

2023 GVCA APPRAISAL by NNDC – RESPONSE of STODY WITH HUNWORTH PC

Stody with Hunworth Parish Council generally welcomes the new GVCA Appraisal, but has some reservations which will be outlined below. We recognise that in the overall history of Planning and Conservation in England, Conservation Areas, first established in the 1970s, are a success story (cf. *Heritage: A History of How we Conserve Our Past, by James Stourton, 2022*).

The PC appreciates NNDC's move to extend the consultation period, and the setting up of two new Public Meetings on 9th March, in addition to the first Public Meeting in November 2022. Three of our councillors have attended these meetings and reported back to PC Meetings in December last year, and in March 2023.

We first of all state some overall observations on the Appraisal, and then we list factual corrections specific to **Stody and Hunworth**. We shall refrain from commenting on specific issues in other villages or landscapes beyond Hunworth & Stody, eg. the removal of Cley Marshes from the GVCA.

We note that as with the separate 2021 Hunworth Village Conservation Area Appraisal and its parallel new Stody Village Conservation Area, there are many paragraphs and sentences repeated several times in the different sections!

Overall Effect on communities of proposed measures in the GVCA Draft Appraisal

There is a danger of leaving the built environment frozen in time and looking more like a museum than an active community. Properties in the Glaven Valley are already generally more expensive than adjacent areas as they attract second home owners and holiday lets. This affects the balance between full time residents and visitors and subsequently the overall balance of the community. It is accepted that visitors are financially beneficial to the area and many local businesses, such as hospitality, reap those rewards. However, at the same time, the cost of properties in all Glaven Valley villages has become prohibitive for many local working families. The recommendations of the review are likely to increase this issue with restrictions on development and changes to existing properties. The use of more traditional materials can increase the cost of build and maintenance. These, together with the cost of energy to heat traditional buildings that are often cold and damp, are going to push properties towards the holiday-let market where the summer is the main season for occupancy. Changes to the building environment need to take into consideration the need for some lower cost housing while balancing the effect this might have on the way our villages look going forward. In Stody and Hunworth we are lucky to have a good mixture of different income households. This is largely due to the houses and cottages rented out by the Stody Estate to local people, especially families, who live and work here all year round.

Development

Protection against large housing development is welcomed in the Glaven Valley but the inclusion of small developments, built sympathetically to fit the vernacular should be permitted, particularly if they are affordable and encourage first time buyers or some social housing. The conversion of existing buildings such as old barns and more modern non-residential buildings should also be acceptable if they can be sensitively developed.

Building

There is an inference that where there are existing buildings etc that do not fit into their stated vernacular, these should be removed. This is unacceptable and the present character of the built environment is based on changes of style over many years, rather than just accepting one style going forward.

Where changes can be made that are generally out of sight from the main views they should continue to be considered sympathetically. This would allow for more modern styles that could enhance smaller properties and provide larger open spaces within the property, especially at the rear. Rear extensions along these lines, can allow for more thermal efficiency and the installation of renewable energy solutions, whilst retaining the existing front façade.

Views

There is reference to the views across the countryside being considered and preserved, when this consultation is focused on the built environment. The GV landscape has evolved over centuries. The comments made about building and development, if agreed, will change the view over the countryside and it is more important to address the building and development issues rather than insist rural views remain unchanged. We acknowledge that the existing planning rules have done a perfectly good job hitherto, and once again we note our desire not to completely mothball large tranches of the Valley. Surely there could be room for some small in-filling housing within village envelopes? These would change views a bit, but at the same time could provide much needed additional housing?

Trees

The default position of no removal of mature trees on any planning application is not acceptable. The Glaven Valley is in fact a very well-wooded area. It may be necessary for small numbers of trees to be removed to facilitate small-scale development and the removal of trees should be considered carefully, rather than not permitted at all. We believe the 75mm diameter rule should be lengthened to say 150mm, particularly with regards to non-hardwood specimens.

History

There are some inaccurate historical facts in relation to both Stody and Hunworth, detailed in page by page corrections below. We have benefitted from the historical research carried out by Hunworth resident, Liz Waites, who has extensively searched through documents relating to Hunworth & Stody in the NRO. Her paper outlining these corrections has already been submitted to NNDC, and is attached here.

The importance of watermills in the history and current look of the GV is emphasised again and again – maybe even too much? Hunworth Mill must be one of the most attractive and sensitively “modernised” mills remaining in the GV? We question the suggestions that some straightened stretches of the Glaven are retained to demonstrate the moves by previous generations to boost the water supply to mills? In today’s challenging natural environment, we think that the health of the river and its water quality, which is enhanced by meanders, is the best option to follow.

CORRECTIONS

1. Introduction

p.9. LH col. Why is the new **Stody Village Conservation Area**, agreed in early 2022, not included in the list?

p.12. RH col. We believe **75mm diameter** of tree trunks is too small, and suggest **150mm**.

2. Summary of Special Interest

p. 15 LH col. Thought five mills in GVCA? Glandford, Letheringsett, Thornage, Hunworth & Hempstead?

p.15. RH col. Use of word **expansive** twice

3. Historic Development

p. 18 Mid col. There was **no Anglo-Saxon centre of Hunworth around the isolated church**.

NB. Hunworth Hall & barns built late 17thc. Hunworth Mill is 18thc (cf. Liz Waites doc. attached)
The settlement around Hunworth Green does NOT date from the Middle Ages, but is much later.

4. Character Assessment

p. 33. Mid col. last sentence does not make sense – is it all **estate farmlands?**

p.52. LH col. Thought **Hunworth Mill** now removed from Hunworth CA, into GVCA?

p.58. Seven **Thatched Cottages at Hunworth & Stody** – surely built between the Wars, not between 1906-50?

5. Heritage Assets

p.72.RH col. **Beck Farm, Beck Farm Cottage and Barns are all in parish of Hunworth, not Thornage** (although they all have a Holt NR25 postcode)

7. Management Plan

p.89. LH col. Retaining **straightened sections of River Glaven** just above some mills for historical reasons clashes with ecological preference for meanders.

p.90. RH col. Last para. Some home owners & landlords cannot afford timber frame windows, but agree any **uPVC windows** should be of “high quality and imitate wooden windows” & doors where possible?

p.92. RH col. Can **solar panels** be placed discretely in back gardens as well as on non-primary elevations?

p. 93. Mid col. The uPVC windows debate! Whilst not ideal, uPVC windows and doors demonstrate that not all properties are historic and “set in aspic”.

p.95. RH col. Straight vs meandering rivers again!

Appendix C. Audit of Heritage Assets

p.122. Stody with Hunworth PC is split on whether Stody Lodge and seven thatched cottages in Hunworth & Stody should be locally listed. We are aware that the Stody estate is not keen on this, but most PC members believe the Lodge and thatched cottages have architectural merit, although their style is atypical of the Glaven Valley.

p.128. **Beck Farm, Beck Farm Cottage & Barn are all in parish of Hunworth not Thornage.** The PC is relaxed re local listing status for these.

p.132. **Heath House, Hunworth Rd**, Holt NR25 6SR – is in parish of Holt, not Hunworth.

Charlotte Crawley

Chair – Stody with Hunworth PC

28 March 2023.