From the Chairman - TrustNews Mar 2004

In addition to the regular monitoring of planning applications within the city, the Trust Council tries to keep abreast of other activities that have a bearing on the character of Winchester.

Following up the resolution passed at the Trust's AGM on the future of the **Public Library**, we have made representations to the County Council. There has now been a public consultation to establish whether to refurbish the existing building and include the reference library in it, or to extend the building to provide facilities appropriate for a modern library. When the results are analysed and the choice determined by the County and City Councils, we have been promised an opportunity to see the designs at an early stage.

Readers may recall that the City Council refused planning permission for the refurbishment of the **Police Headquarters**. The Trust was approached by Philip Morgan to endorse his suggestion for lobbying and organizing a petition in order to persuade the Police Authority to desist from its endeavours to prolong the life of this hideously prominent eyesore. The Council of the Trust agreed to support this action and hopes it will receive wholehearted support from members.

We were pleased to be included recently in the City Council's consultation on car-parking policy. We wait, anxiously, to learn whether the recommended funding will be provided for producing Neighbourhood Design Statements and Development Briefs. Their production is vital to retain the character of Winchester's leafy suburbs and other distinctive localities. Although changes have been made to the Revised Local Plan to accommodate the policies, these will be pointless without the resources to support their implementation. The Local Plan Inquiry will commence in June and the Trust's principle objection will be to the provision of Tourist facilities at Bushfield because the area is so important visually to the setting of our city.

Design and style in architecture have ever been subjects to provoke differing views. The Trust Council feels that members would welcome an opportunity to debate the subject, so a meeting has been arranged on Thursday April 29th at 7.30 p.m. in the Guildhall. Christopher Clark QC (Chancellor of the Diocese) has kindly agreed to act as Chairman; Adam Wilkinson, Secretary of SAVE and Richard Feilden, an eminent architect, will introduce the debate.

We feel sure that members and their guests will find **"The Design Debate"** stimulating and an opportunity to air their views. We have hired the Council Chamber for the event. It seats 150 so there should be eno ugh room for everyone. We hope you will put this date in your diary at once and bring any friends who may be interested.

Roger Backhouse

Winchester's Finest - TrustNews Mar 04



For a very long time this lantern, surely the finest in Winchester hid its light behind a very fine tree. Sadly the tree was felled and the City Council sold off the site it adorned, King's Head Yard, to developers.

At some time the lamp has obviously been converted very carefully from gas to electricity note the ladder supports and large vents at top and bottom. No trace of any makers is visible on the column but may exist below ground. Little is known of its history though it is thought to have been in the Christchurch Road area. Any additional information would be most welcome.

The Trust was approached by the City Council for advice on repositioning the lantern and it has been agreed to site it near Abbey House, just across the footbridge on the east side, well away from road traffic. The Trust has also indicated that, if appropriate and depending on the cost, it would like to see the City's coat of arms engraved on one of the glasses.

C. J. Webb

Development Control - TrustNews Mar 04

A lot has been going on in Winchester during the past few months. First an update on earlier schemes.

Appeal decisions: the building of a detached house beside **Rosenheim, 42 St Cross Road**, and a garage with a studio flat above in the garden has been allowed, while the proposal to demolish and replace Chestnut Mead, Kingsgate Road, with a block of flats was dismissed. The Inspector took less than a week to reach his decision.

Several sizeable developments have been permitted: on land between **Sparkford & Airlie Roads**, the **Northgate House & Documation House site, Staple Gardens** and on the site of **19, 20 & 20A Jewry Street**.

A couple have been withdrawn: a development for 25 dwellings on the back-land behind **3-9 Park Road**, and a more recent one to which we objected, to build 14 houses at **Pipers Field, 67 Chilbolton Avenue**, instead of the existing house.

Cala Homes have put in another scheme to demolish and replace **64 Quarry Road** and build 30 new dwellings on land behind **Nos. 58-68**, to which we have objected. This consists of various uninspiring structures, for which too many types of clay materials are specified, a barrack-like block of flats, which would become an unsightly landmark of Winchester from the motorway, and a density of 40 dwellings per hectare (dph) - much the same as before, which we continue to feel is too high for this location.

A major development has been put forward at **Weeke Manor, Malmesbury Gardens**, probably better known as the **Red Cross** site on **Stockbridge Road**. Here a sensitive conversion of the house, a Listed Building, is proposed by Linden Homes, together with 39 new dwellings in its grounds. Apart from a few relatively minor concerns, this seemed an appropriate development, with satisfactory spaces and a thoughtful landscape scheme. The density of the uncramped layout would be 33dph, which seemed acceptable here, although it was wondered whether the Dean Lane junction with Stockbridge Road would be able to cope adequately with the additional car movements that would be generated.

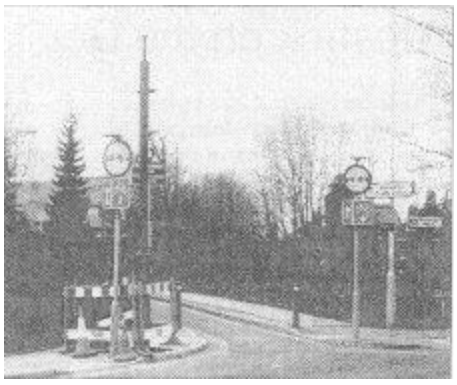
The proposal to convert the **Royal Observer Corps HQ, Abbotts Road**, is a different matter. Here Bayview Developments want to convert the existing Listed Building into 4 dwellings, and build a further 23 in its grounds. This would give a density of over 64dph, which we felt was too high for this part of Winchester. The building was listed for historic reasons, rather than its beauty (it is an ugly concrete structure), because apparently it is the only unmodified example of a wartime ROC Operations Centre remaining in the UK. When it was no longer in use, but with its fittings still intact, it had been hoped that it could be turned into a museum. Sadly this did not happen and the equipment that gave it much of its value now resides in various stores around Hampshire. Retaining the Listed Building in the centre of the plot compromises the siting of any new development, which perforce must be positioned near the peripheries of the plot, where the trees on the boundary would be put at risk. We also felt this was not an appropriate position for a 3-storey block of flats, and objected to the application.

We have also objected to developments in the Jewry Street/St Peter Street area. The most visually crucial is the demolition of **Bottomsup, 28 Jewry Street** (no loss) for a 3-storey block, with commercial use on the ground floor and 6 residential units above. The building proposed was described as "deferential" to its surroundings and had a somewhat retrospective style with flat roofs. This seemed a mistaken approach for this position, where the surrounding roofs have a spiky character and any new building should act as a foil to (but not challenge) the Library, on a site where it will act as the focal point on the northward view along Jewry Street and where the proposed use of Western Red Cedar boarding would be very inappropriate. The conversion to residential use of **Dolphin House, St Peter Street**, behind Bottomsup, is also proposed. As far as could be judged from the information provided this seemed a reasonable scheme, but we felt that for an important site such as this, next to St Peter's Church and visible from Jewry Street, and also in close proximity to a Listed Building, a model - or at the very least elevations - was needed to give an idea of how it would fit into its surroundings. We also felt that the confusion about the number of new bed spaces evident in the application was unacceptable for a scheme in the central Conservation Area.

Following concerns raised with the Planning Office about apparently unsatisfactory supervision of some schemes, we had an interesting and instructive discussion with the Enforcement Team Manager. It was apparent that his task is not as straightforward as we had thought, and that to circumnavigate the wily dodges of opposing QCs at appeals, the drafting of both refusals and permissions seems to need considerable legal skills. Are these made readily available to the Planning Department?

Shione Carden

Street Scene - TrustNews Mar 2004



Do you ever feel, as you drive in Winchester, that there are so many road signs that they confuse rather than inform you? Or that when you walk in the City Centre, you have to watch out for litter bins, bollards, cycle tether posts and other "street furniture" which appears to have been scattered at random? There is growing concern nationally at the proliferation of signs and street furniture and the apparent lack of coordination about their placing or sensitivity to the effect of this visual clutter. We would welcome your views and/or photographs of your favourite examples, good and bad!

In the meantime, here is one, which caused dismay when it appeared and confusion rather than clarity for drivers.

Iain Patton

Police HQ, Romsey Road - TrustNews Mar 04

The Last Chance

The Police HQ is a blot on the landscape of Winchester, Cathedral City and ancient capital of England.

As its future is being considered we have an historic opportunity to remove this eyesore. If the opportunity is not seized now, the building will be given a new lease of life and Winchester will have to live with it for at least another 30 years.

The City Council has taken a lead by refusing to grant planning permission for its renovation. Short of a miracle, the Police Authority will appeal against the planning decision and an Inspector or Government department will approve some compromise which will result in its retention to minimise cost.

Something dramatic has to be done

Something fairly dramatic has to be done to change this outcome way of Lobbying and a Petition. My suggestion is some vigorous lobbying of influential Hampshire and National people - Winchester is a national treasure --- together with a large petition of local people. It needs to be done very soon whilst decisions are yet to be made.

It will require at least 20 people willing to be active for a couple of months. Advice on computer use for email lobbying and petitions would also be necessary.

As I cannot do this on my own, please telephone or email me immediately if you can help. If you can't do that, then, please email or write to say you support the demolition of this building. It is hard to believe that any member of the Trust would wish to see it retained so we could have about 800 signatures immediately.

Philip Morgan 12 Kilham Lane, Winchester S022 5PS Tel 01962 866506 Email: morganps@surfaid.org

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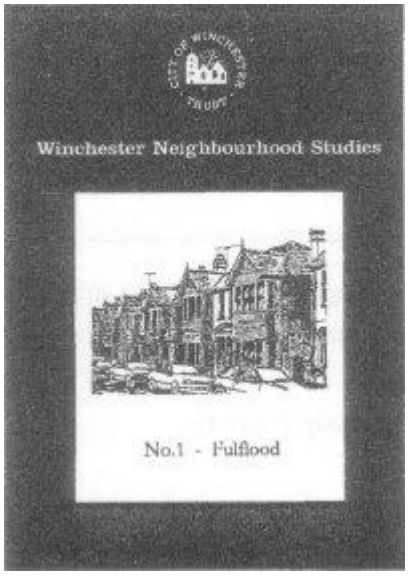
Winchester Neighbourhood Studies - TrustNews Mar 04





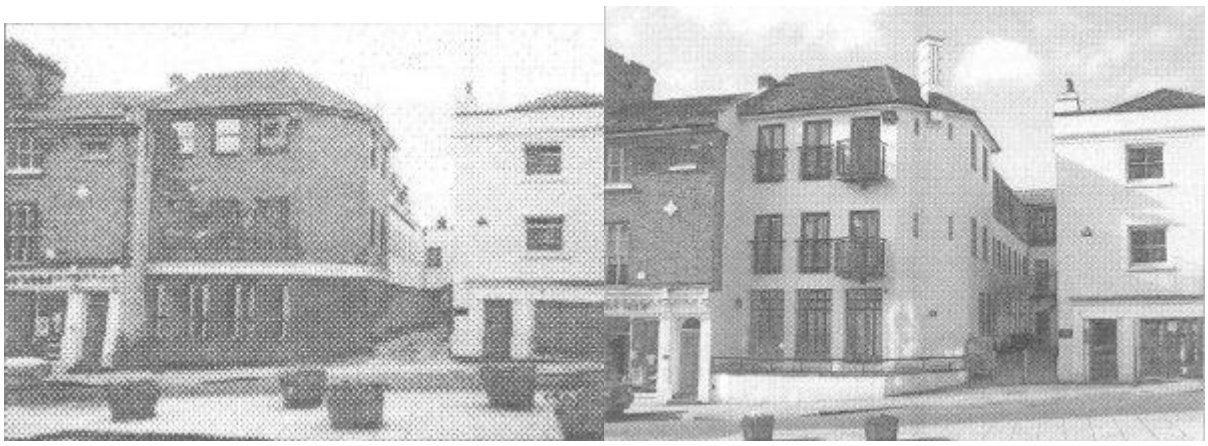
The first two Neighbourhood Studies have been published and are available from the Heritage Centre. The first covers the Fulflood locality, the second St. Cross, and its surroundings.

Each study gives a detailed picture of the development and style of the area and is copiously illustrated by line drawings. These and the text are the work of Nick Bourne Dip. Arch., a long-term resident of Winchester, whose knowledge of and enthusiasm for the City is unbounded.

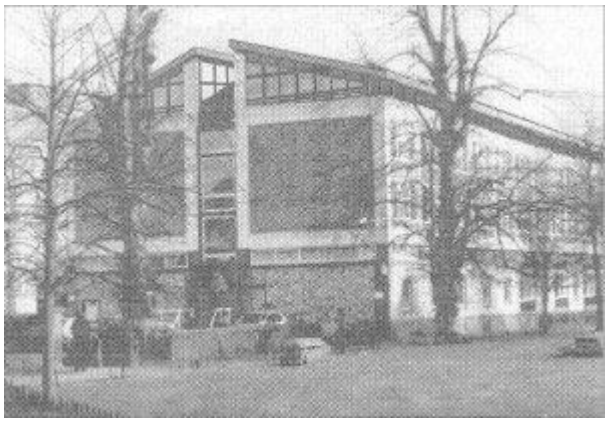
The studies are priced at £3 each (postage included).

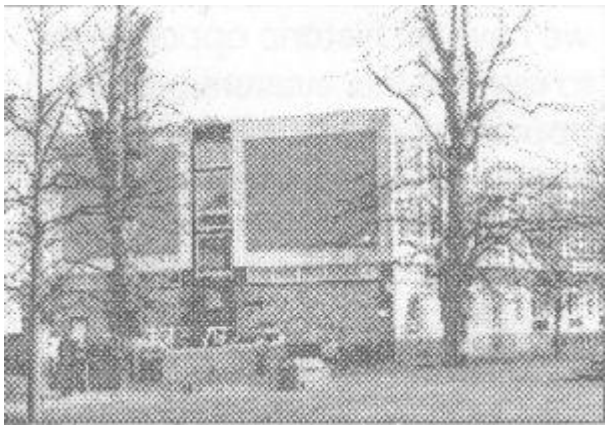
Further studies are to be published.

Lipstick on the Gorilla - TrustNews Mar 2004



This is the title for a little series in TrustNews. It is an attempt to brighten up and improve visually some of the unattractive buildings in Winchester. Of course, it is true that ' beauty is in the eye of the beholder' and some of the suggestions may not be entirely popular.





I have illustrated one building called Wessex Court (Upper High Street), which was a drab office block, now converted into flats. What do you think of this lipstick? It illustrates what can be done to an existing building.

The next example is the Wessex Hotel. I have always thought it lacked something. Therefore, in the computerized montage, I suggest another floor with a low-pitched lead covered roof. Not only would this improve the look of the building but, by adding additional rooms, it could trigger the viability needed to change its appearance.

Huw Thomas