

Acquisition of the North Range of The Folly, Settle

The Trustees of the North Craven Building Preservation Trust are delighted to announce that they have concluded the purchase by private treaty of the North Range of the Folly in Settle.

The Folly is Settle's finest building and is listed Grade I which means it is of exceptional importance and places it amongst the top 2% of listed buildings in the UK.

It has been the Trustees' aim for over 25 years to acquire the Folly for public access. They were successful in 1996 in securing the Centre and South Range, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and after restoration this was opened by HRH The Prince of Wales in December 2001. The acquisition of the North Range brings the building back into single beneficial ownership after it was unfortunately divided into two units in 1992. Plans for the use are at an early stage, but the Trustees intend for the foreseeable future to continue letting the ground floor as a holiday flat, which the previous owners established five years ago, and probably will convert the first floor into another holiday apartment to generate income to pay off the loan from the Architectural Heritage Fund (to which the Trust is registered) for the purchase. In the longer term the North Range will be a wonderful asset and addition to the Folly project.

Formation of North Craven Building Preservation Trust

The Trust was formed in 1978 as an offshoot of the former Settle and District Civic Society (now North Craven Heritage Trust). The idea of forming a Building Trust came from the Civic Trust in London which, in the aftermath of the European Architectural Heritage Year 1975, encouraged Civic Societies to become involved in building restoration projects and recommended for legal reasons that a separate Charitable Trust be formed. The Trust's original name was Settle and District Civic Society Building Preservation Trust and later adopted the name North Craven to take account of the changes in local government boundaries. The first Chairman was the late Mr L P Dutton, of Giggleswick. Other founder Trustees were Mr C M Paley (Austwick), the late Mr Hugh Carr (Settle), the late Mr J M Brassington (Giggleswick), the late Mr W Middleton (Settle), the late Mr R C Clayton (Settle) and the late Mr John Douglas (Settle). John Miller was another founder member, and he continues as Secretary and Treasurer. Alan Bennett, the Playwright, was also a founder member and is the Trust's President.

In recent times Honorary Alderman Miss Beth Graham (who has the distinction of being born in the Folly) has served twelve years as Chairman, and recently Mr James Innerdale from Clapham has taken over the reins.

Other current Trustees are Mr Michael Brown (Settle), Mrs Pat Simpson (Giggleswick), Mrs Anne Read (Eldroth), Mrs Margaret Rhodes (Giggleswick) and Dr Sylvia Harrop (Austwick).

The Trust does not employ any staff, but has the professional support of a much larger BPT, Heritage Trust for the North West, of which John Miller is the Chief Executive. HTNW is based in East Lancashire, and employs 60 full time and part time staff who assist under a management agreement with the development and running of the North

Craven projects. The North Craven BPT also relies on a large number of local volunteers for running the Folly.

The aims of the North Craven BPT

The Trust's remit is to restore buildings of architectural and historical interest in North Craven. The Trust has been extremely fortunate in a number of gifts and benefactors. It was founded with an anonymous donation of £5,000. The first restoration was Grisedale's former furniture shop in Victoria Street, Settle which Mr Tony Grisedale sold to the Trust on extremely favourable terms. Later the Trust bought Nos. 6/8 Chapel Street, and 34 Duke Street. Dr Pam Douglas donated Croft Barn in memory of her husband, John.

In 1990 the Trust was able to acquire No. 4 Chapel Street. In recent years the acquisition and restoration of the Centre and South Range of the Folly have been the Trust's main preoccupation and most ambitious project. It has cost over £¾ million and this has been raised by grants from a wide range of bodies including Yorkshire Forward, North Yorkshire County Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as many private gifts, one in particular from a member of an old Settle family who generously donated a portfolio of shares.

A Revolving Fund

The Civic Trust's original concept of a Building Preservation Trust was to acquire, restore and sell the property and use the proceeds for another project, thus creating a revolving fund. North Craven BPT however has retained all its buildings and as a result has not only a valuable property portfolio, but also derives rental income which helps to fund its projects, in particular the Museum of North Craven Life based in the Folly.

Appeal for Funds

The Trust will be launching an Appeal in due course for the North Range of the Folly. To develop and maintain an historic building and a professionally run Museum requires a large investment. Unlike many similar projects, the Trust does not receive any revenue support from government or local authorities.

In the meantime, the Trustees are very grateful for the support of the Architectural Heritage Fund for the loan and to North Yorkshire County Council for acting as guarantor. In the current economic climate these are challenging times, but the Trustees are looking to the longer term, and determined to bequeath a project of lasting value to the community. For further details of the project contact john.miller@htnw.co.uk or telephone 01282 877686.

<http://www.ncbpt.org.uk/>

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