

FIG, Sydney, Australia
14th April, 2010



Identifying clay- construction buildings in a Norfolk market town



Malvern Tipping, B.Sc., MRICS.








**What will
Cittaslow
do for Diss?**

Cittaslow is an international campaign originating in Italy which focuses on the importance of quality of life and everything local.

Diss became a Cittaslow town in March 2006 and focuses on improving its score against 60 Cittaslow Assessment Criteria.

CITTASLOW VALUES

- Support for local products and businesses
- Community decision-making
- Encouraging our young people
 - Valuing our elderly
- Good services for visitors
- Caring for the environment
 - Healthy lifestyle
- Preserving Diss's heritage
- Quality of life for all





Framlingham Crown Hotel (1553): Wattle and daub in situ

A long history of wattle and daub in East Anglia



Two examples from Halesworth:
Circa 1350



1480/1500

Clay lump buildings in East Anglia: Mount Street, Diss.



Early history of unfired clay blocks

- Mesopotamia 3000 BC
- Pisé known to the Romans
- Mexico – Adobe
- Gorffon's 1772 treatise on pisé
- 1784 Scots build pisé at Tsarkoe Selo, Russia
- 1793 Nicolai L'vov designing pisé peasant dwellings at Nickolskoe, Torzhok

Clay Lump in East Anglia

- Joseph Austin's Cottage, Gt. Shelford, Cambridgeshire in 1791 (McCann).
- Term first used 1821 by John Denson.
- Only became widespread in parts of Norfolk and Suffolk in 1830s-1840s (McCann).
- Therefore, origins in Cambridgeshire.
- Brick Tax: 1784, 1794 & 1803. Abolished 1850.
- Correlation between Brick Tax & Clay lump?

Observing and collecting the data

- Teams of two sent into the field to observe and record data for clay-construction in Diss.
- Comprised three chartered surveyors, a chartered architect, an earth builder and a clay products builders' merchant.
- No formal training.
- No briefing or de-briefing.
- Data entered on record sheets in the field.

The data observed

- Date and names of the data collectors.
- Address.
- Clay lump or wattle and daub.
- Attachment.
- Age.
- Roof details.
- External wall covering.
- Plinth details.
- Window and door details.

Recording the data

- IT consultant – digital data-base.
- Definitive plan (1:300) on A1 sheets for property identification.
- Errors on the plan.
- Checking of each property recorded by an expert.

Disseminating the knowledge

- Planned conference for built environment professionals did not take place.
- Smaller numbers of built environment professionals attended EARTHA lectures.
- New build sub-committee.
- New EARTHA leaflets and pamphlets.
- Updated & improved website.
- Equipping the builders.

Conclusions

- Local Authority now has gazetteer & definitive map of Diss Clay lump, and wattle & daub.
- Such buildings to be flagged up.
- Builders with technical skills.
- Need to date the buildings in Diss:-
 - Prove or disprove McCann's hypothesis.
 - Or if a correlation between Brick Tax & Clay lump
- Hone survey techniques – address validity.
- Clay lump surveys elsewhere.

Any questions?

