Chairman's Miscellany - TrustNews Jun 2005

I am very pleased to take this opportunity to announce that **Jeffrey Smith**, a founder member and indefatigable worker for the Trust, has accepted the invitation of the Trust Council to become a Vice-President. He was one of the small band who started the Trust in 1957, at a time when the City Council was demolishing the heart of Winchester in the name of slum-clearance. Thereafter he was always at the centre of its activities holding office in various capacities and as Chairman 1976-1979 as well as organising fund-raising to support its many successes.

The Trust's most important asset is its membership and, in particular, those members who work for it in many diverse ways. **Rosemary Kinaird-Smith** has for many years looked after the archives with much care and skill but she recently decided to resign from the Council for health reasons. Happily, she remains a member of the Trust and has been able to pass on her knowledge of the system to **John Holder**, who has kindly taken on this task and brings with him many talents and great enthusiasm. Another key player is **Dick Selwood** who has guided us in developing computer use, acting as our guru and always responding calmly to frantic cries for help. He also set up our Membership database and our website under the auspices of Hantsnet which he has kept up to date too. Other commitments prevent him from continuing but we are immensely grateful for all he has done. At a time when Winchester is again under threat, this time because of insensitive development and failing skills and resources to cope with it, the Trust needs all the assistance and support it can muster from its members. In the last issue I referred to our concern about the impending changes to the structure of the City Council's Planning department. Events since then have not encouraged us to think differently as we see the departure of experienced staff and depleted morale trying to deal with ever increasing workloads. We continue to express these concerns to members and officers. The Vision document about which the Trust was consulted earlier in the year, has emerged as a damp squib unlikely to generate enthusiasm in any quarter.

Views on the Draft Plan for the South East were framed and despatched to SEERA (South East England Regional Assembly), the County Council and the City Council. We have received acknowledgments from the first two agencies but not from the City Council. The Trust is indebted to Harvey Cole, Jim Humberstone, David Marklew and Judith Martin, who gave of their time and expertise to assist the Policy Group in formulating the comments covering the following topics: Housing, Economy, Environment, Built & Historic Environment, Town Centres, Transport, Landscape, Implementation. All comments can be viewed on the Trust website or obtained from the Heritage Centre.

The Broadway/Friarsgate development continues to occupy a prominent place in our interests and we have recently had another meeting with Mike Capocci of Thornfield. He has again expressed his commitment to producing a scheme that will get the approval of the whole community. You will see the information about an exhibition of the architect's scheme to be held in June during Architecture Week - perhaps this is fortuitous!

It was with considerable disappointment that we learned of the decision by English Heritage to advise the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport against listing

Hockley Viaduct. The Trust wrote to support an appeal against the decision but this too has been refused. The future maintenance of this structure will need to be considered seriously by its owners, Winchester City Council.

As our speaker on the evening of our next Annual General Meeting on September 26th, we have invited Ben Hamilton Baillie, a well known Urban Planner to talk about Streetscape in the hope that there will be solutions applicable to Winchester.

Patricia Edwards

Coming Events - TrustNews Jun 05

Friday 17th June at 7.30pm "What is Architecture?" Andrew Rutter RIBA at the United Church Hall, Jewry Street.

Thursday 23rd June 2pm - 8pm and Friday 24th June 10am - 5pm in the Guildhall & Saturday 25th June 10am - 4pm at a City centre venue (tba) Exhibition of Allies and Morrison's Designs for Broadway/Friarsgate together with the 'Community Snapshot' by a local artist that the City Council is currently commissioning.

Planning Appraisal Group - TrustNews Jun 05

Refusals for schemes to which we have objected include the development at the **Pumping Station, Romsey Road** and the consequent demolition of the wall in **Mews Lane**, the demolition of **18 Bereweeke Road** for a block of flats, the outline application to demolish four houses adjacent to **Orchard Cottage, St Cross Road**, for a high density residential development, and we understand the demolition of **2-4 Chilbolton Avenues** and **West Hayes Lodge, Sarum Road**, for 40 flats has also been refused.

There are also several sites with ongoing proposals, either in amended form or as new schemes. These include **98-102 Sussex Street**, where the first proposal to replace the existing buildings with a pseudo Georgian block went to appeal and was dismissed, the Inspector stating that the structurally-sound Edwardian terrace houses contributed to the street-scene. There are two current applications for this site, one to demolish and replace with a building we felt would give contemporary architecture a bad name (to which we objected), and another to convert and add rear extensions to the existing houses, which we found acceptable, as we understand the planners also do.

Another site with continuing applications is **1-3 Westley Close**, for which two schemes are at appeal and another is currently being considered by the Planning Office. This would retain the house at No 1, and build what were described as two terraces, although the incoherent design of the structure facing onto the close bore no resemblance to the description. There has been much local concern about the detrimental effect the 3-storey building on the Stockbridge Road boundary would

have on the street scene, and on the ecology of Weeke Pond because of over-shadowing. The Trust has objected to all three schemes.

The proposed residential development of the **Royal Observer Corps HQ, Abbotts Road**, also has a long and convoluted planning history. It was originally proposed to convert the HQ (a building listed for its historical importance rather than its beauty) and build 23 new dwellings, which we felt were too many for this location. This scheme was withdrawn last July, and a development with 17 new dwellings of unsuitable design was proposed. The reduced number of units was welcomed, but we still felt the density of 52.4dph was too high, and reiterated our view that retaining the Listed Building (LB) compromised successful development on the site because of its diagonal siting in the centre of the plot. While this was being considered, another scheme involving the demolition of the LB was presented, but English Heritage refused to allow its destruction, and now yet another scheme retaining the building, this time with 9 new dwellings, is under consideration.

Plans for the **Police HQ, Romsey Road**, have a similarly tortuous history. It was first proposed to reclad the present tower and build a new office block in May 2003, a scheme we were not convinced would be practical. We objected, the planners refused it and the scheme went to appeal in June 2004. While this was awaiting a decision, a second scheme was presented; this still involved re-cladding the tower but attached the new office block to its foot, which seemed an improvement. This scheme was refused in February, and an appeal against this has just been made, with the appeal on the first scheme being withdrawn. Meanwhile, in March 2005, another scheme was put forward, this time to demolish the tower and build a residential development of 300 units. This would mean a density of over 128dph and a possible 505 new residents, which the Trust felt would overload the local infrastructure. We also felt the density proposed would result in buildings that would be too tall and bulky for the neighbourhood, an aspect unfortunately exacerbated by the otherwise welcome underground parking that was also proposed. We disliked the architectural style and the formal layout of the development, as well as the telecommunications mast on the Romsey Road boundary, and strongly objected, as did many local residents.

Another scheme causing much local angst is the proposal to demolish **The Chimneys, 1 Burnett Close**, and build an Aldi store in its place. We objected, feeling the scale of the building and its large parking area would be very unsympathetic to the residential character of the area, as well as being visually detrimental to this important route into the city and adding to the traffic on the already busy Stockbridge Road.

We have also objected to a proposal to convert **Kingsmead, Kingsgate Road**, a Victorian house of considerable presence, into five flats, and build an attached block of three flats and a terrace of three 3-bedroom houses. We felt the design of the attached block failed to relate to the existing house or to make a stimulating contemporary addition, and that the appearance of the terrace would do nothing to enhance this part of the Conservation Area. The Trust has commented on the Development Brief prepared by the Hampshire County Council (in conjunction with the City's Planning Department) for prospective purchasers of their land on Andover Road, on the Winton House site, and on the Greenacres Special School site on the

opposite side of the road. We were concerned at the lack of information about land levels (very important in such a hilly area) and the prescriptive style of the layouts and type of buildings given in the Master plans, because we feared these could be used to get a swift approval instead of encouraging the developers' architects to use their skill and imagination to design the most appropriate scheme for each of these interesting, and very different sites.

Shione Carden

Work for Good Design in the City! - TrustNews Jun 2005

Planning Appraisal is the Trust's core activity. Each year there are more applications, many of which are hotly disputed, and the Planning Appraisal Group needs help with its administration. Enthusiasm and basic computer literacy are essential. The work will be regular and you will gain a stimulating insight into the planning problems that we face in Winchester.

If you think you might be able to help, or would like to know more, please contact Shione Carden who chairs this group - e-mail scarden@freeuk.com or telephone the Heritage Centre.

Impact of University on the city of Winchester - TrustNews Jun 05

Chris Higgins, Director of Estates,University College Winchester



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

WINCHESTER

The advent of the new University of Winchester must inevitably raise questions how a growing university will impact on the life and fabric of our city.

First of all, I should clarify that we are not really growing that much! But we have certainly grown and changed dramatically since our Anglican foundation as a teacher training college in 1840 and now cover more than 20 subject areas. For the last ten years we have concentrated on raising our academic standards in both teaching and research, while growing only by a few hundred full time students. For the foreseeable future, we will remain a community of some 3,500-4,000 full time students, 2,000 part time students and 500 staff. The only real growth will be in developing more foundation degrees and part time courses, mostly based in Basingstoke. We are the only higher education provider in that large catchment area.

A significant contribution

It seems fitting for the ancient capital of England to be a university city. This will complement Winchester's ecclesiastical, educational and military history with its position as an administrative centre, first established by William the Conqueror.

Just as the Cathedral lies at the spiritual heart of Winchester, so the University should make a significant contribution to its artistic and cultural life.

A flourishing academic institution will promote a wider cultural life and stimulate intellectual debate within the whole local community. We have commissioned various art exhibitions, and regularly hold other events which are open to the public (many of them free!) including Enterprise Lecturers, inaugural professorial lectures, debates and concerts.

Recent contributors at these events include **Tessa Jowell, Greg Dyke, Professor Freeman Dyson, John Taverner** and **Terence Conran**.

Our facilities are available for private bookings, which may range from family reunions to weddings receptions as well as a wide range of conferences. We endeavour to foster an understanding and a tolerance of other cultures and religions and encourage people who might not have considered higher education to stretch themselves with a degree; hence our many part time courses for those at work.

A major employer

The contribution of the University to the local economy is estimated to be over £40 million per year. Alongside the Hospital and the local authority, we are one of the major employers in the area. Importantly too our students are a key part of the lower paid workforce in a City where it is too expensive for people to live on low wages.

And our new Research Centre will promote and facilitate incubator units for start up businesses, which can be an essential lifeline to entrepreneurial students and others embarking on their first business venture.

Major building projects

Trust members will be aware of the new campus at West Downs with the student village and the Victorian prep school buildings restored as a Performing Arts Centre, where a number of public functions are held. This has been the start of a series of

major building projects. We have just submitted a planning application. to save the grade II listed, but sadly derelict, Master's Lodge which we plan to refurbish as a Research Centre. James Lunn Rockcliffe is the architect for this restoration, which will complete the development of that Campus for the time being. We do have consent for a further phase of student housing if the demand and the funding prove this is necessary and viable.

The University has recently completed an innovative new Sports Pavilion at Bar End, and is considering improving sporting facilities with perhaps an all weather hockey pitch & athletics track on our land next to King George V Playing Fields for shared use with the local community.

We also have some exciting plans for the main King Alfred Campus, which should create a dramatic improvement to the approach from Sparkford Road. Following the extension to the Martial Rose Library with its illuminated stained glass staircase in the atrium, we have almost completed a radical redevelopment of the John Stripe Theatre. What was once a rather ordinary single storey 1960's auditorium has been transformed by local architects, Design Engine, into a stunning new lecture theatre suite with a first floor extension; quite a challenging construction project!

We are about to apply for detailed planning consent for a £9 million new University Centre on the site of the current dining hall. This will provide a new main reception to the University together with an internet café, bookshop, new food hall and social facilities for students, staff and at certain times, the local community. It is a much needed facility which should go some way to addressing the problems of a shortage of social club activities for young people in the City, especially a no-alcohol venue for the 15-18 age group.

Difficult issue of traffic

The University has done everything it can to tackle the difficult and contentious issue of traffic and parking. We have built the student village as a pedestrian community and introduced strict regulations on parking. We publicly support Park & Ride, but desperately need it to serve the Romsey Road arterial route into Winchester. Until P&R is launched in the vicinity of Pitt or Bushfield Camp, we can do no more to reduce traffic congestion.

Conclusion

I firmly believe that a University should be promoting the best contemporary architecture with an environmental and sustainable agenda. We should be setting a lead to inspire and influence the next generation of students and also to enhance the City of Winchester.

The buildings we construct today should last for 100 years, and we trust they will stand that test of time. They should do justice to John Betjeman's notion that “good architecture is like an art gallery that never closes”.

The Preservation of Winchester's Treed Areas - TrustNews Jun 2005

A few weekends ago, 33 unprotected trees with a very visible presence in Bereweeke Road were felled on Peter Symonds College land. This felling radically changed the treed appearance of the junction of Bereweeke Road with Andover Road. In the absence of Tree Preservation Orders (TP0s) there is nothing that can be done to an individual householder who decides to fell any of the unprotected trees on his property, for whatever reason. All unprotected trees can therefore be considered to be under varying degrees of "threat". And to obtain TPOs one must establish that the trees concerned are important features influencing the character of the area, which might be under threat from felling.

At Peter Symonds such a threat resulting from a proposed development scheme went unrecognized.

One area of potential threat is the Stockbridge Road entry into Winchester where trees on the western side are largely unprotected by TPOs and where development is gradually encroaching. Opposite Weeke pond, for example, a recent planning application includes a tall building close to the roadside, where what is really needed is a line of roadside trees, with any development pushed back to allow for their growth.

In former times, Sleepers Hill, Chilbolton Avenue, Bereweeke Road, and Park Road were classified as Special Policy Areas, which gave a special status to these roads which provided a treed rim to the bowl surrounding the City. Unfortunately this classification was discarded several years ago. And there may well be other areas which are causing equal concern, so what can we do about it?

There are plans within the City Council for a tree survey, priority being given to urban Winchester, but resources are already inadequate and becominq more so. It is perhaps worth considering for a group of residents to identify what they consider to be important trees in their road or area, and then obtaining the services of an arboriculturist to assess the health of the identified trees. This report could then be sent to the City Council asking for the necessary TPO action where required.

The Trust will be investigating this approach.

Are you worried by Tree Felling or Suspicious about Building Work in Progress in your Neighbourhood ?

If you are worried, and you want to know if it is being carried out with the approval of the City Council, even if the trees in question do not have Tree Preservation Orders on them, you should telephone the City Planning Office (telephone: 01962 - 8482931848177) if it is within normal office hours.

If it is out of working hours, and particularly at weekends, you should telephone the Winchester Council Emergency Line on 01962 - 865407, when you will be put through to someone who will immediately investigate your complaint.

Antony Skinner

Home for Roger Brown's Incredible Model - TrustNews Jun 05



At last, we may have a purpose built building for Roger Brown's incredible model.

Mr Mohammed Bakhaty owns this vacant site in City Road and wishes to offer it and pay for a building to be constructed to house the model.

There will be a flat above the exhibition rooms which will help towards the costs.

The design is unashamedly gothic, to held in with the Victorian street scene, which befits a model of Victorian Winchester.

Roger and Mohammed will need support when it goes in front of the banning committee. Positive letters will be helpful when it is submitted.