

Listing and designation application to English Heritage

27 May 2013

Halstead 21st Century Group

Application Reference Number: 477830

Identification

Subject: 16 air raid shelters to the east of Halstead High Street, Essex.
Listing and Designation Online application

Primary County/Unitary Authority: Essex

Location

Descriptive Location: The 16 air raid shelters are at the southern end of an area of shrub and woodland approximately 100 metres to the east of Halstead town centre. From west to east, 5 semi- sunken shelters lie immediately north of Grade II listed Factory Terrace. A brick above-ground shelter, possibly a radio station, and 10 more sunken shelters form an offset line a few metres north extending behind the rest of Factory Terrace and Vicarage Meadow. (Braintree District Council, 2005, 85 Topographical Survey)

Latitude: 51.943691

Longitude: 0.637808

National Grid Reference: TL8139230515

Threat

Is this asset under threat: Other

Details of threat: The ARSs lie on a 1.88m hectare site, identified by Braintree District Council as a Comprehensive Development Area. The current local plan (Braintree District Council, Site Allocation and Development Management Plan 2013, Policy ADM 36, p 67) includes a proposal to demolish up to 15 air raid shelters. An application to construct an A1 Food Retail Unit, build associated car parking and demolish the overground and 8 underground shelters listed under curtilage to Factory Terrace was refused by Braintree District Council in January 2013. In 2007, the County Conservation Officer, with support from the local history society, recommended an amendment to Halstead Conservation Area to include the air raid shelters and Vicarage Meadow. The Town Council approved a change to the Conservation Area but demonstrated its preference for development of the site over protection of the ARSs (Halstead Local Committee, 2007, 43) by excluding them from the final boundaries. A heritage statement carried out on behalf of the site's planning applicants, Tesco, (Ettwein Bridges Architects, 2012, P 25.) states that the 3 main threats to the structures are 1) corrosion of the steel Local reinforcement and 2) structural instability both caused by movement of precast concrete segments and water ingress – due to a high water table below some springs. (Photo - flooding in overground shelter) A tree survey report indicates that the shelters are likely to be damaged structurally by trees

including lime, beech and elm but most numerous sycamore, (Braintree Dist. Council, 2005. 7, 86, photo - Trees Growing on ARS) one of the fastest growing of tree species. Anecdotal reports by local residents concerning the risk of fire damage to the ARSs have been confirmed by Essex County Fire Service who hold records of calls to attend 4 fires in the area during the last 2 years, one call was to an ARS.(email, 23/5/2013)

**Current Planning Application/
Permission/Marine Consent:**

This asset is **not** the subject of a current planning application, permission or marine consent.

Ownership & Occupancy

Owner: You are **not** the owner of part or all of the subject.
Occupier: You are **not** the occupier of part or all of the subject.
Ownership details removed

Reasons

Archaeological Interest: The 16 ARSs are listed in Heritage Gateway as SMR 20822

They are part of a wider group of Courtauld buildings and structures in close proximity, many of can be found on the National Heritage List. Scrutiny of a 1921 plan of Halstead Mill (ERO. D/F3/3/40) shows that apart from the weaving shed, demolished in 1989, the following components of the industry and associated housing survive:

1. Factory Terrace, 1 – 16 Factory Lane East. Grade II listed NHL entry number 1169217
2. 3 - 6 & 13 – 16 Vicarage Meadow. Numbers 3 –16 lie within Halstead Conservation Area
3. Townsford Mill, listed Grade II, NHL entry 113842
4. The Mill House – Listed Grade II. NH entry 1122458
5. Coach House to Mill House, NHL entry 1122459
6. 1 - 2 The Causeway, NHL entry 1221814
7. 3 - 12 The Causeway, NHL entry 1221815
8. Royal British Legion Club (former canteen), Grade II, NHL entry 1221817
9. 1 and 2 Vicarage Meadow
10. Located in the Conservation Area and between the Cooperative car park and Factory Terrace is the preserved north wall of the factory including the entrance arch to the Weaving shed, set within the gable end.
11. The surviving range of the former weaving sheds, with cast-iron columns surviving

which now support the walk-way from the car park to the supermarket and retain the fittings for the line-shafting.

12. The boiler house and pump house, the smithy and the former winding and cleaning room which now forms part of the Cooperative store.

13. Two smaller buildings, adjacent to 11 and 12 are the formerly Dispensary dated 1912 and Lodge, dated 1904.

14. There are many other houses and community facilities in Halstead associated with members of the Courtauld family, but those cited above form a highly significant group of buildings. Local listing of all Courtauld buildings is currently being discussed by Braintree District Council and Braintree & Bocking Civic Society.

The 9 ARSs listed under curtilage to Grade II listed Factory Terrace are within Halstead Conservation Area. The matter of the Town Council's refusal to include the ARSs in the 2007 Conservation Area has already been discussed under Threats.

In accordance with the Civil Defence Act of 1937, all new factories were obliged to provide purpose built air raid protection for their employees. (English Heritage, Military Structures 2011) As an older factory at the time, Courtaulds would not have been required to build Halstead's 16 ARSs, providing further evidence of the family's philanthropy.

Built for the workers at Courtaulds' silk factory, the ARSs were located within minutes of the weaving sheds for the use of employees in factory time. A log was made of the time lost to air raids ((ERO: A6798, Box 21).

Surviving Courtaulds' employees have described multiple uses of the above-ground shelter, including First Aid, radio communication and as an ARP warden's post.

The employee tenants and their families of Grade II listed Factory Terrace and Vicarage Meadow were given the use of the air raid shelters behind them outside of working hours. Several former employees recall each house being allocated a shelter (Halstead Gazette, 19/7/1940 p. 5) thus confirming a functional relationship with the properties during WWII.

There has been an ongoing association between the ARSs, Factory Terrace and Vicarage Meadow whose tenants were given unwritten permission to use the shelters for their own purposes (Halstead Gazette 15/3/2013 p. 6) Some former employees remain in the properties and recount how the ARS were often used for storage as adjoining land was cultivated as allotments, an ongoing situation formally acknowledged by the Salvation Army Housing Association as recently as 2005 (Letter, Winckworth Sherwood) Most accessible ARSs still contain some household items.

Architectural Interest:

Ettwein Bridges (Ettwein Bridges Architects p. 6) and the military archaeologist for Essex County agree that the shelters were constructed in 1939. (Essex Historic Environment, Monument Report, 2004) Records from Halstead Gazette show that they were already in use in 1940. (Photo: Halstead Gazette 19/7/1940, 5)

15 of the ARSs are of a sunken type and seen as lozenge shaped mounds in aerial photos. (Photo: 1960 aerial photo). Measuring approximately 24' long and 6' 6" high, they were designed to hold up to 50 people at a time. They were built from precast concrete

segments cemented together (Interior photo). Several ARSs have escape ladders, (Interior photo) Male and Female lavatory lavatory doors (Interior photo), and blastproof doors (Interior photo) which survive intact. The ARSs were supplied with electricity (Exterior photo) and cubicles for chemical toilets Pictures of similar sunken shelters (Pugh, P. p 47 2008) and verbal accounts confirm that benches would have been in place but the structures have changed very little. There are no surviving external doors in the surface shelter.

The county military archaeologist (Essex Historic Environment Monument Report, 2004) stated: “The majority of these, below ground are of a type not previously recorded in the County...” However, the architects Ettwein Bridges present evidence to demonstrate that they are Costain Shelters. (Ettwein Bridges Architects, 2012, P. 24) who assert that the existence of other Costain shelters is unknown and the survival of such a large group of shelters “ is an unusually large and complete group.” (Ettwein Bridges, App.C, 2012, 39)

There is one above-ground or surface shelter, which is brick built and divided into 2 rooms, each with 2 doors leading to further enclosed spaces. (Photo- Interior, above-ground shelter) Such large surface shelters may be rare. (Essex Historic Environment Monument Report, 2004).

Historical Interest:

The 16 ARSs were built by Courtaulds just before WWII for their employees at the company's silk weaving factory in Halstead

Courtaulds was a highly successful international enterprise and much has been written of the company (e.g. Coleman, D.C. Courtaulds, A Social and Economic History Vols I, Vol. II, 1969, D.C. Coleman, A Social And Economic History Vol III, 1980 C). It began as a single silk mill in nearby Pebmarsh in the 18th century but expanded to become a major international textile company with industrial sites in Essex, (Ettwein Bridges Architects, HA, 4 – 8) the Midlands, Lancashire, Yorkshire and London (D.C Coleman, 1969, 28) When it set up the American Viscose Corporation in the USA in 1909 and bought a patent to produce man-made fibres the company achieved international dominance in the textile industry. It held this position for many years during the inter-war years with subsidiaries in the U.S.A, Canada, Europe and India. (D.C Coleman, 1969, 379)

Many of the Courtaulds family were actively involved with the company (D.C Coleman 1969. Fig. 17, 209) however many were personalities in their own right in other walks of life. (A. Crosby, A. Corder-Birch A. 2001, 52) They include: one of the first British women to become a medical doctor, an architect, an Arctic explorer MPs and High Sheriffs for Essex. Many commissioned local architectural projects and some became patrons of the arts including Sir William Julien Courtauld, Stephen Lewis Courtauld, Samuel Augustine Courtauld and Samuel Courtauld: the company's chairman from 1921 – 1946. Samuel was an early collector of Impressionist paintings and had strong links with the Tate Gallery and Covent Garden before founding the Courtauld Institute for Art. Known as a man of vision he presented his views.to fellow industrialists in a series of talks, the transcripts of which were published posthumously. (Courtauld, S. 1949) R.A. Butler, the Conservative MP for Saffron Walden, who occupied several senior cabinet positions during and after the war, married Samuel's daughter Sydney in 1926 and became a director of Courtaulds in 1946.

Despite an industrial presence in several regions of England, generations of the Courtauld family have lived in and around the town of Halstead. Unlike their 19th century peers such as Salt and Cadbury, the Courtaulds chose not to create industrial villages (Crosby,

A. Corder-Birch, A.2001, 48) however they contributed employment, properties and facilities for the welfare of their workers and the local population (Ettwein Bridges Architects, Heritage Statement, p.5). In Halstead, they also organised and funded a school, adult education classes, a library, mothers' club, sick fund, amusement society, lodging houses for their workforce and donated the Jubilee Fountain, a public park, retirement homes and cottage hospital to the town (English Heritage Halstead Historic Town Assessment, 1999, .3) which survive today.

Courtaulds' Halstead factory was dedicated to weaving and, during the latter part of the 19th century, concentrated on the production of black mourning crape until it became unfashionable. The factory expanded with a new weaving shed in 1904 and began weaving rayon produced in its other factories. A boiler house was added in 1924 (Ettwein Bridges Architects, Heritage Statement, 2012, 6) and the 16 ARSs were the next major additions to the factory in 1939.

Courtaulds played an important role in Britain's defence during WWII with "Over 60% of the looms and 52% of the employees were directly engaged on production for war purposes..." in Halstead, Leigh and in the Yorkshire mills. (Coleman, D.C. 1980, 5) The Halstead mill wove fabric used for the manufacture of parachutes (Doreen Potts, 2003, 80) and towards the end of WWII, material was woven for neckties for demobilisation outfits. (ERO, SA1/152/1)

The Courtaulds were active in local civil defence matters both as a business and local residents. Soon after the Munich Agreement of September 1938, 100 Courtaulds' girls began the task of assembling 20,000 gas masks that had been delivered from London and began distributing them the very same evening. (Osborne, D. 1992, 2) The Courtauld family took 33 evacuees at Gosfield Hall (Osborne, D. 1992, 5) At the age of 75, Samuel Augustine Courtauld became a Welfare Officer during World War and spent part of his duties keeping the gunners company at night as they kept watch for enemy aircraft. (Corder-Birch, P, 2012, 107)

Courtaulds took a very significant role in economic and political affairs and the war effort during 1941 as part of the Lend-Lease deal, negotiated between Great Britain and the USA. (Coleman, DC Vol II, 1969, 460 – 491, 1969). In exchange for the supply of materials from the USA to Great Britain, the White House demanded the sale of British assets in the USA. As the UK's largest 'single piece of industrial property in the U.S.A.' (Coleman, DC Vol II, 1969, 461) and the largest rayon company in the U.S.A, Courtaulds' American subsidiary the American Viscose Company was sold at a huge loss to the company and the British taxpayer. The sale has been described as a political sacrifice and no other company was forced to sell its assets (Coleman, DC Vol II, 1969, 462). After the war, Churchill described Lend-Lease as 'The most unselfish and unsordid financial act of any country in all history.' (Coleman, DC Vol II, 1969, 491)

Documents

Uploaded Documents: Site_Allocations_and_Development_Management_Plan_2013_text_excl__maps.pdf - Braintree District Council Site Allocation and Development Management Plan 2013, Policy ADM 36, 67
Land_East_of_the_High_Street_Halstead_Development_Brief_January_2005.pdf - Braintree District Council Land East of the High Street Halstead Development Brief January

2005, 16, 43, 86

Ettwein_Bridges_Architects.pdf - Ettwein Bridges Architects Heritage Statement 2012, 5, 6, 24, 25

Other

You will post documents.

Documents

Bibliographic References:

Book Reference - Author/s: Potts, D, Title: A Look Back at Halstead, Year: 2003, Page/s: p. 80

Book Reference - Author/s: Pugh, Peter, Title: Structurally Strong, Year: 2008, Page/s: P. 47

Other Reference - Description: Essex Record Office Sound Archive record of a WW2 silk weaver at Courtaulds

Book Reference - Author/s: Coleman D.C., Title: Courtaulds An economic and Social History, Vol. 3, Year: 1980, Page/s: P.5

Book Reference - Author/s: Osborne, D., Title: Halstead and Colne Valley at War, Year: 1992, Page/s: P. 2

Book Reference - Author/s: Courtauld, S., Title: Ideals and Industry,, Year: 1949, Page/s: All

Journal Reference - Author/s: Crosby, T. Corder-Birch, A, Article Title: The Courtauld Family and the Essex Landscape, Date: Autumn 2001, Page/s: 48, 52, Journal Title: Essex Journal,, Volume: 36. No, 2

Book Reference - Author/s: Coleman, D.C., Title: Courtaulds An Economic and Social History Vol II Rayon, Year: 1969, Page/s: 209, 439, 460 - 491, 461, 462, 491

Book Reference - Author/s: Corder-Birch, P., Title: The Howe Estate Halstead,, Year: 2012,, Page/s: 107

Other Reference - Description: Essex Records Office Tape of a Halstead silk weaver

Other Reference - Description: Essex Records Office A6798 Box 21 Time Lost to Air Raid Log

Other Reference - Description: Essex Records Office 1921 plan of Halstead Silk Mill

Other Reference - Description: English Heritage National Heritage Protection Plan 2011 to 2015

Other Reference - Description: English Heritage, Military Structures, 2011, 10

Comments

Comments:

The county military archaeologist stated: "On the criteria of rarity, typicality, group value and condition every effort should be made, initially through the planning process and ultimately as Scheduled Monuments, to ensure their continued survival." (EHER, Monument Report, 2004) The air raid shelters form part of an existing group of 20th century Courtauld buildings. Key elements of Courtaulds' built heritage have been preserved and the shelters' proximity to the existing structures and artefacts would add to their Group Value. Furthermore, there is a continuing functional relationship with some properties on Factory Terrace. In addition, as Courtaulds built few industrial buildings in the town after the 1920s the shelters form part of an historical asset timeline for the industry.

English Heritage has stated that tens of thousands of air raid shelters were built during the Second World War. (English Heritage Advisor's report, 2006) However, we have been unable to find any record of a single concentration of so many surviving ARSs built for civilian purposes in a comparable situation. Architects acting on behalf of a major supermarket chain, (Ettwein Bridges Architects Heritage Statement , App. C October 2012, p 38.) consider these examples of Costain shelters to be rare.

The Courtauld brand was known throughout Britain and the company dominated the textile industry across the globe for many years during the 20th century. Members of the

family were well-known for their contributions to the nation as patrons of the arts, politicians and philanthropists as well as entrepreneurs. Halstead, and its surrounding villages, was home to the Courtauld family whose impact and philanthropic activities are manifest in the town's domestic, public and industrial architectural heritage. Halstead's 16 ARSs form part of this heritage.

The shelters are under multiple threats from demolition, fire, vandalism and of natural and environmental damage . Despite this, the accessible shelters are in fair condition and retain significant features. An n archaeological investigation of those currently locked or inaccessible may reveal more. Group Value is demonstrated by the presence of the cluster of the 16 ARSs within close proximity to the aforementioned associated buildings with which they have had a Functional Relationship from WWII onwards.

Based on English Heritage's criteria for civilian defence structures of rarity of type and relationship to other buildings, (English Heritage P. 10 2011) the 16 ARSs at Halstead must merit serious consideration for designation. Aa a 20th century civil defence site, the protection of the ARSs at Halstead would fall within the scope of Items 4E2.2 and 4E2 of English Heritage's National Heritage Protection Plan 2011 – 2015. Furthermore, the construction of the ARSs by Courtaulds for their employees are part of our industrial heritage and could fall under the scope of Item 4B2, (English Heritage, NHPP, 2011 p. P. 61)

In 2004, The county military archaeologist stated: "On the criteria of rarity, typicality, group value and condition every effort should be made, initially through the planning process and ultimately as Scheduled Monuments, to ensure their continued survival." (EHER, Monument Report, 2004) Halstead 21st Century Group wish to ensure the survival of the shelters as historic monuments and their condition and accessibility suggest that a number of them could be made accessible for purposes such as recording, interpretation and public learning.