

News Release



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THORNEY SOCIETY PUBLISH AWARD WINNING AUDIT OF THE VILLAGE

Thorney Society Annual Dinner, - Friday 18th February 2005

An award-winning assessment of the value of the built heritage in Thorney will be published at the Annual Dinner of the Thorney Society on Friday 18th February. The Thorney audit is one of those which helped to win a Green Apple environmental award in a national competition in 2004.

Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) was commissioned by Castor & Ailsworth parish councils, and by The Thorney Society, to pilot the unique method of surveying and recording their built environment and local heritage. PECT has developed the audit which will, for the first time, allow villagers to undertake assessments of their local built environment that will enable them to plan for future development. Information from the audit has already been used to support the draft Thorney Village Design Statement.

Dorothy Halfhide, Secretary of the Thorney Society said: "The residents of the Thorney were heavily involved in the audit process. We have discovered a vast amount of information about the history of the village and the number of changes it has experienced over the past 400 years. It will allow us to plan for future development and will be influential in shaping the policies for development and conservation of the villages. We have also commissioned a photographic archive to illustrate the range of buildings and their settings in the village."

Members of the Thorney Society, local councillors and friends will be attending the event.

Sarah Fowler, Chief Executive of PECT said: "The built environment audit has been tested in the villages of Castor, Ailsworth and Thorney and has proven robust and reliable. The process has the advantage of not requiring assistance from town planners, architects and urban designers. PECT is now seeking to make the audit process available to other communities to help them understand and plan for the future of their towns and villages."

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Notes to Editor:

1. The Thorney Society is a Registered Charity, founded in 1985, which works to promote interest in the history and environment of the village, and runs the Thorney Heritage Museum (open on Sundays between Easter and the end of September, and by appointment at other times). Tours of the village, including information gained from the Built Environment Audit, are also arranged. www.thorney-museum.org.uk

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2. Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) is an independent charitable trust working with over 200 partners representing business, local authorities, voluntary and environmental groups. We undertake practical projects that demonstrate sustainable development as a practical solution to improving the quality of life for the people and wildlife of Peterborough

3. The Built Environment Audit was commissioned and co-funded by the communities of Castor, Ailsworth and Thorney with the majority of funding from the Countryside Agency Local Heritage Initiative. The Parish Councils and the Thorney Society wanted a process that would minimise planning issues becoming contentious by, wherever possible, ensuring decisions could be based on hard information and data. PECT was commissioned to develop the audit methodology. The survey work was undertaken by the villagers. The Audit allows, for the first time, the lay person to undertake an objective and replicable assessment of the quality and fabric of their local built environment. This process provides statistically robust baseline data on the built environment of the villages. Such data is of intrinsic value as a historical document and can be used to help inform debate within, and policy for, future development within the villages based on knowledge rather than conjecture. For example, the audit has been used to develop Village Design Statements, which can be adopted as planning guidance.

For further information please contact:

Sarah Fowler, Chief Executive

Peterborough Environment City Trust, High Street, Fletton, Peterborough PE2 8DT

Tel: 01733 **760887** email: **pect@peterborough.gov.uk**

www.pect.net