Chairman's Miscellany - TrustNews Jun 2004

With this issue of TrustNews I am delighted to welcome our new editor, Matthew Huntley. He will be known to many members as the owner of P & G Wells bookshop in College Street and we are grateful to him for taking on this important function of communicating with members.

The Neighbourhood Studies for St. Cross and Fulflood were launched in the presence of the Deputy Mayor on 25 March and we hope the Fulflood Study may be useful to residents in the preparation of a Design Statement for that area.

I was particularly interested to attend a meeting of St. Giles' Hill residents to hear about their Neighbourhood Design Statement, which is nearing completion and will be presented to the City Council to be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The plea for help to oppose the retention of the Police HQ in Romsey Road received minimal support. Does this mean that members have little or no objection to the monstrosity?

Once more, Nick McPherson has arranged a full and varied programme of Summer Walks. We are grateful to him and all those conducting the walks. This year the Trust is supporting "Architecture Week" with a special event on June 24 to visit buildings that have won Trust Awards over the past 20 years. Keith Leaman and Andrew Rutter will be joining Richard Baker to lead the walks on this occasion.

We are also supporting the Civic Trust sponsored "Heritage Open Days" by opening to the public the Trust's offices in Upper Brook Street. Opening times will be Saturday September 11th 10am - 4pm and Sunday 12th 2pm - 5pm. If any members would be willing to help with supervision for an hour or two during the opening times, please let us know by 'phone, e-mail or letter.

This year your Council has decided to bring forward the date of the AGM to September 28th to shorten the time between the end of the financial year and reporting to members. George Ferguson, President of the RIBA has kindly agreed to speak after the AGM.

Patricia Edwards

Street Scene - TrustNews Jun 04

I wrote about this in the last Trust News and showed the clutter of signs at the railway bridge in Upper High Street. Members who responded deplored the scene there and similar clutter elsewhere. One member complained particularly of bicycle stands recently placed in the centre of the pavement at the top of St. Swithun's Street. Why there and not against nearby walls? she asked. A considerable hazard for a blind person and so unnecessary. Another member commented on how long

'new road layout ahead' signs linger. When does a new layout cease being new? Three months perhaps. Some seem to remain for ever.

On the broad topic of street signs and furniture, The Chairman and I have met Robin Cooper, Director of Development Services at Winchester City Council. Our suggestions that policies be prepared to coordinate the style and placing of street furniture did not fall on stony ground. Mr Cooper suggested, as a first step, that the Trust identify a street in the city which is a good example of clutter of signs and 'furniture'. He would then seek to work with the other agencies on a coordinated style.

We also discussed the proliferation of yellow signs put up unlawfully by builders. Responsibility for their removal lies with Hampshire County Council and we await action. Meanwhile we would welcome members' suggestions for a street to be 'made over' as Robin Cooper suggested. Please let us have your suggestions at the Heritage Centre by 30,th June. A bottle of sherry for the person who suggests the street selected by the Chairman, whose decision will of course be final.

Iain Patton

Development Control - TrustNews Jun 04

Decisions made for previously mentioned schemes include refusals for developments at **Dolphin House, St Peter Street**, and **64 Quarry Road**. The scheme for 12 new dwellings at **The Grange, St Cross Road**, has been granted.

The proposal to convert the **Royal Observer Corps, Abbotts Road**, to residential use has been deferred for further discussion with English Heritage, who feel the building is of historical and cultural importance because the structure is innovative and uses an early form of pre-cast concrete, and is currently the sole remaining unmodified example of a wartime ROC centre in the UK. Although in bad condition, it is not considered beyond saving. Arguments against its retention were that it is an ugly wartime interloper into the neighbourhood which would compromise future development of the site, and that its conversion to residential use would lose its historic value. The developer's original scheme respected the diagonal siting of the Listed Building, but the layout presented in the application, following consultation with the City's Urban Designers, was much disliked by members of the Sub Committee because the suggested development around the perimeter of the site would create a hard urban edge that wasn't typical of the area, where houses are set back from the road boundary, and would be very obtrusive to houses in Maningford Close, north of the site. They also felt the style of architecture should reflect the character of the area rather than that of the intruding wartime structure.

Bewley Homes have put in another scheme for a development behind **3-9 Park Road**, and although the number of dwellings has been reduced from 25 to 22, the density is still high for the area (36 dwellings per hectare (dph) including the existing 4 houses) and we felt it was excessive that every unit seemed to be allocated 2 car-parking spaces, whether they had four bedrooms or only one. There has also been

an outline application to build 5 terraced dwellings and a block of 9 flats on land at **1-3 Westley Close**, in a layout consisting of a sea of parked cars sandwiched between two large blocks. We have objected to both developments.

We have also objected to a proposal to build a terrace of three dwellings in the curtilage behind **The Prince of Wales, 26 Hyde Street**. It is proposed that the deserted pub, a Listed Building should be converted to residential use, which seemed acceptable, but we felt that some of the alterations to the south elevation were not, and that the new 2 and 3 storey terrace would be very detrimental to the gardens of the adjoining and other neighbouring properties, and would constitute over-development of the site. This has now been refused.

The Trust has also objected most strongly to the outline application by Cala Homes for their proposed development at **Barton Farm, Andover Road**, as being extremely premature. As the need for this land has not yet been triggered, there is no public brief, and consequently the City's infrastructure would be ill-prepared for the great influx of new residents from this vast development. Before anything of this size is even considered, a master-plan for the whole City should be drawn up, together with a transport policy for Winchester and its environs.

A large development of 47 new dwellings is proposed at **Osborne School, Andover Road**, (previously Lankhills School), on a site just east of the railway bridge. It is good that the buildings have clearly been designed for the site and have a crisp and uncluttered appearance, but some aspects are worrying, such as the proposal to transplant a thriving Tulip tree over 14 metres tall. It seems very questionable that it would survive, and we consider the layout should accommodate its retention in situ, even if this means the loss of up to four units - this would only reduce the density from the proposed 56dph to 51 dph, which is still fairly high. It might also help to reduce the effect the additional traffic from the development will have on the already over-loaded Andover Road, where at rush hour the vehicles waiting to cross the City Road traffic lights can be queuing as far back as the bridge.

Two schemes, one for a detached 2-bedroom house in the garden of **35 Fordington Avenue**, and the other for two 2-bedroom semi-detached dwellings in the garden of **38 Milverton Road**, are in fact sited side-by-side. They are also bang opposite a recently completed pair of semidetached houses and, being in the 'dog-leg' turn of Fordington Avenue that leads to Milverton Road, the three buildings are in a stretch of road devoid of any other houses. It is therefore important that they should all relate to each other, and as one scheme has been withdrawn and the other is awaiting a decision, we have urged that the applicants should be persuaded to draw up a joint scheme for the two new developments. If ever there was a case for Joined-Up Planning, this is it!

Shione Carden

The Design Debate - TrustNews Jun 2004

styles of architecture in towns like Winchester

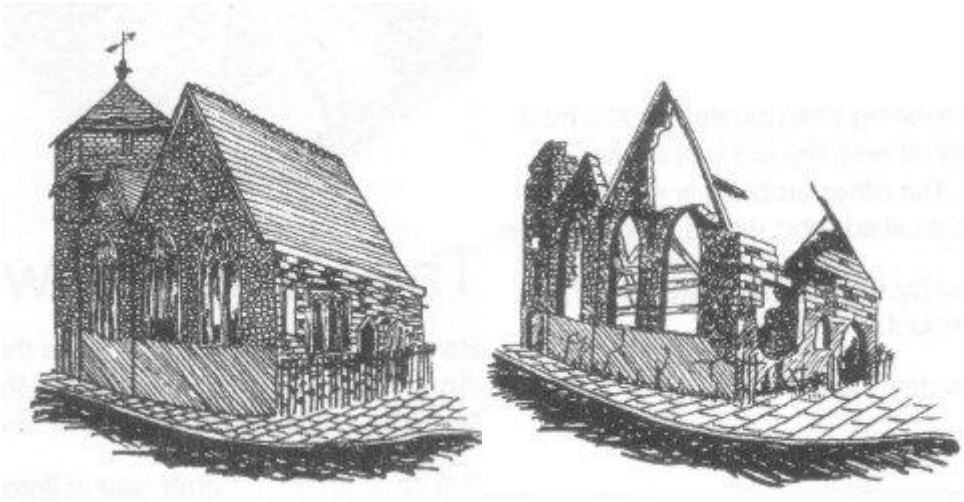
The debate, which was announced in the last TrustNews, took place at the Guildhall on the 29th April. The object of the evening was to air personal opinions about the design of new buildings in existing streets. It has always been the Trust's policy that we should not resist slow continuing change, however, we have also maintained that although new buildings need not be traditional, they must be in character. This begs the question of what 'in character' means, and this is what we wished to be discussed.

To start the debate we therefore asked two speakers to give us their opinions from their very different standpoints. The first was Richard Feilden, who lives near Bath and is the senior partner of the architects Feilden and Clegg, and the second was Adam Wilkinson, the Secretary of SAVE Britain's Heritage, and a medieval historian. It is impossible to describe their illustrated talks in detail here, but both appeared to share the Trust's views, giving a wide variety of examples of success and failure. Both showed how departure from the scale, pattern and texture of a street, most particularly in terms of the way in which the linear space is defined, could completely destroy its character, but how, on the other hand, skilful and considerate design could perpetuate and enliven the character without resorting to pastiche.

If they differed, it would be in the extent to which new materials and forms are acceptable, though there would have been little difference between them over any of the examples they showed us. Adam used more mundane examples, which was very useful because so much of what gets built is mundane, and he was able to show that even at this level, it is an eye for relationships that is critical, rather than the use of particular materials or details. Richard would be more adventurous, but he also stressed the importance of integrity and literacy in design, and the huge importance of respect for site and context.

Our chairman for the evening, Christopher Clark QC (Chancellor for the Diocese), astutely questioned the speakers and provoked the audience to express their thoughts on the subject. It was a pity that more Trust members were not present to share in the process, but very interesting contributions came from all sides, including the City's Chairman of Planning, the Chief Executive and the Chief Planning Officer. In summing up, Christopher noted the need for a balance between harmony and innovation, and said it was clear that more dialogue was necessary between all those involved. The Trust will try to follow this up.

A three-page synopsis of the contributions and questions is available from the Heritage Centre in return for a stamped addressed envelope.



One of the first projects embarked upon when the Trust was founded in 1957 was saving St Peter's Church in Chesil Street from demolition. After considering many possible uses, including converting the twelfth century treasure into a mortuary or an electricity sub-station, it finally became the home of the thriving Winchester Dramatic Society and the Trust's President, Mrs Barbara Carpenter Turner, officially opened the theatre in October 1966. To help raise funds for its next exciting capital project, an interesting history of the Church from the days of Henry 1 has recently been published with 52 pages and 30 illustrations. It can be obtained from the author, Richard Green, at 8 St James' Lane, Winchester S022 4NX (01 962 8690290 for £5.99 (including p&p).

The Trust is pleased to support this venture as the Church forms the centrepiece of our logo.

Lipstick on the Gorilla 2 - TrustNews Jun 2004





This time the lipstick is only paint.

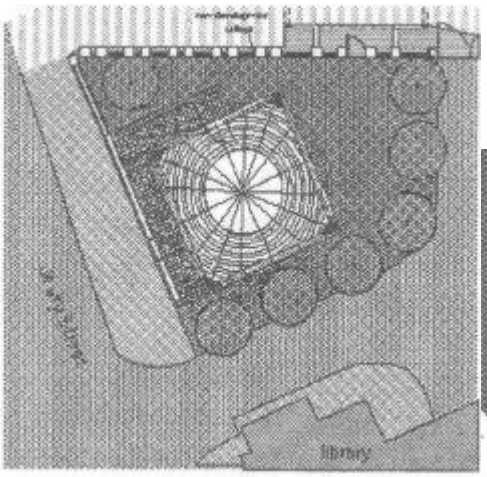
Here are two photographs of a small part of Jewry Street. One shows its poor signage, clutter the overall run down appearance which now exists.

The second photograph shows the same part of the street "repainted", emphasising the colonnade and architectural features now unnoticed.

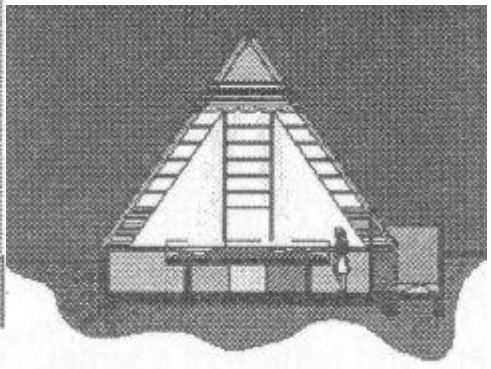
There are a number of street scenes in Winchester which could be improved with a few pots of paint.

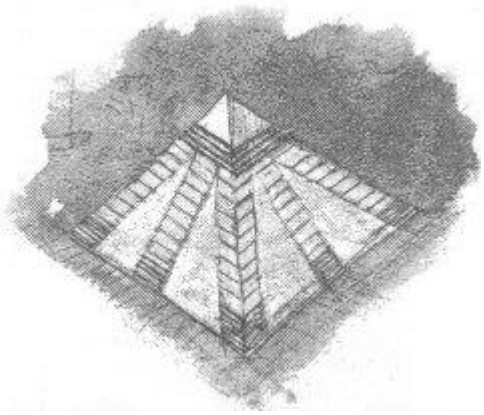
Huw Thomas

THE ROGER BROWN MODEL - TrustNews Jun 04



Ground Floor Plan





Here is another attempt to house this great asset. This is a simple structure designed to sit between the library and the defunct antiques centre (soon to be developed) in Jewry Street.

It is an aluminium frame clad in limestone and is purposefully contemporary. This is deliberately small as it is seen as a temporary home for the model.

There are some minor problems! The existing tree donated by the trust would have to be felled (replaceable by others), the old bus shelter removed and so also the bottle bank. The other problem is it is public land currently owned by the city so political support would be imperative.

A local businessman was so impressed by the model on Morn Hill he is willing to contribute a substitutable amount.

If there is a will there is a way. What do members think?

Huw Thomas