

Thetford Castle Motte saved for future generations

Thetford Castle is a nationally significant scheduled monument and has been in the ownership of Thetford Town since 2008. It is one of only five Iron Age hillforts in Norfolk and due to its previous lack of management and developing erosion scars, the site was placed upon the national monuments at risk register.

In 2014, Thetford Town Council entered into a 10 year Environmental Stewardship Scheme which provided funding to improve the management of this site, along with others of natural and built heritage in the town. In agreement with Natural England, Historic England and Norfolk Historic Environment Services, a plan was agreed to install a stairway to the top to prevent further erosion of this main access route, provide safe access for the public, and to reduce the use of other access routes, leading to further erosion, in other areas.

In 2016, planning permission from Breckland District Council and consent from Historic England was requested and approved. A short consultation was held and the majority of responders were positive about a new accessible route to the top of the mound. The steps will help visitors enjoy the views from the top, giving greater understanding of the historical significance of the site, and orientation panels placed at the top will also guide visitors to other heritage sites in the town.



The stairway is designed to minimise the number of foundations required on this scheduled site and provide a durable construction for many years. This stairway is constructed of composite fibre glass which is similar cost to metal in construction, very durable, suffers no corrosion and has no scrap value. Metal was not chosen as it can interfere with the site's chemical integrity as it corrodes and has a scrap value making it attractive for removal. Wooden steps required more foundations and have greater need of costly maintenance and replacement. The design will be for a long straight run of steps and the council has sought expert advice regarding the health and safety issues. The majority of the costs of the steps have been funded by a grant from Natural England.

The site is also important for its plant species and further works are planned to help remove the scrub from the motte to encourage chalk species including pyramidal orchids back to the site.

We hope you understand the need for this work and we look forward to providing you with improved access and better care of this important national monument. If you have further questions contact Roz Barnett (Amenities Land and Property Officer) Tel: 01842 754247 email: mail@thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk For further information on Scheduled Ancient Monuments please contact Historic England 0370 333 0607