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NNDC Ref: LBII/071/1493291
HE Ref: 1493291
Date: 31 July 2025

Denise Revell
Meadowcroft
40 Cromer Road
Mundesley
NR11 8DB

Dear Denise Revell,

**Re: Notification of Listing: Two First World War Pillboxes on Bradfield Common,
North Walsham**

**I enclose for your Parish Council's information, a copy of the schedule in respect of
the above building, which has been added to the List of Buildings of Special
Architectural or Historic Interest.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read "Chris Young", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr Chris Young
Conservation, Design and Landscape Team

Case Name: First World War Pillboxes: Two pillboxes in Bradfield Common

Case Number: 1491720

Background

Historic England is assessing a pair of First World War pillboxes at Bradfield Common, for listing. They form part of a series of pillboxes along the River Ant and Dilham and North Walsham Canal also being assessed for listing.

Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	HE Recommendation
1	1493291	Two First World War Pillboxes on Bradfield Common	Listing	Add to List

Visits

Date	Visit Type
07 October 2024	Full inspection

Context

The pillboxes at Bradfield Common are situated on either side of Common Road to the west of where the road crosses Bradfield Beck, a tributary of the River Ant and North Walsham and Dilham Canal

Assessment

CONSULTATION

Representatives of the owner, local planning authority, the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) and an interested party were invited to comment on the factual details of the case as part of the consultation process.

The owners responded with some management questions but no comments were made on the detail of the report.

The HER responded to provide their full reports on these pillboxes; we are grateful for the response.

No other responses were received.

DISCUSSION

The criteria for listing are the special architectural or historic interest of a building, as set out in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings (November 2018). To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its design, decoration or craftsmanship. Special interest may also apply to particularly significant examples of building types or techniques and significant plan forms. To be able to justify special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's history and/ or have closely substantiated historical associations with nationally important

individuals, groups or events; and the building itself in its current form will afford a strong connection with the values aspect of history. Before 1700, all buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest; from 1700 to 1850, most buildings that retain a significant proportion of their original fabric are likely to be regarded of special interest, though some selection is necessary; from 1850 to 1945, because of the greatly increased number of buildings erected and the much larger numbers that have survived, progressively greater selection is necessary. Buildings on the List are graded to reflect their relative architectural and historic interest. Buildings listed at Grade II are of special interest, buildings listed at Grade II* are particularly important buildings of more than special interest, and buildings listed at Grade I are of exceptional interest.

Historic England's Listing Selection Guide for Military Buildings (December 2017) provides some pointers relevant to this assessment.

Pillboxes constructed during the First World War are relatively rare compared to those erected in the early stages of the Second. Not only are the pillboxes at Bradfield Common rare, intact survivals of the period but their concrete block construction is also unusual. It is not a method used in other First World War pillboxes in the county and it did not continue to be used in pillbox construction during the Second World War. The case for listing will always be stronger with evidence of remaining fittings and in this case the original doors and gun loop shutters survive in the north pillbox.

The Bradfield Common pillboxes form part of a stop line of defences constructed at bridging points on the River Ant and Dilham and North Walsham Canal and represented by a series of surviving pillboxes of contemporary date, design and construction. As such, they share considerable group value with the other pillboxes.

In recommending the extent of designation, we have considered whether powers of exclusion under s1 (5A) of the 1990 Act are appropriate, and consider that they are not.

CONCLUSION

After examining all the available records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are fulfilled. The pillboxes at Bradfield Common possess special architectural and historic interest and are therefore recommended for listing at Grade II.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The two pillboxes at Bradfield Common are recommended for listing at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

- * as two well-preserved examples of First World War pillboxes with additional interest for their unusual method of concrete block construction;
- * they contain original doors and gun loop shutters that illustrate the functioning of the buildings.

Historic interest:

- * as good surviving examples of First World War pillboxes with intact layouts.

Group value:

- * they form part of an important group of First World War pillboxes of the same design and construction which formed a stop line at bridging points on the River Ant and Dilham and North Walsham Canal, which have a strong functional relationship with each other.

Countersigning comments:

Agree. 03 June 2025.

Annex 1**List Entry****List Entry Summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: Two First World War Pillboxes on Bradfield Common

List Entry Number: 1493291

Location

Two First World War Pillboxes on Bradfield Common, Bradfield, North Walsham, NR28

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
Norfolk	North Norfolk	District Authority	Swafeld

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed:

Date of most recent amendment:

Legacy System Information

This section only relates to older records, created before the introduction of the National Heritage List for England in 2011.

Legacy System: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy Number: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description**Summary of Building**

Two rare First World War pillboxes of concrete block construction, part of a group that formed a "stop line" against potential enemy invaders along the River Ant and Dilham and North Walsham canal. They were constructed between 1916 and 1918.

Reasons for Designation

The two pillboxes at Bradfield Common are listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

- * as two well-preserved examples of First World War pillboxes with additional interest for their unusual method of concrete block construction;
- * they contain original doors and gun loop shutters that illustrate the functioning of the buildings.

Historic interest:

- * as good surviving examples of First World War pillboxes with intact layouts.

Group value:

- * they form part of an important group of First World War pillboxes of the same design and construction which formed a stop line at bridging points on the River Ant and Dilham and North Walsham Canal, which have a strong functional relationship with each other.

History

Despite the emerging deadlock between German and allied forces in Belgium and northern France British military planners planned to counter the threat of a possible seaborne attack on the UK mainland and in 1916 it was estimated that a landing might be made with as many as 160,000 troops on the vulnerable east coast. To counter the threat of a German landing on the beaches of north Norfolk coastal defences were constructed from 1916, some of the first to be built in the country and backed up by a series of defended points inland of the coastal towns and a stop line along the River Ant and the section which formed the North Walsham and Dilham Canal. This utilised the northern part of the river/canal to defend the area between Barton Broad at the northern edge of the Norfolk Broads and Bradfield, the closest point on the river to the defences along the coast to the south of Cromer. A series of pillboxes were constructed at eight bridging points on the river/canal from 1916 with work to the north Norfolk defences continuing until 1918.

The pair of pillboxes at Bradfield Common are situated to the west of where Common Road crosses Bradfield Beck, a tributary of the River Ant/North Walsham and Dilham Canal. They are positioned either side of the road and were shown on a military map of 1918 which marked the other fixed defences along the river/canal and so may have been part of the stop line system. The northern of the two pillboxes at Bradfield is adjacent to land managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

Details

Two pillboxes constructed between 1916 and 1918.

MATERIALS: concrete block walls with concrete roof slab on steel beams and steel door and gun loop shutters.

PLAN: circular with one entrance to a single internal space.

INTERIOR: the northern pillbox is a single open-plan space with un-rendered blockwork walls and roof painted white. The gun loops all have steel frames and one retains the central sliding shutter section with a ring for securing it. The doors have a bolt on the inside attached to them. There are two holes in the roof which might have held ventilation pipes.

EXTERIOR: the pillbox to the north of Common Road is situated close to the road. The pillbox is circular with concrete block walls roughly pointed and topped by blocks with curved outer faces set around the roof slab. The roof slab is a single piece of cast concrete. There are five gun loops set roughly equally around the pillbox with one close to the a low, narrow doorway facing south which has its original steel double doors with a bolt and hasp attached to the outside.

The pillbox to the south of Common Road is largely hidden in vegetation but from a recent photograph appears to be similar in construction and detail to the northern pillbox.

Selected Sources

Books and journals

Bird, C (Author), Silent Sentinels: The Story of Norfolk's Fixed Defences in the Twentieth Century, (1999)

Kent, P (Author), Fortifications of East Anglia , (1988), 185-87

Storey, N R (Author), Norfolk Goes to War , (2014), 46

Websites

Defences of Britain, accessed 26 August 2022 from

https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/dob/ai_r.cfm

Great War Britain Norfolk 1914-18 blog: Norfolk roundhouses of the great war, accessed 24 August 2022 from

<https://stevesmith1944.wordpress.com/2015/08/20/norfolk-round-houses-of-the-great-war/>

Norfolk Heritage Explorer, accessed 25 August 2022 from

<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF32557-World-War-One-pillbox&Index=2&RecordCount=1&SessionID=6da70b73-24e3-430c-8f1b-595db43461eb>

Norfolk Heritage Explorer, accessed 25 August 2022 from

<https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF32556-World-War-One-pillbox&Index=2&RecordCount=1&SessionID=234ded0a-8c87-4d7f-b28c-dc89ba5684ab>

Map**National Grid Reference:** TG2717533422

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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1493291_1.pdf