

# **THE WALBERSWICK CONSERVATION AREA DRAFT APPRAISAL**

## **Response by the Planning Working Party of the Steering Committee of the Walberswick Parish Plan September 2013**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The comments which follow are submitted by the Planning Working Party of the Walberswick Parish Plan Steering Group. The Working Party was established earlier this year following the endorsement of the Stage 2 Report and Action Plan at the public meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012. Amongst its tasks was to prepare for this consultation exercise.

In drafting the Stage 2 report, the Steering Group had envisaged liaison between the Working Party and the Parish Council to develop responses which reflected the views of the village. However, shortly before the October meeting, the Parish Council resigned and the opportunity for collaboration passed. Nevertheless, it was agreed that the Working Party should examine the appraisal once the draft had been published and then report back to the village. A summary of the Working Party's responses was presented at the public meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> August.

The Working Party regards the draft appraisal as a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area. The comments which are set out below are intended to reinforce the document and will, we hope, be supported by the village. However, the views expressed are our own: we do not have the resources nor the mandate to represent the opinions of the village as a whole. Indeed, we have encouraged residents to participate individually in the consultation process by submitting their comments directly to the District Council.

The Working Party's submission will be posted on the parish plan's webpage a week before the closing date of the 27 September. Anyone wanting to comment on the submission is invited to respond to the District Council by that date.

The comments of the Working Party are submitted under five headings:

**1 A Schedule of corrections:** there are some errors of fact in the appraisal which we would like to point out.

**2 Significant Buildings:** The Appraisal records many buildings of significance, both listed and unlisted, within the Conservation Area. The Working Party believes there are additional buildings of note, some from the post war era, which should also be included and a schedule and brief evaluation of these will be provided.

**3 Character zones:** The Appraisal refers to character zones within the Conservation Area including The Green, Ferry Road and Bell Green, The Street, Millfield Road and Leveretts Lane. The Working Party believes the features identifying each zone should be more comprehensively defined. It also considers that the enclaves served by The Lea and Hidden Lane behind the sea wall should be designated character zones and similarly defined.

**4 Views into and out of the Conservation Area:** The Appraisal records some significant views within and from the Conservation Area but none of the Conservation Area when seen from the outside. However, the topography of the village in relation to its open surroundings of river, marshes and dunes, gives the perimeter of the Conservation Area a particular visibility which the Working Party think should be recognised and safeguarded.

**5 Extent of the Conservation Area:** The appraisal is restricted to the Conservation Area as presently defined. However, given that 64% of respondents to the Stage 1 Survey wanted the area extended to incorporate the whole village envelope, the Working Party hereby submits a request for a boundary review so that the issue can be examined after the present exercise has been completed.

A further point arose at the meeting of the 17th August relating to the value of Article 4 Directions and the withdrawal of permitted development rights referred to in Section 14.1 of the Appraisal. The comments of the Working Party on the matter follow at the end of this submission.

## **1 SCHEDULE OF CORRECTIONS and suggested Amendments of the text**

Introduction para 3 - if 'within' were changed to 'within and outside' we feel that the case for including views 'of' Walberswick (which we enlarge on later) would be strengthened

Page 1 para 5 - 'Dunwich' should read 'Walberswick'

Page 3 para 7 - 'east' should read 'south' or 'south-east'

Page 7 para 5 "The Potter's Wheel should read 'The Parish Lantern' (the name has been changed since the listing)

Page 8 para 1 – an amendment '...which relied on the architect Frank Jennings (page 10 et al) for advice....' might be helpful

Page 11 - 'wavy' should read 'waney edged'

Page 14 - para 3 - There also exists a TPO (no 222,2008) for Sunningdale, The Street

Page 16 para 3 - a map is needed to identify the footpath numbers

Page 16 para 5 - 'Seven' should read 'Seven Acres'

Page 17 para 4 – It would be useful if a large copy of the tithe map were included, and the late 19C OS map were enlarged

Page 17 para 5 there seems to be confusion between this and para 5 on page 7

Page 18 last paragraph: The Working Party would like to put on record its whole hearted endorsement of this paragraph.

Page 19 para 3 – There was a Jennings house which was bombed in Short Lane. Is there provenance for this one?

Page 22 To prevent confusion with Section 13 we suggest the following as an introduction....

'this Section is intended to give a 'walk-through impression of the Village and fuller details are given in section 13'

Page 22 para 6 Thorpe View has recently been renamed Orchard House.

Page 24 The picture of Grey Roof is in the wrong place and could be omitted as it appears overleaf. It could be usefully replaced with a photograph of Leverett's Lane. The pictures of Threeways and Te Awahou ought to appear after the heading 'Millfield Road'

Page 32 - add 'Originally Manor Farm,' before 'Early.....'

Page 34 - Threeways was designed in 1905 not 1912

Page 37 - Walber House was not designed by Frank Jennings but by George Val Myer in 1906 (also architect of the old BBC building).

Saltlick was definitely designed by Frank Jennings – recently the deeds have come to light with his name as architect. No mention is made of the source of information regarding Frank Jennings in the references on page 51.

Page 40 – Mill Croft, It may be interesting to add after the word Map '...and by Muthesius in 'Das englische Haus'. The architect was W C Waymouth'

Page 41 Ferry House and Shrublands are not coloured red on the Summary Map

Page 48 14.1 para 2; we consider 'solar and photovoltaic panels' should be added to the list regarding Article 4.

## 2 SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

The Working Party would like to put forward the following additional buildings to be included in section 13.

Dudley, The Street: built 1905 is a building which contributes largely to The Street and has a bell-like Dutch gable and an attractive doorway. (see photo).



Paules Fenn, The Street; this white painted post-WW2 house is important as an early example of a dwelling designed especially for wheelchair-use; the modern exterior is particularly expressive of this. The architect was Felix Walters

Tygwyn, The Lea. This was re-built around an older house by Philip Powell, who was famously the architect of the Skylon. It is a good example of the materials and ideas of the fifties, and has been beautifully restored and updated.

The Hut, The Lea. In a Village of many holiday homes this is an example of achieving the maximum accommodation with the minimum of impact on its surroundings, all in an appropriate style of white render and pan-tiles. It was converted by the architect Reginald Hyne from a builder's store.

## **3 CHARACTER ZONES**

### **Introduction**

The working party supports the concept of Character Zones as a means of better describing the Conservation Area. However, as noted in the Introduction, we believe that in certain respects descriptions should be amended or expanded to give better definition. To help in this objective, we propose that the appraisal should include a map delineating the character zones.

We also believe that two other parts of the Conservation Area, The Lea and Hidden Lane, have distinctive identities which should be recognised in the appraisal and warrant designation as character zones.

This part of our response includes comment on the character appraisals in the draft document, references to sunken Gardens and the topographic record of the village scroll, additional material on Millfield Road and Leveretts Lane, and brief appraisals of the Lea and Hidden Lane in justification of their status as character zones'.

### **Comments on Sections 11/12**

#### **General Character/Street by Street Appraisals**

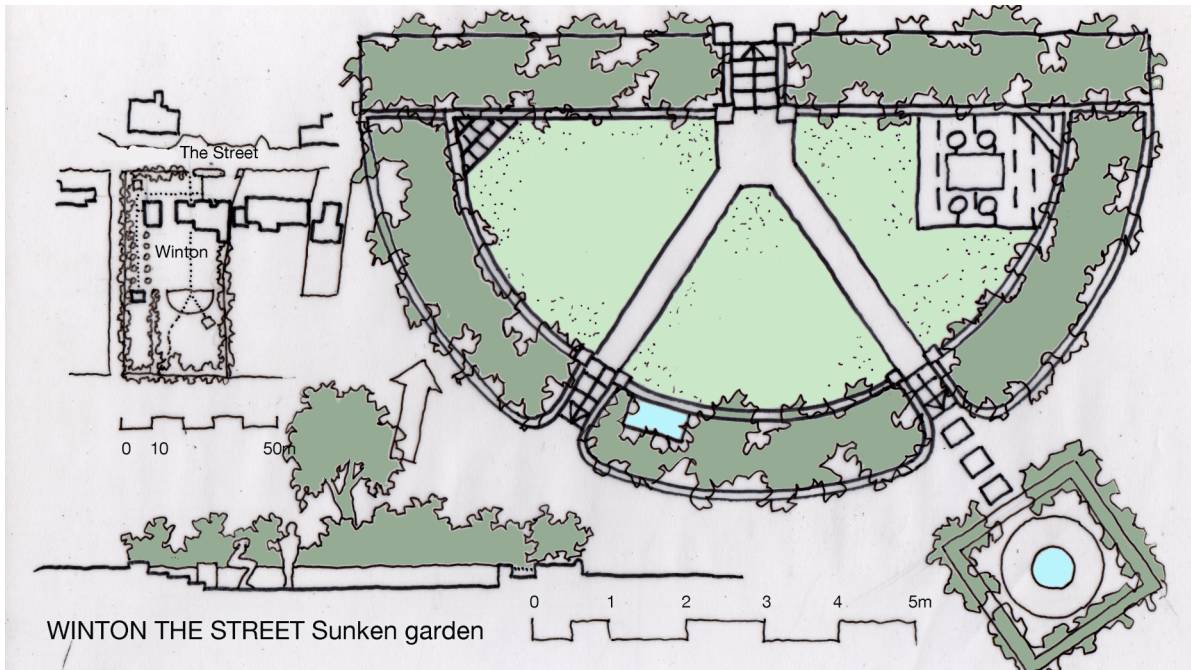
##### **3.1 The Green and Ferry Road**

Page 19 para 3 Omit the phrase 'by Frank Jennings' and amend the subsequent text as follows.

Fronting onto The Green is a cluster of eighteenth century cottages and substantial former merchants' houses, together with the handsome Congregational Chapel of 1885. The building currently known as 'The Parish Lantern' is Grade 2 listed. Apart from the current gift shops, one can still see evidence of former stores and shops and even a garage which dispensed petrol from a hand pump. The Green itself is of considerable size and is the centre of village outdoor activities such as the annual village fete. Part of The Green is devoted to fixed play equipment for both local and holidaying children.'

### 3.2 Sunken Gardens

Page 19 top of right hand column after ...in their own right. Add:  
'Within these attractive gardens, a tradition grew up in Walberswick from the turn of the 20th century to construct sunken gardens, probably as a protection against the wind. A survey carried out in 2002/4 recorded some fifteen in the Conservation Area alone. The Walberswick Local History Group keeps a record of this survey in its archives. These sunken gardens are of course on private properties but a typical example is that at Winton in The Street'



### 3.3 The Street and the Walberswick Scroll Page 22 item12:

We suggest the following addition:

'Before considering this detailed appraisal, the work of the artist John Doman Turner should be mentioned. Around 1930 he sketched every house from the top of the village all the way down to the Harbour then back up again. He painted all the bricks, flints, timbers, chimneys, gates, trees and hedges. To this day it is the combination of this wide variety of features which makes the street so special; features which are fragile and need all the protection we can give them. Turner's individual drawings are mounted on a single long roll, known as the Scroll. A video was made of this and we feel the enclosed copy should be lodged in the records of SCDC as a reminder of the rich heritage of the Village.'



Turner's watercolour of the Barn, The Street

Page 23 last para of 12.1 After ... The Mercers Hall (above),... add.... 'Dutch House, Shrublands, Three Ways, Old Farm, Mill Cottage and Dudley comprising an eclectic mix of good quality buildings'.

Page 23: after The Anchor Public House add ...'with its attractive old barn alongside'.

Page 23 last para: add a sentence: 'The low lying structures around allow views of the sea, the dunes, including the tarred and timber huts, and the important concrete WWII defences, all of which are a key feature of the Walberswick scene.'

### **3.4 Leveretts Lane: Additional material re topography and layout**

The houses and gardens of Leveretts Lane are set on a notably flat plateau, extending as far as The Street, and elevated above the lane by one or two metres, according to its gradient. The plateau can be glimpsed from time to time and gives a sense of common datum to



the development. The perimeter is marked by steep banks and continuous planting of tall hedges interspersed with trees, interrupted at intervals to allow access to garages. The boundary treatment continues unchanged into The Street, running as far east as Souwester and Mazoe.

The houses are regularly spaced and sited close to the lane to take advantage of the views of the river and Southwold. This form of perimeter development provides the maximum distance between dwellings for privacy and gives an open character to the northern boundary of the Conservation Area. It also creates large, unobstructed gardens to the rear of each house which, together with the garden of The Lodge and the copse behind Souwester belonging to the Common Lands Charity, combine to form a significant and much valued 'green lung' in this part of the village.

### **3.5 Millfield Road: Additional material**

Page 25 12.4 Millfield Road: could this alternatively read ' This is the second of the two roads within the village to have been developed by Frank Jennings. Like Leverett's Lane, this road benefits from having several large and distinguished arts and crafts villas, of which 'Te Awahou' is, arguably the finest, and which can be glimpsed from The Street. This private cul-de-sac has a different feel from Leverett's Lane, particularly as it does not have the same height characteristics, and the dwellings are closer grouped and less varied in size, although often with spacious rear gardens. Materials are varied but generally traditional with brick, render, pan-tiles and plain tiles. The road has groups of mature trees interspersed within the private gardens; established hedges to the front boundaries giving a strong sense of privacy, and grass verges abutting the carriageway. There is an informal surfacing to the private drives and to the road. This latter has a loose chipping finish which is preferable to a tarmac appearance. The houses are seen against a backdrop of large trees.

## PROPOSED ADDITIONAL CHARACTER ZONES

### 3.6 The Lea: Brief Appraisal

The Lea is an enclave of small houses lying to the west of The Green and extending northwards from the higher ground of Leverett's Lane to the Town Marshes and the edge of the flood plain. Its western and northern boundaries also form the boundaries of the Conservation Area. The land was owned and developed in the 1920s by a local builder whose yard and workshop were on the site of what is now The Hut, probably to provide economical accommodation for holiday makers.

The settlement is accessed by a narrow, unmade track running down the hill from Leveretts Lane, at the bottom turning westwards parallel with the marsh. Houses are built close to the track, generally on one side only, the other side confined by a tall hedge, now somewhat reduced but still giving a secluded, concealed quality to the development.

The houses comprise an informal mix of single and two storey dwellings, built of brick, fairfaced or painted, with lively pan-tiled roofs. Some retain the original Crittall windows. The general character of The Lea is private, small scale and unpretentious, the architecture a kind of builder's vernacular of the time, with an immediate and dramatic relationship to the marsh and the river.

Views northwards from Leverett's Lane across The Lea show trees and glimpses of the marsh beyond. Closer to the northern boundary, the panorama of Southwold and the river unfolds.

Views into the Conservation Area from the north show The Lea as a scatter of low scaled development, with wide gardens and irregular clusters of trees, giving a transparent feel to the boundary.

The Lea includes two houses of architectural interest, The Hut and Tygwyn. The Hut is a single storey, studio-like building with a distinctive Scandinavian character designed by Reginald Hyne. Tygwyn, by contrast, is a typical bungalow of The Lea, transformed by glazed extensions designed in a sophisticated Modernist manner by Sir Philip Powell, a one time owner. These houses are noted in Section 2 of our response.

### **3.7 Hidden Lane: Brief appraisal**

The Hidden Lane is an unmade track that runs northwards from the roadway to the Cliff Car Park, behind the rear gardens of houses overlooking The Green. A narrow link at its northern end connects the lane with The Green and Ferry Road.

The lane serves an informal linear settlement of six dwellings, sited on the seaward side of the road. The three southernmost houses are predominantly single storey of which two, Creek Cottage and Longfield, are good examples of the East Anglian coastal vernacular: simple low forms, with black timber cladding and shallow pitched pan-tiled roofs.

The character of this section is very much of dwellings crouching for protection behind the sea defences, an impression strengthened by the reduced level of the lane in relation to the adjoining roads. The lowness of these houses and the neighbouring Reedlings, also single storied and with a flat roof, corresponds to the horizontals of the surrounding sea walls and marshes: their small scale is in dramatic contrast to the open landscapes beyond.

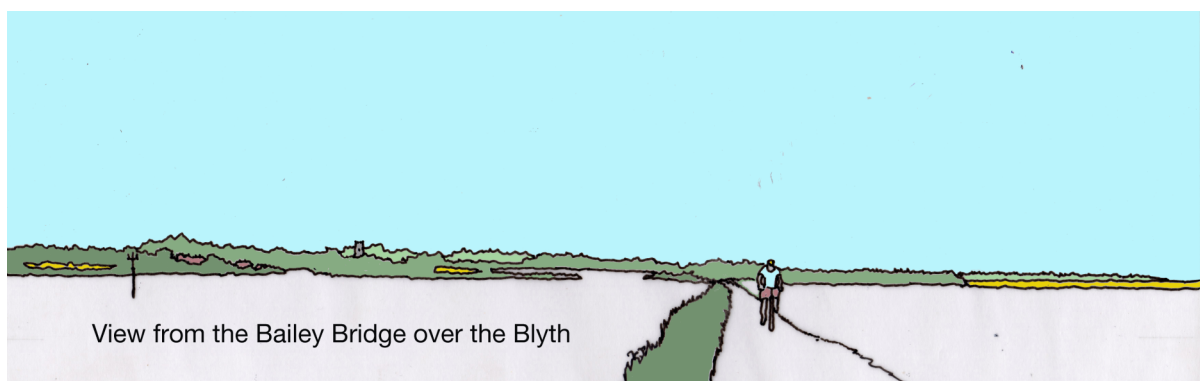
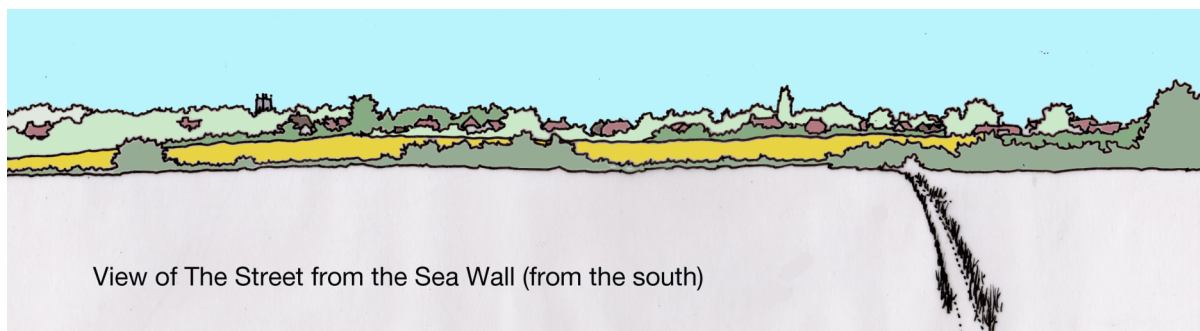
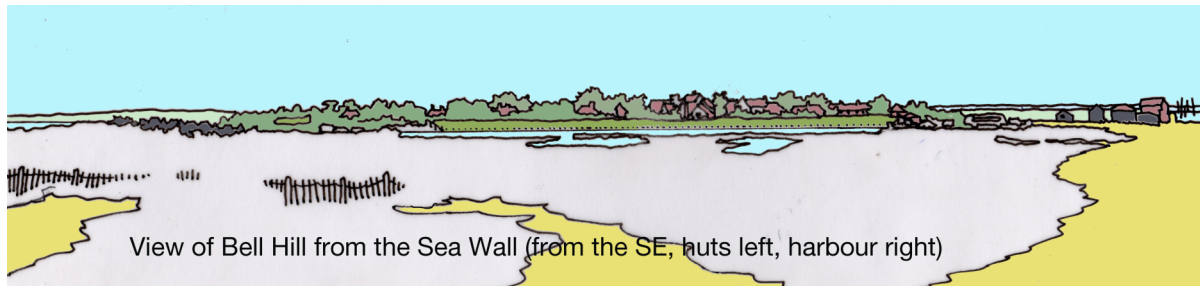
The northern end of Hidden Lane has a different character. Here, screened by trees, two larger houses combine to form an enclosed, private compound, centred on a paved courtyard. Of these, the Hidden House, is notable as a long two storied dwelling of rendered walls, with steep pitched thatched roof and low eaves. At its eastern end there is a two storey extension with a pan-tiled roof and interesting cobbled walls. The house was once the home of the architect, Ernst Freud.

## 4 VIEWS INTO AND OUT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

### Countryside Setting

Page 16 ..add to last para:

Because Walberswick is surrounded by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is on raised ground, it is visible from a distance on all sides. (see sketch diagrams 1-3).



It is therefore vital that this visibility is taken into account when considering any planning application which might affect views from outside the village.

## **5 EXTENT OF CONSERVATION AREA**

At the public meeting held in the Village Hall, Walberswick, on Saturday 17th August 2013, Mr. Robert Scrimgeour (SCDC Conservation Officer) mentioned that while not part of this draft appraisal document and associated consultation, boundary reviews of certain Conservation Areas would be undertaken by SCDC and that these would probably take place during 2014. It was likely that the Walberswick boundary would be one of the first to be reviewed. The Planning Working Party welcomes this, and would add that as a result of the Parish Plan survey conducted in 2010, 64% of the residents who responded were in favour of the entire village becoming a Conservation Area. The Planning Working Party feel the current Conservation Area boundary is rather tight, and excludes landscape and structures of considerable merit and interest.

## **ARTICLE 4**

14.1 and 14.2 The Working Party strongly supports these sections and offers to undertake a survey to initiate this process.

Given what the community considers to be a very special environment within the Conservation Area it is considered that every effort should be made to maintain this, including the possible use of Article 4 Directions. It is accepted that such a mechanism may only be justifiable where erosion of the conservation area's character through the cumulative effect of unsympathetic works is happening. As we offered above the Working Party would be willing to be involved in investigating whether there is evidence that such erosion has been taking place.

An Article 4 Direction is a powerful mechanism which removes current permitted development rights and could be seen as intrusive by some. The fact that the views of residents would be sought before the process of making a Direction is commenced is to be welcomed. There is an anomaly in that part of the village down by the 'Harbour' which is also a Conservation Area but administered by Waveney DC, does **not** allow 'permitted development' to occur. The Working Party feels that a special case should be made of Walberswick and the whole area should be dealt with in the same way as the 'Harbour'.

## **Members of the Working Party**

Paul Bradley, Frank Duffy, Alan Gomm, Alvin Hunt, John Nichols and Bill Ungless