in need of attention, and some minor repairs would be undertaken by NWT. The HEM highlighted that this mill dated back to the early 19th century and was notable for the fact that three generations of the Nudd family had lived there and the interior reflected this domestic use. The timber staircase and partitions, the chimney stack and evidence of lathe and plaster ceilings were in contrast to the usual utilitarian fittings associated with these working structures.

The second structure visited was Swim Coats Windpump located to the west of Hickling Broad, at Catfield. This Grade II listed 2 storey brick tower was in sound condition with some brickwork and the brick lintel of the single window in need of repair. An NWT warden had reported that this mill was becoming increasingly isolated by the incursion of water from the Broad in recent years. The HEM explained that they had to traverse quite muddy terrain on this occasion in order to survey the mill. This drainage mill had an internal scoopwheel and, despite the surrounding land not being submerged, the internal raceway showed the water to be within 30cm of the ground floor. This situation would need to be monitored in order to ensure that surface/ground water did not undermine the structure. A member noted that he had undertaken a visit to this site for a previous quinquennial survey. He indicated that the water level in this area was high and in fact he was surprised that the HET had been able to walk to the mill, in his experience it was more usual to visit by canoe.

Buildings at Risk

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) made reference to the Buildings at Risk register; this list was local to the Authority and was maintained through periodic review or following activity such as the quinquennial survey. The intention of the register was to identify buildings in poor repair and try to work with owners to encourage their repair and with mills such as Brograve, retain these structures and slow, if not halt, their deterioration (given the existing state of some of these structures restoration was an unlikely outcome).

The presentation illustrated three of the structures currently on the list; Brograve Mill, a WW1 pillbox at St Olaves and Stones Mill. A member asked for an update on the WW1 pillbox at St Olaves. The HEM explained that following consultation with Historic England, options regarding the preservation of the pillbox had been put to the owners and talks were ongoing.

Water, Mills and Marshes - update

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) provided an update on the Water, Mills and Marshes project. The work at Mutton's Mill was coming to an end; the access track had been made good, the scaffolding was due to be removed imminently and the sails and stocks were due to be installed in the coming weeks. The annual site visit on 6 July 2023 would provide an ideal opportunity for members to see firsthand the work achieved by this project.

The HEM provided news on Herringfleet Mill, the only remaining smock mill on the Broads. This structure had initially been assessed for inclusion in the WMM project however due to delays and the estimated cost it was deemed out of scope. The work was assessed by a millwright and a specialist quantity surveyor and the estimated cost was in the region of £500,000.

Since then, the Authority had been liaising with Somerleyton Estate, who own the building, and the Churches Conservation Trust, who undertake fund raising for the conservation of historic buildings, with the intention of creating a standalone project to restore Herringfleet Mill. The Authority was aware that East Coast College were looking to provide training in heritage skills. The restoration of Herringfleet Mill would provide an ideal opportunity to establish this training course especially as the college were proposing to establish a construction centre at Lound. The Authority were continuing to liaise with East Coast College to investigate what support they could provide this restoration. In the meantime, the HEM would be preparing the necessary Listed Building Consent(s) and planning permission(s) to ensure these matters would not delay the restoration in the event that this project came to fruition. These would of course be brought to the Planning Committee at the appropriate time.

A member thanked the HET for their efforts on this matter.

Matters for information

Boardman's Mill: An application that has been determined under delegated powers for information and interest.

The Heritage Planning Officer (HPO) presented an approved application, under delegated powers, for the repair and restoration of a Grade II* listed skeleton trestle drainage mill (Boardman's Mill) on the banks of the River Ant at How Hill in Ludham. The presentation included location maps, various photographs of Boardman's Mill showing earlier condition and current state, two other mills at How Hill, front and side elevation plans and detailed plans of the cap and fan tail.

Boardman's Mill was located within an ecologically sensitive area being a Ramsar site, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area. There had been safety concerns regarding the condition of the mill and the owners, Norfolk Windmill Trust, had removed the sails and fan tail as a precautionary measure. The sail stocks were too heavy for the structure causing it to lean and the mill cap, installed in the 1970's, was not authentic being too modern for a mill of this period (built 1897). The metal drive mechanism within the timber trestles was also in need of repair.

The Norfolk Windmill Trust proposal to repair and restore the mill included:

- Repair and re-instate the sails and fantail
- Remodel the cap to its traditional shape
- Straighten the lean on the tower

- Replace the metal stocks with traditional timber stocks

Natural England (NE) had raised concerns regarding the potential impact of the construction work on the designated sites. The applicant submitted a robust information detailing how the work could be timed and mitigated to limit these impacts. This information then informed the Habitat Regulation Assessment performed by the BA Ecologist which supported the proposed mitigations. NE had now advised that the works could be supported. This application highlighted the potential conflict between Heritage gains and the ecology of a site.

A member asked about how the Authority prioritised which mills to include in a prospective project. The HEM indicated that some of the key factors included:

- The condition of the mill
- The willingness of the owners to participate in the restoration
- Access to the mill itself; some of the structures were in very remote and inaccessible areas that might be prohibitive from a logistical perspective

A member asked about the lack of a weatherproof covering at Oby Mill. The HEM had been in contact with the new owner, earlier this year, and they had indicated that a new cover had been purchased. The HEM would follow up to establish when this cover would be installed.

3. Any other business

None.

4. Date of next meeting

The next HARG meeting would be held on Friday 08 September 2023 at Ranworth Village Hall, Broad Road, Ranworth NR13 6HS.

The meeting ended at 10:53am.

Signed by

Chair