Officers and Committee - Trust Annual Report 1964

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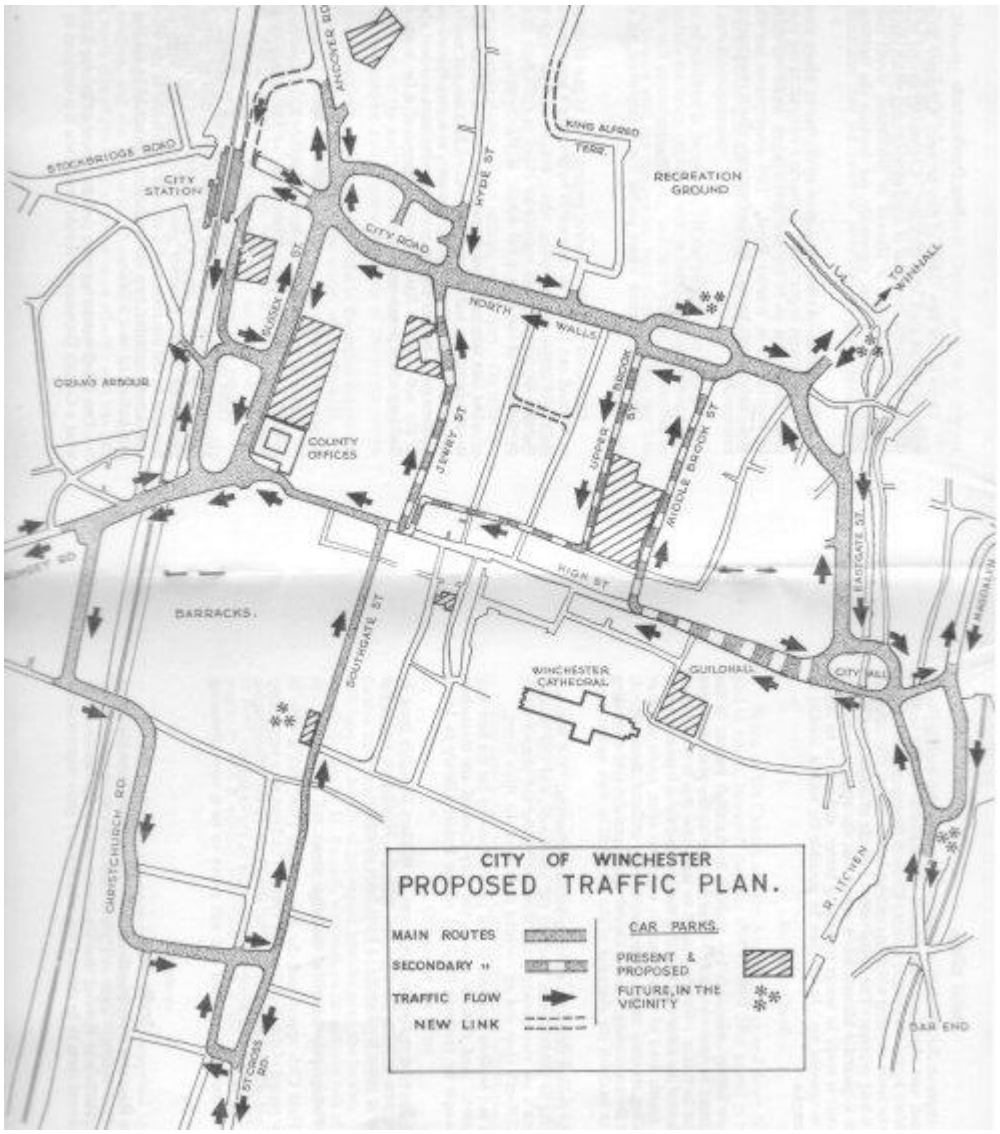
	Mr G. Gore-Langton	60 Hyde Street, Winchester
	Mr R.L.P. Jowitt	Gore Grange, New Milton, Hants
	Miss C.A. Kingsmill, J.P.	2 Ranelagh Road, Winchester
	Sir John McNee, M.D., D.S.C., F.R.C.P.	Barton Edge, Worthy Road, Winchester
	Mr W.H. Rendell	Sunnyside, Twyford
	Mrs Nowell Salmon	Hyde Cottage, Winchester
	Mr R. Sawyer, F.R.I.C.S.	44 St Cross Road, Winchester
	Mr D.J. Smith, F.R.I.C.S.	78 Parchment Street, Winchester
	Mr R.D. Utting, A.R.I.B.A.	Chalk Hills, Crawley, Nr Winchester
	Mr W.D.R. Weller	25 St Thomas Street, Winchester
	Miss Margaret Wells	St Olafs, Cheriton Road, Winchester

Traffic - Trust Annual Report 1964

Traffic is a topic which has been in the forefront during the past year. The publication of the Buchanan Report produced some bold ideas to meet the threat of traffic chaos on a national scale, and forcefully presented the magnitude of the question. In July the problem was brought home to the citizens of Winchester by the publication of the City Council's proposals. We are pleased to be able to reproduce a plan illustrating these proposals. This plan originally appeared in the Hampshire Chronicle, and is printed here by kind permission of that newspaper.



City of Winchester Proposed Traffic Plan

The Committee of the Preservation Trust discussed the proposals and a special meeting was called for members and their friends in the Friary Hall in Canon Street. The hall was packed and the two hundred available chairs proved insufficient. Those who could not get seats stood at the back of the hall. This large support was an indication of the keen interest and anxiety which had been caused by the City Council's proposals.

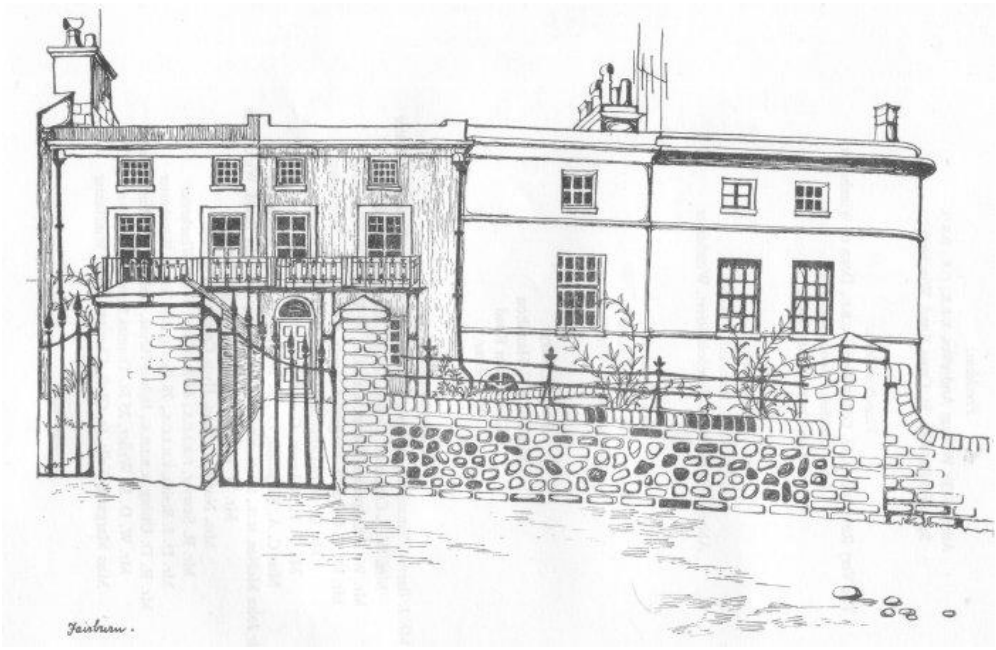
The meeting was opened by the Chairman, who pointed out how fortunate we were in Winchester compared with some other Cathedral cities, which were now indistinguishable from any other town except for the immediate vicinity of the Cathedral, with all the other historic buildings and streets cleared away.

This must not be allowed to happen in Winchester, unique in having a combination of ancient City and magnificent river landscape which is rarely found today.

The Chairman then outlined what a Preservation Trust could and could not do. First of all, it could combat ignorance and apathy, so that a large body of the citizens could form an enlightened public opinion. In this context it is not only outstanding architecture which must be retained, but also the humbler building which together help to give character.

A parallel was then drawn between the present proposals and the coming of the railway in the 19th century. The first plan was for the railway to come right through the city between Jewry Street and the Westgate arch. Fortunately wiser counsels prevailed and a cutting, which we all know, was made for the railway higher up the hill. This change preserved the city from the worst effects of the railway age while allowing the benefits of the new service. There can be no doubt that the second plan was more expensive than the first, but this was not allowed to influence the decision.

There are similarities in the present situation. It is undoubtedly necessary to have some way of absorbing the increased traffic of the future. It is the function of the Trust to try and ensure that the necessary new roads are right for Winchester and the whole community.



The drawing, by Mary Faiburn, shows the four houses overlooking the railway, at the Romsey Road end of St. James' Terrace. These houses would disappear if the road, proposed in the city plan, linking Romsey Road and St. Cross Road, were to be constructed

As we drive about the country today, each one of us in our own car, the right and freedom to do so has often been achieved by the sacrifice of individual liberties, for the common good. But each one of us living by the roadside does so under the constant threat that his particular property may one day be subject to compulsory purchase for a road improvement scheme.

The Trust cannot protect the interests of any one individual, but it can try to ensure that the result of such far reaching plans is in the best interests of the whole community. The meeting had been called to allow people to make constructive suggestions. There was no doubt that a traffic plan was necessary, but it was probable that the proposed plan could be improved in many ways.

The Chairman ended by reading a statement which the Committee had authorised him to make at the Open Meeting called by the Town Clerk for July 28th. This statement was subsequently modified and enlarged at a further committee meeting, in the light of the opinions expressed from the floor. The Vice-Chairman took the opportunity of reading the City Council minutes which dealt with the traffic proposals.

The final version of the prepared statement which was read out by the Chairman at the Town Meeting on July 28th is given below.

An explanation and amplification is given after some of the items, so that members of the Trust may have fuller information on the issues which guided the Committee in drawing up the statement.

Members of the Trust and many others would urge the City Council to press for a western By-Pass as early as possible. This to be in addition to the Kingsworthy¬Andover Road link due to be started in 1965.
(The present by-pass is to be extended from Kingsworthy to Three Maids Hill on the Andover Road in 1965.
Originally engineered for speeds of 50 miles an hour, the existing part of the by-pass is quite inadequate by modern standards.
A new additional western by-pass will be necessary to deal with the increased volume of traffic from Southampton to the North and it would also serve the western traffic leading towards Stockbridge.)

The Trust would wish to see an exhaustive investigation of the possibility of constructing a road over, or immediately alongside, on the west of the railway, in preference to the suggested new road connecting Romsey Road and St. Cross Road. Such a road could by-pass the village of St. Cross, whose preservation is of vital concern to the Trust. It is felt most strongly that the published proposal can only lead to the destruction of St. Cross by the necessity of widening the road. The Trust also wishes to see St. James' Terrace preserved intact.
(The weakest part of the plan is undoubtedly the new road connecting Romsey Road with St. Cross Road. This is unsatisfactory because it has too many corners and is 54 feet wide. This is one way only. Traffic in the opposite direction has to travel through Southgate Street, which is much narrower, and both streams of traffic have to pass through St. Cross which is narrower still.
This can only result in one thing—the destruction of the village of St. Cross. This the Trust would vigorously oppose and advocates a plan which allows the traffic to flow

right round St. Cross. It also seems wrong to disturb the quiet and important residential area served by Christchurch Road and Edgar Road. This is being quietly redeveloped in a sensible way by allowing new building and improvements where there is ample space.)
The French resort of Cannes on the Cote d'Azur has solved its difficult traffic problem by the simple yet bold plan to raise a roof over the railway track and run a motor road along the top. Cars speed along the roadway on four traffic lanes, with trains running as usual beneath.

There is strong support for the proposal that all through heavy traffic should be forbidden in the centre of the town. This has been done already in a number of other towns in accordance with the Road Traffic Act of 1960. In this connection consideration should also be given to the traffic problems generated by the parking of heavy goods vehicles in the coach station. Another site on the existing by-pass would be an advantage.
(No further explanation of this point seems necessary, but its importance was brought home to everyone when a heavily loaded lorry got out of control in the High Street during August, and ran the wrong way down the one way section below Jewry Street. It is miraculous that this occurrence was not accompanied by a great loss of life.)

The Traffic Plan is not only a Highways matter but is closely linked with the planning of the City as a whole. The siting of business premises has a great influence on the generation of traffic.
(During the past ten years there has been a revolution in retailing methods in the main shopping area. Although the number of square feet of business premises remains the same, the area has been made far more paroductive and caters for many more people. This involves more goods coming in by lorry, and more cars used by shoppers to collect the goods. This situation has been met by creating the one way system between the High Street and St. George's Street, and providing massive car parks.
The aim of keeping traffic out of central Winchester cannot be realized if a separate planning authority, acting independently, allows further development of business premises. Planning and traffic problems must be worked out together. It seems that saturation point has now been reached for the present road system, but great improvement would result from a western by-pass.)

It is questionable whether the new roads need to be so wide. Wide roads are not suitable for a city of the character of Winchester.
(The effects of disproportionate road widths have already been shown in the note under 2 above.)

In the proposed plan, it is observed that any properties belonging to the Government or Local Authorities have been carefully avoided. These properties already belong to the whole community and their use may quite possibly provide better facilities for improved traffic conditions, than the smaller properties of private individuals. The difficulties of negotiating with these bodies should not be allowed to act as a deterrent. For example the part of the Barracks bordering the railway line would plainly provide a much better route than the one shown in the proposed plan.

Sir Keith Joseph, Minister of Housing and Local Government, is at present enquiring into the position of ancient towns in relation to modern traffic. Winchester should apply to the Minister for inclusion in the study, and in any case no action should be taken by the City to implement the present plan or modifications until the Minister's report is published.

Finally the Trust considers that the order of priorities in Winchester's traffic plan is as follows:—

The completion of the Kingsworthy-Andover Road link.

The construction of a new western by-pass to the best modern standards.

The overall planning of the City with due regard to traffic generation of all new developments.

(The order of priorities is important. If the present plan were put into operation, especially the much criticised section between Romsey Road and St. Cross, traffic will immediately flow in, and there will be no incentive to build a western by-pass until the damage has been done, and it is too late to save St. Cross.)

The Wessex Hotel - Trust Annual Report 1964

The Wessex Hotel was completed early in the year and is an undoubted asset to Winchester. An hotel on an island site is an infrequently encountered problem of the present building, it must be admitted that it is not entirely satisfactory. On reflection the decision to break up the forms into sections so that the mass of the whole in no way competes with the Cathedral, has not been very well achieved, but it must is be observed that large masses of unrelieved plain brickwork are extremely unattractive. Traditionally, brickwork has been set off with interesting fenestration, providing incident and light and shade, and these qualities are entirely lacking. The use of flint, a local building material, on the south front also seems somewhat clumsy, not blending well with the more modern and effective treatment of the rooms above.

The most extraordinary feature, however, is to be found in the arches supporting the bedroom wing. These give the impression that the matter of the drainage, and how to get it down to ground level, had been completely forgotten in the original plans. As far as one could see during the period of construction, the form of the reinforced concrete columns and arches had some relevance to the superstructure, and one said to oneself "Ah! when we can see the whole thing without the wooden screens, perhaps it will look all right." But then a motley collection of bulbous drainpipes began to festoon themselves down the inner columns, and these had to be hidden by an elephantine blue brick outer column having no relevance to the essential structure or the arches above, ending as they do quite abruptly. Then to make everything match, these outer columns having no drainpipes, were subjected to the same treatment but to smaller diameter.

The opportunity of seeing the Cathedral Close from a pleasant arcaded courtyard seems to have misfired, and the impression from the Close is no happier. Curiously enough, the north side of the building seems more effective and less self-conscious than the main front facing the Cathedral, where presumably the architect was trying hardest.

New Developments - Trust Annual Report 1964

There is one new block of flats between Kingsgate Street and St. Cross Road which is not an asset to Winchester. Completely devoid of any architectural merit, this block destroys any sense of good environment which this or any other city should have. Such buildings, if allowed to proliferate, would completely ruin the area. The Trust must protest vigorously, not because the building is new but because it is unworthy of the City.

This matter of creating a good environment where people can live happily is one of the utmost importance. In marked contrast to the block of flats noted above, some praise must go to the new development which has taken place in the grounds of Northlands in Worthy Road. This development has used the undulating site and existing trees to very good advantage. Such imaginative development must be commended.

Winnall - Trust Annual Report 1964

If the environment where people live is important, so also is the place where they work.

Compared with the industrial centres, built as part of the new towns, the factories at Winnall can hardly be claimed to be creating a good environment. To regard an industrial centre as something which can be tucked away out of sight with little thought for planning and appearance takes us right back in the 19th century. The development of this area is not worthy of Winchester.

The idea that industrial development must of necessity be drab and uninteresting is entirely wrong, and when tall blocks of flats are put nearby it is even more inexcusable. Things are improving, however, at a very belated stage. The Corporation flats are much better than the private development criticised above. Also the frontage of the new Conder factory gives a glimpse of a far better approach to Industrial Building which is welcome.

Building High - Trust Annual Report 1964

The new Police Headquarters in Romsey Road have come in for some adverse comment. It is complained that many of the distant views of Winchester have been spoilt.

There can be no objection to building high in general. Modern building techniques make it inevitable, and it saves a great deal of spread into the surrounding countryside. But the top of a hill is probably not the right place for an unremarkable rectangular block. However good the textures and finish of a building, they are invisible in the distance, and if there is no interest in the whole mass it becomes an unwelcome intrusion into the landscape. It would be far less visually objectionable in a hollow or on a hillside.

One is left wondering what part the County Planning Authority plays in deciding what a County Department should have when it is designed by the County Architect.

Better Design - Trust Annual Report 1964

Any attempt to improve the standard of design in present day building is to be warmly commended, and the Trust was pleased to receive a booklet entitled "Better Design" produced by the Hampshire County Council Planning Officer giving examples of some of the better building which has taken place recently. To influence design in building is a long process. The conservative attitude of house purchasers and Building Societies is generally blamed, but it seems that the stage is now being reached where the public is ready to accept something better, and it is to be hoped that the process can be speeded up. It will then be possible for such a booklet to show much better examples.

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41 High Street - Trust Annual Report 1964

This property, now empty, occupies a key position in the High Street. It has previously been mentioned in these reports and there has, during the past year, been some uncertainty about its future. We are pleased to learn that this is now secure. The property is to become the office of a Building Society and its character is to be retained without the drastic kind of reconstruction which so often spoils shops of this type. The building requires extensive repair, having suffered from neglect. Plans are in hand for the restoration, and we are extremely grateful that a building which does so much to establish the character of the City will be with us for many years to come.

Preservation at the present time owes much to outside influences. The National Provincial Bank is being completely rebuilt behind the old façade, and this is most important. Woolworth's are reconstructing the frontage of the old chapel which was formerly above Gifford's shop and an essential feature of the High Street.

It all shows what can be done by goodwill and persuasion—by far the best way of achieving preservation. And then, of course, the City Council are themselves setting a splendid example by restoring the front of the Public Library in Jewry Street.

Finally we would like to give a word of welcome to William Deacon's Bank in the High Street. Their new building fits quite well into the Winchester scene, but the quantity of marble at street level seems to have been overdone.

Photographic Record of the High Street - Trust Annual Report 1964

The Hampshire Field Club approached the Preservation Trust with a view to making a photographic record of the High Street in 1964. The Trust were very happy to assist in this excellent scheme and obtained the assistance of the Photographic Society, who very readily agreed and made a contribution to the expenses.

The record is now nearing completion and will prove to be a very interesting and useful document.

Traffic Signs - Trust Annual Report 1964

Earlier in the year there was correspondence in the Hampshire Chronicle about the appearance of 13 "No Waiting" signs in Hyde Street in a very short distance. It appears that the regulations in force at that time necessitated that number, but a subsequent change allowed them to be thinned out, which was a great improvement.

Sally Port - Trust Annual Report 1964

The Trust has been concerned that the Sally Port, one of the few remaining entitled relics of the old Castle, might be endangered with the new developments connected with the construction of the new Law Courts. Correspondence took place with the County Council and Architect, and it was learnt that no detailed plans of the area had been made yet, but it was hoped to incorporate this important passage way in the new scheme. It is a point which the Trust will keep in mind.

St. Peter Chesil - Trust Annual Report 1964

Work on the Church and the Appeal have slowed down this year. We are now glad to report, however, that the City Council have agreed to make a grant of £500 and to make a further loan of up to £2,500 for the restoration. The grant has been approved by the Historic Buildings Council and it was in the period of these negotiations that work has had to cease. This is because work put in hand before approval was given by the Historic Buildings Council would have been disqualified for grant.

Work will shortly be resumed on the east window and wall which will be a great improvement in Chesil Street, and complete the most essential part of the restoration.

The money will be advanced by the Corporation in instalments equivalent to the money raised by the Trust. After the fifth year interest will become payable at current rates on the amount outstanding.

This contribution from the City will be a great help in completing the restoration.

Officers of the Trust - Trust Annual Report 1964

The Committee would like to put on record their indebtedness to Mr. W. D. R. Weller for his period of several years as Hon. Secretary. He worked very hard to further the interests of the Trust, and remains a member of the Committee, so we still have the benefit of his expert knowledge of the locality. He was ably assisted latterly by Mr. W. H. Rendell, who took on the arduous task of being Hon. Membership Secretary. The Trust is greatly indebted to both for arranging the affairs of the Trust so well.

Both secretarial offices are now being combined, and the Trust is very fortunate to have the services of Miss C. de C. Hamilton who has taken up her duties enthusiastically and is warmly welcomed as an active and efficient secretary.

Footnote - Trust Annual Report 1964

Visitors to Winchester have been somewhat surprised to see television aerials appearing over historic buildings in the last few years. It is understood that an aerial placed in an attic is generally just as effective as one put on a roof, with the added advantage to the owners that they are not adversely affected by wind and rain.

The Ruin of Our Cities - Trust Annual Report 1964

by
James Lees-Milne

Reprinted by kind permission of the Sunday Times from the issue of September 20th, 1964

York, Wells, Gloucester, Salisbury, Worcester, Lincoln, Exeter and Hereford. What do these names immediately imply? Some of England's most historic cathedral cities. Sherborne, Farnham, Tenterden, Abingdon, Andover, Poole, Cirencester and Bath. And these? Just a few of our smaller towns which for ancient beauty and character have been admired and loved for hundreds of years by discriminating people. Well, then, my advice to those who have not

visited them is to do so at once—at least to visit those which are still intact. Some like Worcester, Exeter and Gloucester have practically gone already, and are no longer worth looking at as cities. In ten years' time at the present pace of "progress" all England's old cities will have altered beyond recognition. In twenty years they won't be there at all. Instead the cathedral or great church will be left dominating a uniform sea of concrete chunks, commerical, commonplace, and soul-less.

What exactly, you may ask, is happening? If you cannot see for yourself, get hold of the blue, glossy "Property Developer" for 1964 with a Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt., M.P. From it you will learn how a host of giant development companies, their anonymity often protected by the most innocuous-sounding names, proclaim their pious intentions. They phrase them something like this: "The---- ----- Group are undertaking the re-development of (mentioning some ancient borough of renown) with high quality blocks in keeping with the historic background." Or, "---- ---- Properties Ltd. are actively seeking prestige locations with or without planning consents for composite site developments."

Among them are speculators who are hungrily buying up the centres of our cathedral cities and market towns for astronomical sums which individual freeholders simply cannot resist. Reluctant sellers are tempted or cajoled into submission. Sometimes the most recalcitrant are finally driven to capitulate by the appalling devastation left around them. Frequently one firm of speculators will re-sell a whole area to a second for a handsome profit.

Eventually all the buildings of the area, good, bad and indifferent are swept away and replaced with chain-stores, supermarkets and blocks of flats devoid of distinction and all looking alike. Occasionally the replacements boast the tacit approval of the Royal Fine Arts Commission. But as this body has no power of veto and is composed mostly of professional architects its blessing on contemporary building enterprise does not count for much.

It goes without saying that, in the process of wholesale clearance, those buildings of historic interest not yet listed by the Ministry of Housing disappear automatically. Those listed as of historic interest under Grade III enjoy no statutory protection. So far so easy. Those under Grade II and even Grade I can also be got rid of. But it involves rather more time and ingenuity.

The speculator is bound to give the local authority two months' notice of his intention to demolish. The local authority, if it thinks preservation desirable, must refer to the Ministry of Housing, which may then consult various local amenity societies as well as interested parties before submitting the case to its Advisory Committee (Chairman, Sir William Holford, creator of St. Paul's Cathedral precincts). By the time this committee decides whether or not to recommend a preservation order by the Minister the two months have most probably elapsed. If by chance they have not, the owner can still demolish the building on payment of a £100 fine. To a company whose assets may be £100 million this sum is not even a flea-bite.

There are, too, other ways out. Supposing a preservation order has been imposed on a Grade I or Grade II house, the owner has merely to take a few tiles off the roof

and rearrange the gutters so as to conduct the rainwater inside the building. In no time there is rampant dry-rot and decay. Within a year or so the Corporation will agree that owing to advanced dilapidation the building had better come down. Sometimes the owner will put in undesirable, temporary tenants who will work havoc as quickly as an English winter—a quaint form of Rachmanism. Or he will threaten indefinitely to defer development of a whole area so that the Corporation, terrified of losing rates, will consent to demolition of the isolated listed building.

These things are happening all over the country. Are the "development" firms I have described philantropists? Are they engaged upon making a more commodious and beautiful Britain? No. They are out to make money. There are people today amassing stupendous fortunes by systematically destroying our historic cities.

Why then do the local authorities not stop it ? The answer is that few members of Corporations or Urban District Councils seem to care, fewer still to have any sense of history or aesthetics, many have commerical interests in these transactions, and most welcome the accompanying rise of income from rates. Very occasionally there are conscientious City councils, such as those of Chester and Chichester. The majority, in so far as the beauty of their cities is concerned, are indifferent or downright bad, like Worcester, Cirencester and Bath.

The preservation societies are well aware of the scandal of the ancient cities. So are the officials of the Ministry of Housing's historic buildings department, some of whom are well-known architectural historians and nearly all men of knowledge and taste. They are in despair, for they can do nothing. They complain that they are not allowed enough inspectors to complete the listing of historic buildings: that the early lists are skimped and inadequate: that no protection is given to buildings however important their interiors if the façades are dull: that no consideration is given to the group value of streets and squares: that thousands of buildings provisionally listed have already waited for anything up to six years for implementation by the Minister: and that the two months' notice and £100 fine are farcical.

For thirteen years we have had a Conservative Government some of whose members might have been expected to care about England's architectural heritage. There have been precious few signs that they do. It is true that after repeated prodding the present Minister of Housing has announced his intention to make pilot studies of the centres of twelve historic towns. Up to date we have not been told which they are to be. He had better hurry up if he wants to save any. The centre of Worcester. for example, is practically flat. Hitler in a series of Baedeker raids could not have blitzed more effectively the old buildings of this historic and once lovely city than the developers have blitzed the area north of the cathedral. Another plan has been put forward to dispose of the Bridge Street area in the same manner.

The next Government might take a leaf out of the French book. France has recognised that her historic cities are the State's responsibility. They are to be safe¬guarded by Paris, and no longer left to provincial incompetence and half-measures. Negative methods of scheduling have been abandoned. Instead, under a law passed in 1962, a positive system of urban renewal by means of loans and subsidies has been set in motion.

Detailed studies are being made of a thousand historic city centres. The old buildings of merit within them are to be preserved and renewed only by architects qualified as archaeologists and city planners, working under the direction of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, with powers, co-operation of the Ministry of Con¬struction. Moreover, whatever elements make a city centre historic, archaeological, artistic or picturesque, are to be retained.

Much emphasis is put upon the "atmosphere" of the area, which may involve the strict retention of old street alignments, pedestrian alleyways, the height of new elevations and the building materials to be used. Either the owners of historic buildings will be financed direct by the State, or the buildings will be appropriated and returned afterwards to the owners who must then refund the enhanced value of the improvements. The perimeters of the cities are still left in which the speculators may do their worst, or best.

But, it will be objected, France has for Minister of Cultural Affairs an exceptional person in the forceful scholar Monsieur Andre Malraux, whose powers are practically autocratic. What of it? There are plenty of potential Messieurs Malraux in this country waiting to be given a chance. What we need and must have immediately is a Ministry of Cultural Affairs, with powers. The first duty of such a Ministry should be to stop the trafficking in what is left of our beautiful cities by speculators actuated by gain.