



Qa 04256

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To: MR PATTISON

From: SIR KENNETH BERRILL

*Nick - could you deal
Ms. Hardy with
writing the PM.
Announcement on NHF
is ^{not} due ~~for~~ until
out.*

National Heritage Fund

NBPM MS TR 14/9

1. Thank you for your minute of 7 September enclosing a copy of Mr Edmonds' letter of 6 September to you and asking if I had any comments on it.

2. Public ownership of Heveningham has indeed not been very successful. It has been run by the National Trust for DOE at a cost to the DOE of rather under £50,000 a year, but the National Trust has become increasingly frustrated with its relations with DOE and recently informed DOE that it was unwilling to continue to run it on the present basis. It was this that probably precipitated DOE's decision to sell.

3. However, the National Trust did indicate that they would willingly assume full ownership of Heveningham provided an endowment was provided. Such an endowment could not be made under the rules of the National Land Fund but will be possible with the creation of the National Heritage Fund, and critics of the proposed sale will almost certainly point this out.

4. If, as is not unlikely, a suitable private purchaser is not forthcoming, it would, of course, still be possible at that stage to ask the Trustees of the new Heritage Fund to provide an endowment so that it could be accepted by the National Trust, but there could well have been a public argument in the meantime.

5. I agree that it would be useful to forewarn the Prime Minister of the possible publicity connecting the two and the adverse effect it might well have on the reception of the Government's proposals for the National Heritage Fund. Criticism could well be spearheaded by Mr Marcus Binney,

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Chairman of Save Britain's Heritage, who led the opposition to the previous Government's decision on Mentmore. Mr Binney is particularly likely to take up this cause since his late wife was a member of the Vanneck family to whom Heveningham formerly belonged.

6. I am sending a copy of this to Sir John Hunt (together with your minute and Mr Edmonds' letter).

KB

SIR KENNETH BERRILL

12 September 1979

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JS
Home Affairs

10 DOWNING STREET

B/F 12.9.79.

From the Private Secretary

SIR KENNETH BERRILL

Thank you for your minute of 4 September about the National Heritage Fund.

I raised these issues with the Secretary of State for the Environment's Office, and I enclose a copy of the reply that I have now received. Subject to any comment which may come from the Chancellor of the Duchy's Office, it would appear that the National Heritage Fund proposals, and the Heveningham Hall proposals, have not been developed in isolation, and need not complicate one another.

I still think that it would be useful to forewarn the Prime Minister of the possible publicity connecting the two. Do you have any further comment in the light of the Environment response, before we mention this to the Prime Minister?

MAP

7 September 1979



2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

6 September 1979

Dear Mike

I understand from our discussion yesterday morning there may be some concern that our proposed sale of Heveningham Hall in Suffolk could conflict with our declared policy regarding the National Heritage, and the proposals currently to be announced for the new National Heritage Fund.

The conflict is more apparent than real. Our aim is to keep country houses and their contents as far as possible in private ownership. The National Heritage Fund will act as a safety net to rescue those houses where the owners cannot or no longer wish to live in and maintain them, and where no new private owner is forthcoming.

The Government bought Heveningham in 1970 as a holding operation to keep house and Wyatt furniture together.

Public ownership has not been very successful and has been expensive. We have had some indications that there might be private buyers willing to take the house on with the furniture. My Secretary of State believes that we are right in seeing whether there is a market for such properties, and that this does not run counter to our purposes in the National Heritage Fund.

I am sending a copy of this to the Private Secretaries to the Chancellor of the Duchy and to the Chief Secretary.

Yours sincerely
David Edmunds

D A EDMONDS
Private Secretary

Mike Pattison Esq
10 Downing Street

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Qa 04246

To: MR PATTISON

From: SIR KENNETH BERRILL

The National Heritage

1. In his recent minute to the Prime Minister on the National Heritage Fund the Home Secretary sought the Prime Minister's agreement to an early public statement on this subject. The statement, which is still the subject of interdepartmental discussions, is likely to receive a welcome, if only a muted one, from the Heritage Lobby.
2. However, I see from item 28 of the enclosure to Mr Jacob's letter of 23 August to you on Forthcoming Announcements and Publications that DOE are planning to announce that Heveningham Hall, an important Adam house in Suffolk which was purchased with the aid of the National Land Fund (NLF) some years ago, should be resold. Such a sale of a house previously purchased by the NLF is, I believe, a new departure.
3. The current National Heritage Fund debate was triggered, you will remember by the last Government's refusal to purchase Mentmore - a much less distinguished house than Heveningham. So criticism of the Heveningham decision could well be loud. The criticism is likely to be all the stronger in that the Government's proposals on the National Heritage Fund empower the Trustees of the Fund to provide the National Trust with capital endowments to enable it to accept just such houses as Heveningham.
4. My concern is that the Prime Minister and other Ministers are aware that it is quite likely that a positive public response to an announcement on the National Heritage Fund could well be largely dissipated by the proposed subsequent announcement on Heveningham. The responsible officials

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in the Treasury, with whom we spoke, had not taken this connection on board, and Heveningham has not been mentioned in the recent Ministerial correspondence on the National Heritage Fund. So you might wish to check with Mr Heseltine's and Mr St John Stevas's offices that their Ministers have appreciated the connection and are content.

5. I am sending a copy of this minute to Sir John Hunt.

KB.

4 September 1979

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