

## Restoration Reigns at the Heart of Holt

**1 September, 2005**

The four-year transformation of a busy Holt café into an upmarket bed and breakfast, dining and retail 'complex' has earned its owners a Graham Allen Award for conservation and design from North Norfolk District Council.

**Byfords**, at the heart of Holt's famously well-preserved town centre, is a 17th Century, Grade II listed building. It has seen a new dining room, framed in green oak, built in the rear courtyard, as well as the conversion of outbuildings and upstairs rooms into luxury bedrooms, and improvements to the café and delicatessen on the ground floor including a new office and kitchens. Roof and window repairs were undertaken as well.

Owners Claire and Ian Wilson, Robert Bacon Builders and architect Keith Reay ensured they made the most of original features and used top-quality materials throughout - as appropriate for an important conservation area.

The Award is given annually in memory of the late Graham Allen, NNDC's first Chairman, to encourage the conservation and enhancement of North Norfolk's built environment with sensitive property renovation projects and new buildings which make innovative use of traditional features and detailing.

A bronze plaque was presented to Mr and Mrs Wilson by Edward Allen, son of the late Graham Allen, on Thursday, 1 September, 2005, in the Committee Room at NNDC's offices on Holt Road in Cromer.

The restoration of the **Globe Inn**, on the Buttlands at Wells-next-the-Sea, was Highly Commended by the judges. This 19th Century, Grade II listed building needed to have a dangerous gable rebuilt, and the project also involved the rebuilding of chimneys in reclaimed brickwork, the repair and replacement of rotten timbers, the reuse of old floorboards, the reconditioning of the original windows (including re-painting them in linseed oil paint), and the re-plastering and re-rendering of walls using lime. Heat- and energy-saving features were built in to minimise long-term running costs.

The Wells Harbour Commissioners entered the Grade II listed **Old Lifeboat House** on the Quay in Wells-next-the-Sea for the Award, and were Commended by the judges. The 1869 building has been converted to provide better facilities (with full disabled access) for the community and harbour users with new toilets and showers, a stair lift and a meeting room. In addition, the building has also been completely re-roofed and repointed.

Kelling Primary School was also Commended. Its new extension not only provides all the necessary facilities for teaching in the 21st Century but, situated prominently as it is in Kelling's conservation area, it has also been carefully designed to blend in with the main building and employs traditional materials.



Councillor Henry Cordeaux, chairman of the judging panel, said: "We were very lucky because we had an outstanding set of entries this year. It wasn't easy to choose a winner, but the workmanship at Byfords was absolutely first class and the way they incorporated the courtyard is well worth seeing.

"The Graham Allen Award entries show that North Norfolk is ahead of the field when it comes to the quality of design and workmanship, and is very diligent in looking after its listed buildings. We should all be proud of this heritage and those people, like this year's entrants, who strive to preserve it."

- For more information about the Graham Allen Award please call:  
Chris Young, Senior Conservation and Design Officer, on 01263 516138
- Councillor Henry Cordeaux, Chairman of the Graham Allen Award judging panel, on 01263 588213.