Chairman's Miscellany - TrustNews Dec 2004

The trust has been involved in discussions on the following projects in the City during the last three months.

1. Vision In response to a request for community contributions at a Town Forum to seek a vision for Winchester, the Policy Group submitted a paper part of which is reproduced in this issue to reflect the views of the Trust.

2. Friarsgate At the end of October, Robin Cooper, Director of Development Services at the City Council gave a presentation to the Trust Council accompanied by Mr. Mike Capocci, Director of Thornfields, Developers, and Paul Appleton, Architect from Allies & Morrison, Master Planners for the site. We were pleased to see the block plan respected the important features and characteristics of this part of Winchester and to hear that the shopping to be provided would be of a scale to enhance the role of specialist shopping town that the Trust envisages for Winchester. In addition to ground floor shopping, there will be replacement car parking at first floor level, retention of the Woolstapler's Hall, 360 housing units with 260 car spaces and a replacement for the Antiques Market as well as an enlarged area for the Market. Following the acceptance of the principles of development by the City Council on November 3rd, the Trust hopes to have further discussion about the plans. In particular, we hope that the City Council will ask the consultants, who have demonstrated such a sensitive understanding of the site and its surroundings, to tackle the problems of traffic circulation in Friarsgate and St. George's Street and the implications of developing Cossack Lane and St. Peter's car parks in the future.

3. Library Whilst welcoming the redevelopment of the Jewry Street site to provide a modern Library complex incorporating the Reference Library, Trust Council members were not convinced that the plans we saw could achieve adequate space for books and study. We have written to the leaders of both County and City Councils to ask for more information.

4. Peninsula Barracks The Trust was consulted on signage and interpretation. We feel there is plenty of room for improvement at present and hope that some of our ideas may be implemented to improve use of this splendid but underused part of our City.

In September we held 'open house' at the Heritage Centre for Heritage Open Days sponsored by the Civic Trust and welcomed over 100 visitors with a display of The Brooks area before the clearance.

In conclusion, the members of the Trust Council were sorry to learn that Robin Cooper will be leaving Winchester soon and we wish him well in his new post.

Patricia Edwards

Cittaslow - TrustNews Dec 04

Cittaslow - the Slow City movement began in Italy as part of the Slow Food movement. The Slow Food movement was the brainchild of Carlo Petrini in reaction to Fast Food, when a branch of McDonalds opened in 1986 in the historic heart of Rome. Slow Food has now spread to over 100 towns in 10 European countries - you may have seen its snail logo in restaurants.

Cittaslow rejects the homogenisation of towns by the multiple chains - not just McDonalds but the host of other companies that make every High Street look the same up and down the country and even across the globe. It doesn't mean looking backward, or stagnating. It aims to protect and promote local skills and produce, and in so doing protect jobs and the environment. It means using the best of old and new technology - broadband, renewable energy - to improve the quality of life for everyone.

The places so many of us like to visit on holiday are just those places that still have their independent shops and restaurants, have kept their old street patterns - have kept their local distinctiveness. The first UK Slow Cities are Ludlow in Shropshire and Aylsham in Norfolk. Winchester would not be at the cutting edge but would be joining a well-established movement of very special places.

The idea that Winchester should become a Cittaslow was well received at September's AGM. The Trust now has a working group to look at Cittaslow's 55 targets, and wants to work with the City of Winchester to achieve them. So far the reaction of the City has been favourable, as it has from the recent Town Forum. And of course, our Farmers' Market, voted the best in the UK and about to go fortnightly, is a marvellous start.

By the time you receive this TrustNews, your gallant band of investigators will have visited Ludlow, to try to assess the impact Slow City status is having there. We will report back in the next News.

Meanwhile, if you would like to comment on the subject, do please send your views to the Secretary at the Heritage Centre.

Judith Martin

Planning Appraisal Group - TrustNews Dec 04

Please note the new name for this part of the Trust's activities, known as PAG for short.

There's been some unease in the Trust Council about our previous title, Development Control, since it was felt it could give rise to confusion with the official activities of the City's officers and councillors. It was also misleading, because of course we didn't actually have any control over anything. However, apart from the change of name, business continues as usual and the duties of the panels haven't got any less demanding as a result of a different title. The Trust continues to be very

grateful to all those members who are willing to give so much of their time to this ongoing activity.

There have been a spate of appeals over the past couple of months or so, and we have written in support of the Local Authorities for their refusal to grant permission for these residential schemes: development at **Barton Farm, Andover Road**, demolition and development at **46-48 Chilbolton Avenue**, demolition and development at **18 Bereweeke Close**, conversion and development at **15 Chilbolton Avenue**, and demolition and development at **1-3 Westley Close** which demolishes only No 3 and has a reduced density of 45.3dph (which we still think is too high for this position); in all other respects seems much the same as the previous proposal, so we have again objected.

The most recent scheme for **Enniskerry, Sleepers Hill**, has been refused, as has the proposal to demolish **Lang House, 27 Chilbolton Avenue** for 13 new units. The large Linden Homes development for 49 units behind 8-22 Chilbolton Avenue has just been given permission.

There has also been a new application for the **Prince of Wales, 26 Hyde Street**, still for the conversion of the pub to residential use, but with one new residential unit instead of three to be built at the rear. However, even with this reduced size, the property immediately to the north would still suffer considerable over-shadowing and loss of sun light, quite apart from the fact that any cohesion of design the new buildings might have had has been lost in the effort to reduce their height, and we have again objected.

We had considerable reservations, but did not object, about a proposal to build 14 dwellings on land adjacent to **135-137 Andover Road** on a site with an unusual and difficult shape that made the development seem too cramped for the character of the neighbourhood, even though the density was around an acceptable 30dph. The application has now been withdrawn, so no doubt in due course we shall be looking at another scheme for this site.

As members will no doubt have seen in the local papers, there has been an amended scheme for the **Police HQ, Romsey Road**. This attempts to answer some of the reasons for refusal given in the documents of the Appeal that is wending its way through the system, and it is certainly better in some respects than the original proposal, with a more practical recladding of the tower block and the new office building being attached to the main block so that the land in front of the building is left available for soft landscaping. However, the Trust would very much prefer to see a building with a lower profile on this site, rather than compounding the mistake to the Winchester skyline that was made nearly half a century ago, and has again objected to the scheme.

A decision is still awaited on the development proposed on the site of the **Royal Observer Corps HQ, Abbotts Road**, and in the meantime an application has been made to demolish the Listed Building. This was discussed by the Trust Council, who reached the conclusion that while the best option would be to have its equipment returned and the building become a museum, there seemed little point in preserving this far from beautiful building unless it housed the artefacts that give it its raison

d'etre, and that the present proposal to convert it to residential use was the worst of all choices because this would compromise both the original building and the design of any future development on the site.

Another matter causing the Trust Council much angst is the appearance of two tall notice boards on the pavement outside **The Guildhall**. We had objected to the application for these but were informed that they were "permitted development". Not only do we feel they do nothing to improve the appearance of the Guildhall, but they are inconsiderately sited for pedestrians, especially those with impaired vision who would not expect an obstruction there. We are glad to hear we are not alone in our concern to see them there and the question has been raised by members of the City Council.

Shione Carden

Summer Walks 2004 - TrustNews Dec 2004

We have had a very active walking season, with a total of thirteen different venues. Thirteen must be a lucky number for the Trust - the weather has been generally kind despite the fact that we've had one of the wettest summers on record! One of the advantages of Trust Walks is that, because they are led by people who are experts in their fields, considerable dialogue occurs and this can be carried out in concentrated form when the group is sheltering from the rain. As luck (or was it Divine Providence?) had it, we were able to take full advantage of this facility this year, so that periods of walking were broken up by conversation "halts".

Elizabeth Proudman led the first walk, on 10th June. Her knowledge and professional presentation skills were much appreciated. Winchester's waterways were well described and fortunately the sun shone.

Michael Carden's annual tour of the Hospital and Chapel of St Cross started in sunlight, ended in sunlight and when the rain came we were inside either the Chapel or the Brothers' Hall. Michael's long experience and great depth of knowledge of this timeless place were demonstrated yet again and we were inspired by his youthful enthusiasm.

Our next walk, on 24th June, was in celebration of Architecture Week. Led by **Richard Baker** we revisited buildings, which had received Design Awards from the Trust over a period of some twenty years. By the end it was evident that although tastes and technologies have changed a little, the quality of strong architectural design is fairly permanent.

On July 1st **Andrew Rutter** invited us to explore the St John's area. This was one of the strangest and most enjoyable of all the walks, mainly because we were invited into three houses, which enabled us to discover their interior detail. We were grateful to all the owners, particularly in the case of the magnificent St John's Croft, where we were all afforded shelter from the downpour!

Huw Thomas led us on an exhaustive - and exhausting - excursion on 8th July when we examined some of the more interesting modern housing schemes in central Winchester. Much debate took place on this outing and the real power of the individual architect and the RIBA was called into question. The way in which small details make or mar different schemes was pointed out and Huw showed clearly how the architect can so easily lose control of the project after the initial planning phase.

On 15th July we were led on a tour of Winchester College's new Music School by the Works Bursar of the College, **John Wells**. The new building is a fine example of modern design and is site-specific and wholly appropriate to its function and use of space. Unexpected views of the rear of Kingsgate Street houses and the School's relationship to St Michael's Church were felt to be particularly successful.

Barbara Hall took "some steps back in time" the following week. This involved the story of the removal of Alfred's bones from New Minster in 1110 together with those of his wife and son, Aelswith, and Edward the Elder and their formal transfer to the site of the then new abbey church at Hyde. Hyde Abbey Garden, which marked the end of our walk, is today a sensitively landscaped interpretation of the east end of the great monastery building.

Phil Yates is always a lively performer and on 29th July he led us on a detailed factual tour of the cinemas of Winchester. Ingeniously he managed to combine the general history of 20th Century cinemas with particular examples en route and we were all entertained by his on-site reminiscences.

"The Devil in the Detail" was our next theme. **Robin Freeman**, local studies librarian and architectural historian, met us at St. James' Terrace on Romsey Road where we considered the architectural detail of the adjoining buildings, then progressed into St. James' Lane and finished the walk in Christchurch Road and St Cross.

Chris Webb had organised a fascinating evening walk to view the impressive Hockley Viaduct, which once carried the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway from the Midlands to Southampton. We are very grateful to Chris and the Friends of Hockley Viaduct for their expertise and enthusiasm.

The eleventh walk took us back to Winchester College, but on this occasion to view the 19th and 20th Century boarding houses. **Michael Morris** was able to demonstrate many of the finer points of these large brick buildings, and also reminded us of the context and educational setting of the entire college complex.

The penultimate walk involved looking at the exhibition in the Cathedral's Triforium Gallery to mark the 450th anniversary of the marriage of Mary Tudor with Philip of Spain. We then proceeded to the Williams Library in the South Transept where**John Hardacre**, the Cathedral Archivist, gave an expert interpretation of the Winchester Bible. Finally we visited the Jacobean Library, with its two thousand ancient books of Morley's collection.

At the end of the summer we enjoyed a magnificent evening at The Grange, Northington. Our guide was **David Brock** of English Heritage and, because of the number of people attending, we had to divide into two groups to view the interior.

David Brock's informed enthusiasm made the final walk of the season a truly memorable occasion, and we all came away feeling that we had enjoyed one of our best sequences of Summer Walks.

Attendance at the walks this year was high. Donations made by walkers, taking into account two additional pre-season walks, have raised nearly £500 for the work of the Trust.

Nick McPherson

Winchester: Small and Dynamic - TrustNews Dec 04

Limitations of space only allow room for the second part of our paper intended as a preliminary contribution by the City of Winchester Trust to the Vision for Winchester which the City intends to publish. It seeks to address the fundamental principles upon which all detailed considerations should be based.

What is Winchester for?

Past

Winchester like other cities had, and has, multiple purposes. Its present character, however, derives almost entirely from its past purposes: an important administrative centre for government, church, army and law. The type of ancillary activities these attract, such as professional and commercial businesses, retail suppliers and manufacturers, education, entertainment and leisure, and residential areas, all exist primarily to support the administrative purposes.

Present

Of late, administration has largely been reduced to local government, health and the law, while education, and a new purpose, residential provision for outward commuting, have grown. This growth has presented problems for the setting, and for traffic and transport, for example; problems with which the authorities were already struggling. Central government's sudden imposition of vastly accelerated growth in housing provision has brought all these problems to crisis level. Hence the urgent need for a Vision.

Future

1. Administration and services If the administrative activities remain on their present scale, the basic character of the City will be perpetuated, even if diluted by the city's increasing role as a commuter town - a scenario that could be handled (given adequate skill and forethought). If the administrative purpose of the city were significantly reduced, the basic character would change. This would happen whether the primary purpose of the city became that of a commuter town or whether it were able to attract alternative activities (such as education, service industries, or tourism) to replace administration. This may become an important issue in the longer term.

2. Lively shopping - Winchester should compete by offering a quality specialist shopping experience in delightful surroundings. It should be built on the present characteristics of our compact shopping area which is integral to the historic core of the City, by encouraging speciality shops (as Lewes has done), markets, pentices, covered ways and alleys, etc. The removal of through traffic and the establishment of pedestrian priority within the City centre would transform shopping. City policies must be designed to support these aims. Winchester should not attempt to compete with neighbouring towns on the size of its shops, but rather by avoiding the sameness of the multiple retailers that are found everywhere else.

3. Heritage tourism - The wealth of historic sites and other tourist attractions need imaginative integration and promotion to create a widely recognised 'Winchester Experience', building on the strengths of our talented Blue-Badge City guides and Cathedral guides. The interesting plan to develop the walls should be explored. A more pedestrian friendly centre would make a wonderful contribution to this experience too.

4. Culture - The proposal for the development of the County Library should be pursued vigorously, in co-operation with the Theatre Royal, and a means of returning Roger Brown's model to the City should be sought.

5. Education - there are severe problems of competition with the needs of residents, but with forethought and skill (again) these might be overcome. Any major increase in higher education should be on an out-of-town campus, possibly on one of the redundant army establishments.

6. Commuters - they are inevitably part of Winchester's future because of the M3, good trains and schools, the fact that it is a 'nice place to live' and is small and safe. It would be prudent to investigate how to integrate them better into the community, a task in which planning could play an important part.

7. Size - Winchester's core can only support a limited expansion of population without its character changing, as has happened to Basingstoke. Its capacity, while maintaining its character, needs to be calculated, and such growth as can be accepted should be carefully integrated, following the principles of the 'Good City' set out by the Trust in its discussion document of January 2001. The imposition of housing numbers beyond that limit would be easier to resist if it became part of the City's Vision. If growth were allowed to exceed the calculated limit, the City's historic core would become a museum piece, and its function would be replaced by an expanded centre without the enduring magic of the present one. Moreover, careless expansion could destroy Winchester's incomparable setting.

8. Good urban design - The ideal of sustainable communities composed of streets and squares should be attainable in any sizeable new neighbourhood, if difficult to implement literally on smaller re-development sites. Nevertheless the principles should still be applied to 'densification' of the so-called leafy suburbs, which is to say, attractive character areas away from the town centre. These principles have been set out at length by the Government, and summarised in the Trust's 10 point Design Checklist. To summarise still further, the aims of 'Good City' redevelopment mean that area character should be maintained by studying the neighbourhood and

relating development to both it and the wider surroundings. This does not mean that the density cannot be increased, but it does mean that the manner of the increase must grow from what is there, and not exceed what is sensible. Experience is showing that there tend to be two contexts in which suburban redevelopment takes place: isolated sites where adjoining change, if any, will come slowly, and whole neighbourhoods where common characteristics lead to a rapid domino effect. In such areas it is impossible for separate developers to produce an integrated approach to the inevitable shift in character; this is the responsibility of the Local Authority, which should prepare guidance in the form of a vision for the area, and an example of good planning.

9. Traffic moderation - In the 21st Century, no city that claims to be civilised will tolerate heavy traffic and fumes. A solution has to be found for removing through traffic and conflict with delivery vehicles from the City centre, an area within which vehicles give way to pedestrians and cyclists. There will be a strong opposition, just as there was when the High Street was pedestrianised, and once again it will be proved wrong. There is a growing understanding that Park and Ride at the edge of the City should be complemented by Park and Walk located at the edge of the City centre, for short term users.

The Vision - Small and Dynamic

Winchester must remain small, but go on being dynamic. Given its immense advantages, it can build a prosperous future on its heritage and physical qualities. It should continue to focus on its administrative functions, seeking new ones where the existing ones are contracting. It should put a major effort into developing lively, specialist shopping. The tourist experience should be enhanced.

To achieve success in the 21st Century, new standards of design are required to achieve a compact, sustainable city with a traffic-moderated centre. Continental experience shows this is possible. Winchester should take a lead by requiring world-class standards of design in all that it does, continuing the example formerly set by its institutions and its patrons.

Antony Proudman

Images of England - TrustNews Dec 2004

I was asked by the Chairman if I would take some photos of Listed Buildings for the English Heritage website "Images of England": www.imagesofengland.org.uk

It seemed a simple request and I visited the website to see what to do. I discovered that Images of England is an initiative run by the National Monuments Record, the public archive of English Heritage. The project aims to create a 'point in time' photographic record of every listed building in England. Each of the 370,000 images are being posted alongside existing list descriptions for each building to create what will be one of the largest free to access digital image libraries in the world.

First I had to register on line. Then I was asked for further details by email.I was accepted as a potential "volunteer photographer" and a volunteer pack was promised. This arrived by post and included: a volunteer photographer contract - in duplicate, a copyright agreement in duplicate, an identity card which needs a photo added, a form for my bank details so that my expenses can be paid. Also included was a programme for training days - I need three hours training before 1 can begin, and a plain English version of the copyright agreement. Apparently I would retain copyright of prints of my photographs but not of scanned and digital copies! Why? It also seems that the photographs must be taken on 35mm film despite the fact that the images are for a website. Oh well, I'll have to put away my digital camera and dust off my trusty Minolta 35mm and remember how to use it. Is this progress?

I now realise that the site is more than just a collection of photographs on the web. It is being carefully researched and annotated and will be a valuable resource for school children, students, local historians, family researchers, conservation groups, academics etc and we must make sure all our Winchester Listed Buildings are included.

David Marklew

New Wine in old Bottles - TrustNews Dec 04

The trust was privileged to have George Ferguson, President of the RIBA, as guest speaker for the AGM in September. He gave a wide-ranging and engaging talk to demonstrate his theme, beginning by saying how pleased he was to be back in Winchester. He had been born in the City and had a great affection for it as a special, precious but lively place. He did not, however, talk about Winchester but about a variety of examples and possibilities illustrating what makes a place special, beautiful and atmospheric. He felt that since the 1947 Planning Act this country had been making buildings but failing to make places - partly tied in with too great a segregation of usage. He wanted to show the audience some examples of new buildings put into old places, and some of old buildings transformed into new buildings. A variety of styles could and should be used provided that they were well executed.

Mr Ferguson used a an extensive collection of slides to illustrate the talk and the examples he used ranged from Venice - Arsenale and the Roman Temple at Nimes to Brindley Place and Selfridges in Birmingham. He had been personally involved in redevelopment in his home city - Bristol and described how over the period of redevelopment of the docks much of the character had been lost. He and some friends had rescued some dockside cranes from being scrapped; eventually embarrassing the City Council into buying them back and using the proceeds to purchase an old ferry, which had become a flourishing leisure business. Bristol was a place of old and new where regeneration had succeeded in providing popular public space incorporating exciting features around redeveloped listed goods sheds.

(A full length report of the talk can be seen on the website or obtained by email from the Heritage Centre).