

Refurbishing the Nunthorpe World War 1 War Memorial

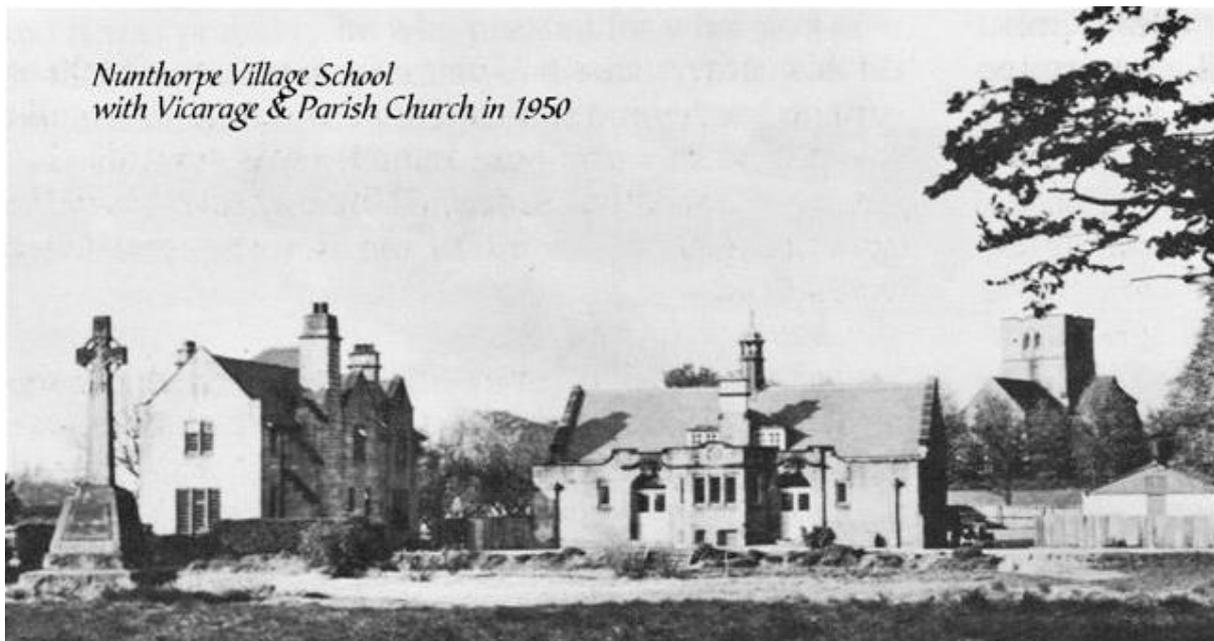
Completion Report

Introduction

Nunthorpe has two War memorials, the World War 1 memorial is next to Stokesly Road and the World War II memorial is within the Lych Gate leading towards St Marys Church.

The World War 1 memorial is within a small garden area. This garden has been looked after by Nunthorpe Parish Council for a number of years, primarily maintained by the Harrison family, John and Pauline, who tidied up the garden on a regular basis and replanted when considered necessary.

The World War 1 memorial was originally built in 1921 at a cost of £286.16s.3p. The cost was covered by public subscription plus an unnamed donor. Sir Arthur donated the land on which the memorial was built. A metal plaque was mounted on the memorial with sixteen names of the fallen.



1950

Purpose of refurbishing

To emphasise with increased visibility the presence of the stone memorial cross in an improved and simple landscape setting on behalf of the Nunthorpe community.

Background to refurbishment

In 2014 a housing developer purchased the land surrounding the memorial, this land was originally the allotment gardens belonging to the St Marys Parochial Church Council with the War Memorial plot owned by the Diosece of York.

When the housing proposal plans were first produced the developer made an undertaking to the Parish Council to retain the visual aspect of the memorial area as seen from the Stokesley Road. This aspect was considered part of the heritage setting of the War Memorial along with the Grade II listed Vicarage and the Locally Listed Old School House façade located in the background.

The Parish Council considered the retention of this setting was absolutely vital as part of Nunthorpe's heritage, much appreciated by the community and also by those who passed along Stokesley Road viewing an essential part of Nunthorpe's history.



2016

Following approval of the housing development Middlesbrough Council planners insisted in 2015 that the new houses be protected from road noise and instructed the developer to erect a 2 metre close boarded wooden fence along the housing boundary facing Stokesley Road, albeit with a small gap in front of the war memorial.

Not only did this fence impact on the visual presence of the memorial, it also took away the valuable heritage setting of the memorial also the previous composite view of the Grade II Vicarage and the Locally Listed School House. This blight on an important view was vigorously fought by the Parish Council but with no success.

The construction of the fence has been regretted by the Nunthorpe community and the Parish Council had begun to look into ways in which to mitigate the negative impact on this valuable Nunthorpe asset.



2017

By coincidence, in early 2017, two Parish Councillors and a resident attended a Civic Voice training workshop in the Dorman Museum on recording the condition of War Memorials. Attending this workshop inspired the attendees to cast a newly trained eye on the two Nunthorpe War Memorials.

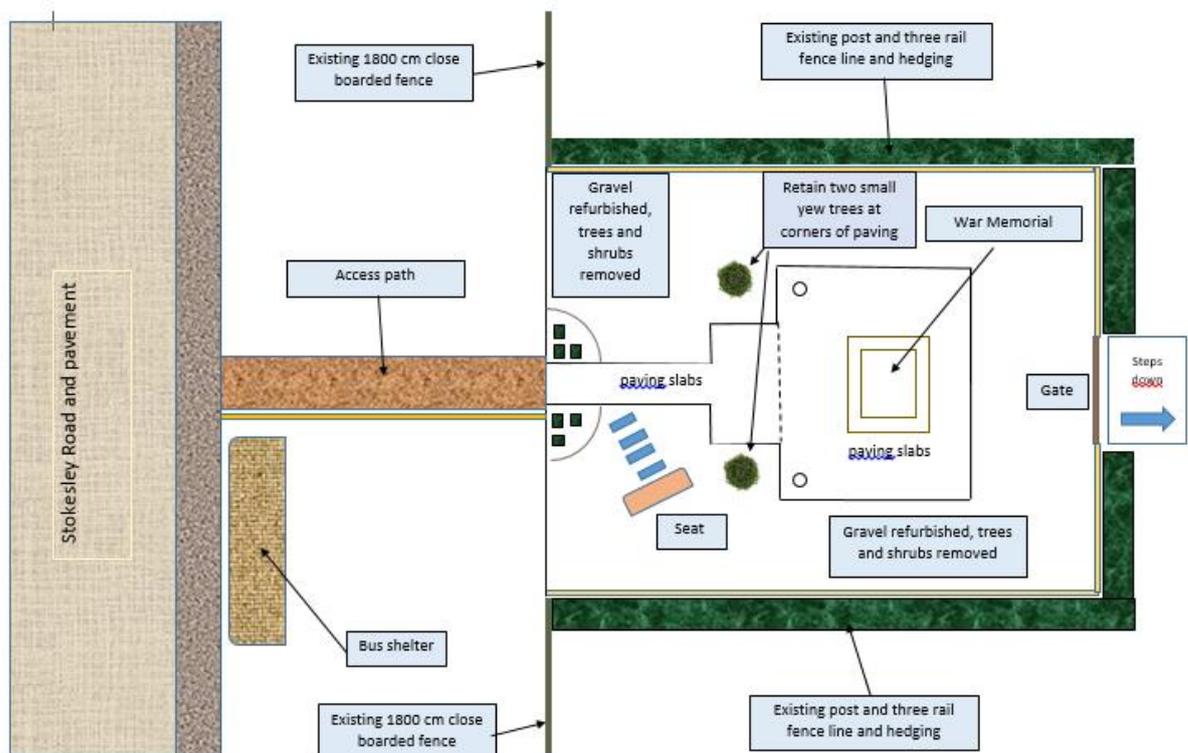
When recording the condition of both Nunthorpe memorials it was discovered only the World War II memorial had a Historic England Grade II listing, the World War I memorial had received no listing status at all. It was presumed by proceeding with the English Heritage listing process there may be some way to persuade Middlesbrough Council to consider alternative methods in reducing road noise affecting the new dwellings

The listing process commenced in March 2017 and succeeded in obtaining a Grade II status in September 2017. Unfortunately the listing had no influence on Middlesbrough Council. The next step was to investigate the improvement of the now sadly diminished setting of the memorial on Stokesley Road.

The refurbishing project

When conducting the condition survey it was found some work was required to restore some of the almost one hundred years old lime mortaring on the memorial itself. At the same time it was decided the flagstone path leading to the memorial also needed restoring with some of the flags needing reset and re-mortared to avoid a tripping hazard. It was also considered the garden area would benefit from a complete renewal with new low level planting more in keeping with a required open view of the memorial from Stokesley Road. Nunthorpe Parish Council agreed to fund the refurbishing project.

WW1 Memorial site, Stokesley Road, Nunthorpe.



David Leyland January 2019

Initial agreement to proceed with the project was given by the St Marys Parochial Church Council and Middlesbrough Council.

An expert masonry restorer Mr. Nigel Copsey of the 'Earth Stone and Lime Company' was engaged to carry out the work on the stone memorial and a local Nunthorpe landscaper, Mr Anthony Wadsworth (A. Wadsworth Landscape Ltd) was engaged to complete the landscaping works.

Further planting of yew hedging was considered along the frontage of the wooden fence to break up the austere visual aspect on either side of the War Memorial gap, as well planting twelve White birch trees in the greenspace between the fence and Stokesley Road. Unfortunately, Middlesbrough Council then introduced a

considerable amount of bureaucracy and potential extra cost in proceeding with this part of the proposal which was eventually abandoned.

The below photograph shows the present status of the War Memorial area in January 2019, providing a new raised decorative gravel bed to replace the older gravel with a new under-gravel membrane to inhibit unwanted weed growth. There was some planting of small yew and conifer bushes within the gravel bed. The landscaper will be planting further yew shrubs to both sides of the pathway where it meets the grassed area.

When eventually completed it is considered the opening out of the vista towards the memorial from Stokesley Road and the sensitive planting will at least mitigate some of the visual impairment caused by the wooden fence. However, it is rather sad the previous composite view of all three significant listed structures - the memorial, the Vicarage and the Old School façade - has gone forever.



January 2019

The landscaping scheme has been simplified to reduce future maintenance involving a yearly trimming of the shrubs to retain a non-intrusive view of the stone memorial. There will also be an annual collection of fallen leaves and generally tidying up of the memorial area.

Nunthorpe Parish Council has contributed £ 3,915 towards the refurbishing costs.

David Leyland, Nunthorpe Parish Council.

Bob Mullen, resident.

January 2019.