

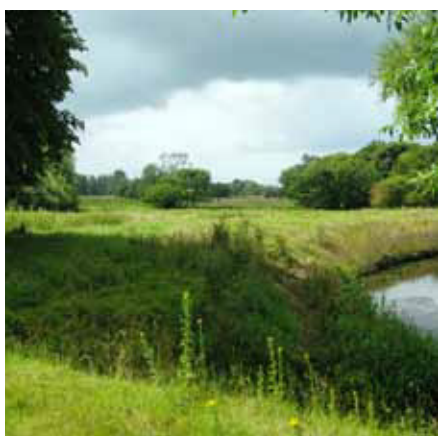


# Stoke Holy Cross

## Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

---

September 2012





## Introduction

Under the terms of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990, the local planning authority is required to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate them as Conservation areas.

The 1990 Act also requires local authorities to prepare policy statements for conservation areas. These statements are to be more explicit and detailed than would be possible as part of a local plan, and seek to identify the components that give the conservation areas their special character.

This character appraisal for Stoke Holy Cross covers the historical background to the mill and describes the significance of features in the area. The policies of the Council, and others, are noted, and it is hoped that the assessment will help to guide any future change.

The conservation area at Stoke Holy Cross was originally designated in 1975 but the initial conservation area appraisal was carried out in 1980 and reviewed in 2002. This review of conservation area in 2010 is being carried out in response to new guidance issued by English Heritage, which requires that conservation area character appraisals include management proposals.

## Value of the appraisal

The publication of this appraisal aims to improve the understanding of the value of the built heritage. It also aims to provide potential developers and property owners within the conservation area with clearer guidance on planning matters and the types of development likely to be encouraged. It will enable South Norfolk Council to improve its strategies, policies and attitude towards the conservation area and to identify development opportunities and priorities within the designated area. It will also support the effective determination of planning and listed building applications, and inform relevant evidence in planning particularly relating to the demolition of unlisted buildings.

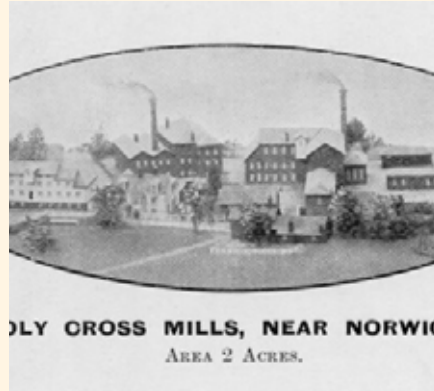
While the Council has prepared this appraisal, it cannot successfully deal with all the issues without the support of the Parish Councils, and other groups and individuals. With the co-operation of all involved, this appraisal could have a positive effect on the appearance of the area.

## Public consultation

The appraisal has been subject to public consultation and has been approved by the Design Champion and local members. It should be read in conjunction with the adopted SNDC Local Plan and detailed guidance and site-specific development briefs as appropriate.



The Mill 1901



Model of The Mill 1862



View west across the flood plain  
from Stoke Lane

## Historical development

Stoke Holy Cross is situated approximately 8.5 kilometres almost due south of Norwich and is in the South Norfolk Local Government district. It is a large parish of some 923 hectares, straddling the River Tas and containing the settlements of Stoke Holy Cross, Upper Stoke and Dunston. The conservation area is to the west of Norwich Road and is centred on the mill and the bridge over the River Tas. The countryside around the conservation area is gently undulating, sloping down to the water meadows either side of the River Tas.

Stoke was recorded in the Domesday Book as Stocche (meaning place, religious place or dependant place) and Crouche-stoke in c1150. Presumably the “Holy Cross” addition is from the dedication of the Church. “Crouche” is an old form of cross.

Stoke Holy Cross was part of the Henstead Hundred. A ‘Hundred’ was a division of a shire and is a term dating from the 10th century. It was, as the name suggests, an area of land containing approximately 100 families, or 10 tithings. There were 33 Norfolk Hundreds listed in the Domesday Book in 1086, and they remained the accepted units of administration and taxation until 1834.

A mill in Stoke is mentioned in a deed dated 1306, and reference made again in an old record in 1482. The current building on the site dates to 1747, although it was significantly rebuilt in 1853 following a serious fire. In the latter part of the 18th century it was used to manufacture paper and only later adapted into a flour mill and mustard milling business.

Stoke Mill is most remembered for its association with the Colman family who leased the mill in 1814. The business prospered and the site underwent a dramatic change. Starch and mustard factories were added, a granary and warehouse. The Colmans also established a school above the granary.

A windmill was added in the early 19th century and by 1845, both it and the mustard mill operated entirely by steam power. A picture of a model of site as it looked during this period is shown on page 4.

However, it became evident that the mill could not cope with this continued expansion. This and other reasons, for example the growth of the railways, prompted the family to purchase the site at Carrow in Norwich. Thus when the lease eventually expired in 1862, the whole business was transferred to the new works.



The river meadow opposite the Mill



View of the Mill from the entrance drive



Mill House

With the departure of the Colmans, the industrial buildings they had erected were disposed of at auction in accordance with an agreement of the lease. Unfortunately, most were demolished: only the ruins of the granary and part of the 'Blue' Warehouse remain in a recognisable form. 'Blue' refers to the blue powder which was manufactured a whitener in laundry. The mill continued to grind corn under a succession of millers. Mr Brock bought the mill in 1936 and used it to mix cattle feeds until the 1960s after which its fittings were removed. The ground floor of the mill is now in use as a restaurant while its upper floors remain unused.

There are still other signs of the industrial past. Evidence suggests that Mill Cottages might have been converted from the Old Mustard factory. The area still retains a number of brick walls, which although not necessarily those of the original buildings, certainly could have been constructed out of their materials.

It may be said therefore that this is a key site in the history of the development of industry in 19th century Norfolk.

With the departure of the Colmans, the industrial buildings they had erected were disposed of at auction in accordance with an agreement of the lease. Unfortunately, most were demolished: only the ruins of the granary and part of the 'Blue' Warehouse remain in a recognisable form. Blue powder, in the form of Blue bags, was manufactured as a whitener in laundry. These buildings are referred to in the conservation area map. The mill continued to grind corn under a succession of millers. Mr Brock bought the mill in 1936 and used it to mix cattle feeds until the 1960s after which its fittings were removed. The ground floor of the mill is now in use as a restaurant while its upper floors remain unused. There are still other signs of the industrial past. Evidence suggests that Mill Cottages might have been converted from the Old Mustard factory. The area still retains a number of brick walls, which although not necessarily those of the original buildings, certainly could have been constructed out of their materials.

## Character assessment

### Boundary

The area includes the grounds of the mill and Mill Cottages, including the two modern houses to the east, together with part of the river valley to the south.

### Form and Character

The setting of the mill is quite idyllic in the river valley and the building dominates the area. The present rural character would have contrasted dramatically with the industrial complex that existed in the 19th century. While some of those buildings survive, they are now part of a domestic scene subordinate to the mill.

The approaches to the area are more attractive from the west along the tree-lined roads and down the river valley. Glimpses of the mill from this route are enticing though they are admittedly, of its less impressive sides. Equally, the views back are attractive either along the valley or up to Dunston Hall and the tower of St Remigius's Church.

### Buildings and Materials

The Mill and Mill House are listed grade II while the buildings adjoining at Mill Cottage and the former 'Blue Warehouse' are all of significance. There are some boundary walls, which could be remnants of the buildings that adorned the site in its industrial heyday.

The mill has a boarded finish on a high brick plinth with a pantiled roof. For the remainder of the buildings in the group, brick is the dominant material, either painted or fair faced. The former "Blue Warehouse" is rendered, with a pantile roof. Mill Cottage is weatherboard on a rendered plinth with a recent extension to the side in painted brickwork. Surface materials are predominantly tarmac with compacted gravel to Mill Close and gravel to the Mill Restaurant car park.

There are a variety of boundary treatments. Attractive white painted iron railings to Mill House contrast markedly with the aluminium barriers on the bridge. Posts and chain link have been chosen to Mill Cottage while various hedges, indigenous and otherwise are used along Mill Road.

### Trees and Hedges

There is a good bank of willow trees each side of the southern approach road, with a good individual lime tree on the riverbank south of the mill. Other trees and hedges make a contribution to the character of the area but are not dominant.

## Problems and opportunities

Since the Conservation area reports (December 1980 and November 2002), the former 'Blue Warehouse' had been in commercial use. Planning consent was granted in 2005 to convert the building to residential use, and, although the building has been vacant and in poor repair for the last few years, re-roofing works have recently been completed using traditional pantiles to replace the metal corrugated finish. The ramshackle buildings behind, which may be in separate ownership, are in a particularly parlous state. The remains of the granary, which houses the sub-station, continues to deteriorate.

Although the road through the mill is narrow and winding, it is still a popular short cut for road traffic. The nature of the road slows this traffic down but the uncertain demarcation outside the mill is confusing and visually unattractive. A rationalisation of the area and its surfacing would improve the situation.

A beneficial use or uses for the upper floors of the Mill would do much to safeguard the future of the building.

It is unfortunate how Mill Close and the buildings and spaces that shape it, have been neglected. While this is a private area, its comprehensive enhancement should be promoted.

There seems to be a wide choice of boundary treatments for such a modest area. The traditional white metal posts and railings to the western approaches have not been reflected in the aluminium railings to the main bridge. There are some good railings to Mill House but the simple metal bar railings opposite have been supplemented by an unattractive barbed wire fence. The adjacent building, Mill Cottage is separated from the road by a low post and chain fence to the street.

Leylandii has also been used which is totally alien to the character of the area. These should be removed and replaced with a more indigenous variety of hedge.

## Proposals

Having provided an analysis of the conservation area, which recognises both the problems and potential, proposals can now be presented for the future enhancement and development of the area.

The Council will follow the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, which outlines the Government's policies for Heritage Assets.

The Strategic Principles and Policies in the Norfolk Structure Plan 1999 and the South Norfolk Local Plan have implications for the historic fabric of the conservation area and provide the local framework for the future of Stoke Holy Cross.



View along Mill Rd showing modern railings to the right



Railings just before the bridge at the south side of the Mill



Looking west towards the Mill

## **Recommendations for management proposals**

### **Local Plan**

Include policies in the Local Plan relating to the management of conservation areas and listed buildings to enable appropriate advice to be given to owners and developers, and assist the effective determination of planning applications.

### **Design guidance and advisory leaflets**

Monitor and update the information on South Norfolk Council's website ([www.south-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk)) regarding advice for owners and residents on;

- The implications of conservation area designation
- Appropriate maintenance, repairs and alterations to buildings to preserve and enhance
- The character and appearance of the conservation area.

Publish advice on sustainable development and construction (in line with the Council's policies) taking into account the need to maintain the distinct character and appearance of the area, and include on the council's website.

### **Specific enhancement issues**

- Repairs to the remains of the old granary and brick dome once housing an hydraulic ram
- Enhancements to the boundary and surface treatment at Mill Close
- Improvements to boundary treatments, including the aluminium barriers on the bridge
- Rationalisation and enhancement of the highway and footpath in front of the Mill
- The replacement of leylandii with indigenous species of hedging and similar additional planting to the west of the Mill car park.
- Under-grounding of overhead lines and wires

### **Monitor the Conservation area**

The Local Authority has a duty from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990).





Mill Cottage



The Old Blue Warehouse



South side of the Mill

## Appendix 1 Townscape and buildings - Stoke Holy Cross

The Stoke Mill is one of the most significant in South Norfolk both visually and historically. That it has survived is a credit to the owners but a new use or uses for the upper floors would be beneficial to the building. It is a formidable building in the river landscape and also in the wider setting, which includes Dunston Hall to the northwest.

The boarded framed section is raised on a brick ground floor, with its more modest return wing to the south. This wing effectively closes the view down Mill Road and forces the road to bend sharply around it. The approach from the south is framed by the two banks of willows and alders that are the most significant group of trees in the conservation area. The car park to the west is rather open but the gravel surface is appropriate. The setting could be improved by an indigenous hedge along the west side, and the removal of the leylandii at the entrance. This sensitive area should not be crowded with trees and other elements, keeping the setting of the mill as natural as possible.

Near the road is a brick dome, once housing an hydraulic ram, which used to pump water to the stables at Dunston Hall. It appears to be in reasonable condition although covered in ivy. Its restoration and 'unveiling' could add further interest to the area.

The mill is linked to the Mill House by a single storey extension partly obscured by a holly tree. Mill House is a charming 18th century brick and pantiled house with a wide bay window on the ground floor. The bay on the first floor flanked by pedimented sashes is unusual. Its colour scheme of white respects that of the mill, with darkened surrounds to the openings, creating a pleasant contrast. The rear of the house has been altered and its once secluded garden now extends down to the river. According to records there are some beautifully designed ceilings inside the house, which the Colmans are said to have left.

The old Blue Warehouse had been converted to a commercial use, but is once again vacant

The cottage opposite reflects the design of the mill. A later extension noted as red brick in the 2005 report, has been harmonised with the cottage through colour washing. Together with the old Warehouse they form a gateway into the conservation area. The natural river meadow to the south contrasts with the almost urban character across the road. While there may be opportunities for development on the north side, the south side must remain open in character.

At Mill Cottages little remains of the character of the original mustard factory from which they may have been derived. The UPVC windows do little to enhance their character, but the

recent timber replacements in No 3 are a great improvement. They share a good traditional front boundary wall.

Mill Close threads its way through a maze of outbuildings and while this informal character should remain, its appearance could be improved.

The remains of the old granary are now on the verge of collapse. In view of its historical association, its repair should be encouraged.

The presence of overhead poles and wires does spoil the view of the mill and Mill House and any opportunity to underground them should be grasped.

The two relatively new houses, Rivendell House and Tas Valley, on the east side of the area are not unattractive and do not unduly affect the character of the area.

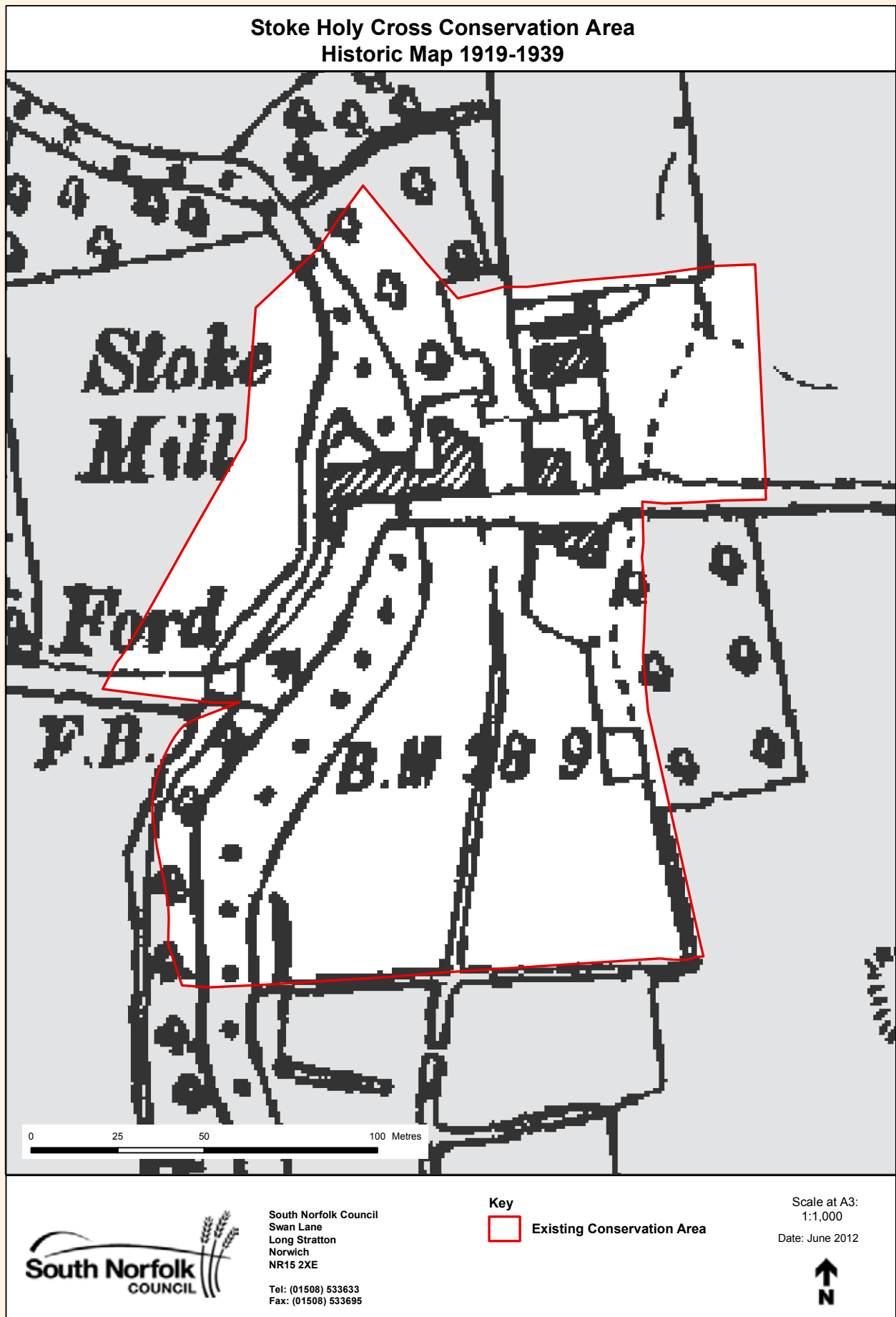
At Mill Cottages little remains of the character of the original mustard factory from which they may have been derived. The UPVC windows do little to enhance their character, but the recent timber replacements in No 3 are a great improvement. They share a good traditional front boundary wall.

Mill Close threads its way through a maze of outbuildings and while this informal character should remain, its appearance could be improved.

The remains of the old granary are now on the verge of collapse. In view of its historical association, its repair should be encouraged.

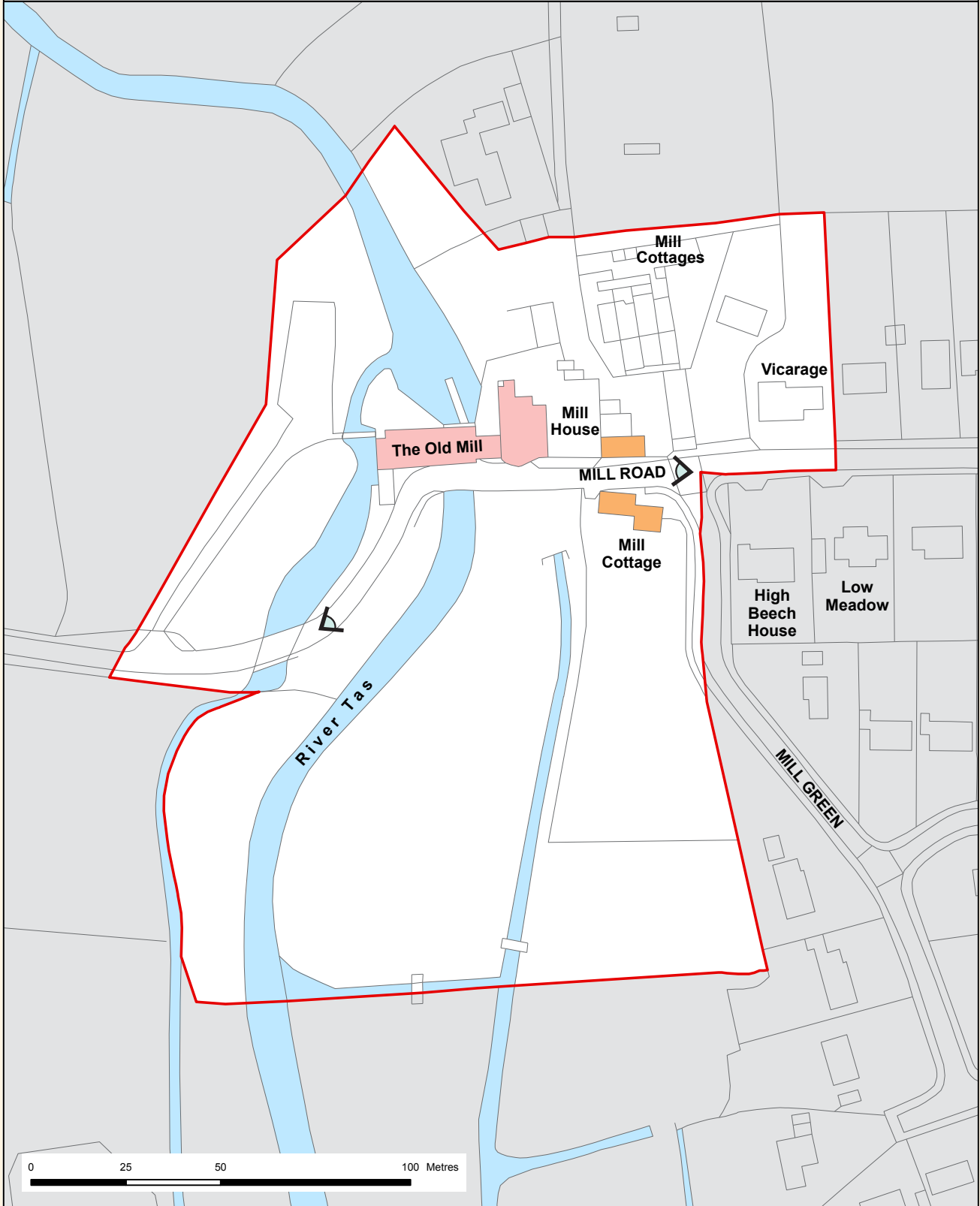
The presence of overhead poles and wires does spoil the view of the mill and Mill House and any opportunity to underground them should be grasped.

The two relatively new houses, Rivendell House and Tas Valley, on the east side of the area are not unattractive and do not unduly affect the character of the area.



© Crown copyright and database rights 2012 to date Ordnance Survey Licence no 100019483

## Stoke Holy Cross Conservation Area Streetscape Map



South Norfolk Council  
Swan Lane  
Long Stratton  
Norwich  
NR15 2XE

Tel: (01508) 533633  
Fax: (01508) 533695

### Key

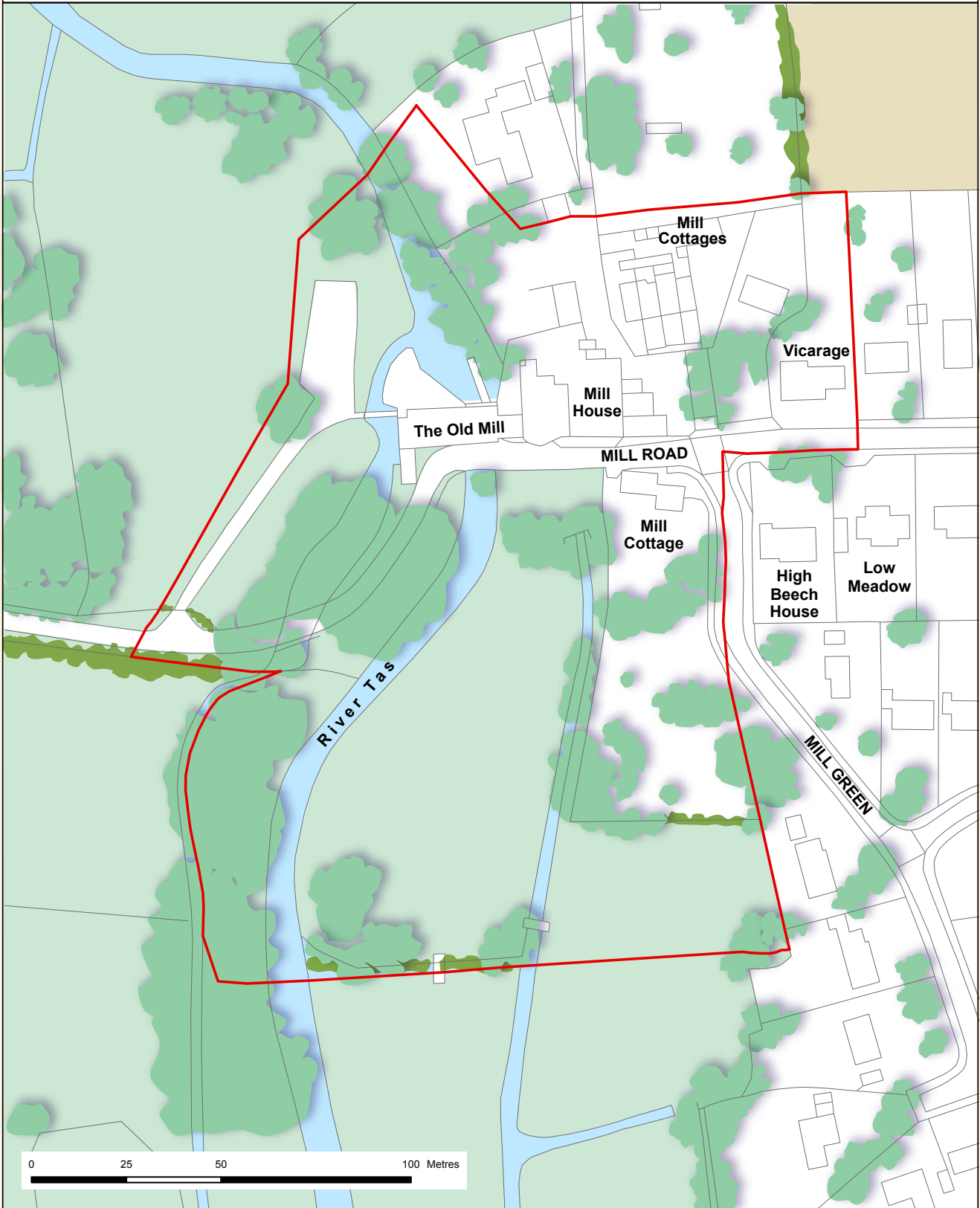
- Listed Buildings
- Buildings of townscape significance
- Key Views

Scale at A3:  
1:1,000

Date: February 2012



# Stoke Holy Cross Conservation Area Natural Character Map



South Norfolk Council  
Swan Lane  
Long Stratton  
Norwich  
NR15 2XE  
Tel: (01508) 533633  
Fax: (01508) 533695

**Key**

- Water Meadow
- Agricultural
- River
- Trees
- Hedges

Scale at A3:  
1:1,000  
Date: February 2012



## Appendix 3

### Conservation areas

The majority of conservation areas are historic settlements, and often include a number of buildings, which are designated as 'Listed Buildings', in recognition of their individual architectural or historic value. However, the character of conservation areas depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings. They take into account features such as building layout, open spaces, boundaries, thoroughfares, the mix of uses, use of materials and street furniture.

Within the conservation area;

- Buildings and other structures are protected from substantial demolition
- Works to trees are controlled by giving the local authority six weeks to consider whether a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) should be made
- Some minor developments (such as stone cladding, the positioning of satellite dishes and dormer windows) which do not require consent outside conservation areas, may require consent within the designated area
- Special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the conservation area throughout the planning process
- Enhancement schemes are the subject of public debate
- Reviews take place from time to time

In addition to the guidance available from Central Government, and to support local policies, guidance concerning the design of new buildings and alterations and repairs to existing buildings in conservation areas is available from South Norfolk Council.

## Appendix 4

### Policy background

In recent years, the approach to conservation area designation has changed considerably. It is now recognised that development plan policies, development control decisions, proposals for the preservation or enhancement and the 'management' of conservation areas can be best achieved when there is a sound understanding of the special interest of the conservation area.

#### **1. Department for Communities and Local Government National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012**

The new NPPF replaces all the previous Planning Policy Statements. Section 12, paragraphs 126 to 141 cover "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment".

#### **2. South Norfolk Local Plan**

South Norfolk Council is currently reviewing and revising local policies, which will be published in a new Local Plan. In the meantime the more specific local policies included in the South Norfolk Local Plan (1998) are still relevant and include;

IMP1 is replaced by Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich & South Norfolk:  
Promoting Good Design

IMP2	Landscaping
IMP3	Protection of Important Spaces
IMP4	Important frontages
IMP5	Streetscape
IMP6	Visual impact of parked cars
IMP11	Demolition of Listed Buildings
IMP12	Redevelopment following demolition of Listed Buildings
IMP13	Alteration of Listed Buildings
IMP14	Buildings at Risk
IMP15	Setting of Listed Buildings
IMP16	Demolition in Conservation areas
IMP17	Alterations and extensions in Conservation areas
IMP18	Development in Conservation areas
IMP19	Advertisements
IMP20	Shopfronts
IMP21	Illuminated advertisements
IMP22	Corporate signs
IMP 23	Control of advertisements in the open countryside
IMP 24	Illuminated advertisements in the open countryside
IMP 25	Outdoor lighting

## **Appendix 5**

### **Listed Buildings**

Grade II

Stoke Mill  
Mill House

#### **Unlisted Buildings of Special Interest**

Former Blue Warehouse and cottages to the south  
Mill Cottage,  
1 – 4 (consecutive) Mill Close  
Various boundary walls in Mill Close as shown on accompanying map.

#### **Tree Preservation Orders**

There are currently no tree preservation orders in the conservation area.

## Appendix 6

### Sources and references

The Buildings of England, Norfolk 2: North West and South, Nicholas Pevsner and Bill Wilson  
GENUKI website  
Norfolk Mills website  
White's Gazetteer and Directory of Norfolk 1845  
Norwich and its Region, British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1961  
English Heritage: Guidance on conservation area appraisals, 2006  
English Heritage: Guidance on the management of conservation areas, 2006  
English Heritage and CABI: Building in Context: New development in historic areas

Photographs on page 4 - The Mill 1901, Model of The Mill 1862 - images courtesy of Norfolk County Council Library and Information Service.

## Appendix 7

### Contacts:

SNDC Conservation Team – 01508 533812/533811  
[www.south-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk)

Norfolk County Council - 0344 800 8020  
[www.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk)

Historic Environment Service – 01362 869276  
[www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk)

Broads Authority - 01603 610734  
[www.broads-authority.gov.uk](http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk)

