Chairman's Miscellany - TrustNews Sept 2005

Following the exhibition in June of proposals for Friarsgate - now renamed Silver Hill - the Trust responded by commanding the thought and care that had been devoted to the task of understanding the development area and its relationship with the wider city and its setting. However, two major areas of concern were registered with the developers, Thornfield Plc:

1 The mass and height of the building fronting Middle Brook Street from Friarsgate to Silver Hill. Although the most recent version attempts to break up this frontage above third floor level, it is the requirement for increased car-parking and housing units over and above those of the original brief that seems to be dictating the still overbearing outcome. The Trust has consistently opposed increasing town centre parking provision, as it will only add to the existing problems of congestion and pollution. Indeed, at the Park & Ride enquiry the City Council agreed to reduce town centre parking capacity. As stated at the beginning of the master - planning exercise, the Trust believes that the traffic implications of this development have not been adequately addressed by the Local Authorities.

2 The threat that lack of variety in design will produce a monolithic result. Never before has such a large central area of this small city been developed as one scheme. The master - plan acknowledged that variety of form is an essential characteristic of Winchester and it was envisaged that diversity would be achieved by introducing other architects to design specific parts of the scheme. It now appears that this will not be the case and the Trust Council members who have been involved are not convinced that the problem has been addressed satisfactorily.

Consultation on the Housing Strategy for the South East Plan continues (see relevant notice of meeting) but, meanwhile, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has come up with yet another consultation paper on the subject. This suggests that the supply of housing should be linked to house prices and Local Authorities will be required to release development land when government set price targets are triggered. Such a policy could have serious consequences for Winchester. It was launched in mid July and responses are required by September 9th so it covers a period when Parliament is in recess and many people are on holiday. Other significant events to watch out for are the publishing of the Inspector's report on the Revised Local Plan and the enquiry into development proposals at Barton Farm - both due in October.

In 2007 the Trust will celebrate its Golden Jubilee - and it is not too early to consider how this anniversary should be marked. The Trustees would really appreciate the participation of members in making suggestions as to how we might acknowledge the past 50 years and anticipate the 50 years ahead. Allied to this exercise and encouraged by recent advice from the Charity Commission, the Trustees are re-examining the aims and objectives of the Trust and how these can be achieved. This is the opportunity for members to inform us of their aspirations for the work of the Trust and make suggestions too for implementing them.

This edition of TrustNews goes out with the notice of the Annual General Meeting on September 26th. We are very fortunate to have, as our speaker that evening Ben

Hamilton Baillie, who from examples of his work elsewhere, we hope will inspire user friendly and clutter-free streets for both residents and visitors to enjoy in Winchester.

Communications

To improve our ability to keep you informed, it would be helpful to have e-mail addresses for those of you who can be contacted electronically. Please send to: secretary@cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk. We should also be pleased to receive you views on relevant subjects in this way.

Patricia Edwards

South East Plan - TrustNews Sept 05

District Level Housing Distribution

Consultation will take place in September. Hampshire County Council will be distributing information to all households in its administrative area and inviting responses. The material will be structured to set out proposals for each sub-area of the county which is split into South Hampshire (incorporating Portsmouth, Fareham, Southampton, Havant, Gosport, and part of Winchester District), North Hampshire which forms part of the Western Corridor development area and Central Hampshire and the New Forest (the rest of Hampshire).

Winchester City Council is organising a series of public meetings and one of these will be held at the Guildhall on September 22nd at 7.30 pm.

Planning Appraisal Group - TrustNews Sep 05

Worrying about possible developments in Chilbolton Avenue has almost become a way of life for members of PAG's viewing panels, and at present there is no indication that this will change. Whatever decisions are made, its character is going to alter considerably over the next few years.

Other roads are undergoing similar pressures for development, the approach int Winchester along St Cross Road being one. This important route into the City is very special, primarily because the first large structures to be seen to the east are the Hospital of St Cross complex of buildings, and in certain evening lights the church can seem almost magical when seen across the open spaces of the cricket ground and St Cross Park. Travelling along the road, the ribbon development to the right does not obtrude because of the hedges and the domestic scale and siting of the buildings, many of which are at a lower level than the road.

This could change if two current applications were granted. The Trust has objected to both.

The large development proposed on **land adjacent to Little Orchard, St Cross Road**, involving the demolition of four houses has been refused. However, another proposal has been lodged by the same developer, to demolish two of these houses, **Overcombe & Rothiemurchus**, to make way for two blocks of flats, four 5-bedroom detached houses, and two 4-bedroom and two 3-bedroom terraced dwelling. Technically, this half of the site originally considered for development - the two houses closest to the new bridge over the railway - is part of the parish of Compton and Shawford. Physically, it is an important component of this entrance into Winchester, and the Trust considers the two 4-storey blocks of flats that are proposed for either side of the entrance into the site would be more in keeping with the approaches into Bournemouth than an ancient city such as Winchester. The development would also be clearly visible from across the valley and from St Catherine's Hill, where it would impinge on the character of the water meadows and the views of St Cross and Bushfield. *(This application has now been refused.)*

These views would also be affected by a second proposal to demolish **St Cross Lodge, St Cross Road**, to build a block of 13 flats. The previous scheme for a block of 1 4 flats was refused a year ago because of its bulk and scale, and because of the detrimental effect it would have on the adjacent Area of Special Landscape Quality. Although the design has changed, the second block is still much too large, and should not rely on the existing boundary trees to hide it from view, as is suggested in the application. Trees are an ephemeral screen at the best of times: they are subject to disease, natural disaster and human activities, and in winter they tend to shed their leaves. Many of the trees on the site are deciduous, so it will be important that any structure here does not depend on greenery to hide it, but can stand on its own merits of acceptable siting, mass and design. Because the site can be seen from across the water meadows, it would be impossible for a building on this scale - whatever its design - to merge into the background, as is suggested by the applicant. The present house is clearly visible, but its scale is domestic and its appearance elegant, neither of which would be the case with the proposed structure.

City Road is also entering a period of change, with two new residential developments due to be built, facing each other at the station end of the road. The Trust has been involved with both at the pre-application stage, which is when we prefer to have our presentations, because it is then possible to make constructive suggestions instead of carping criticisms.

The schemes are at very different stages. At **23 City Road**, the plan to replace the Winchester Tyre & Exhaust premises with flats is reaching the end of its journey, with the number of flats and the height of the building reduced to 11 flats in a 4-storey building. This scheme, which should do much to improve the street scene, is now awaiting a decision. The other development, involving the demolition of **16 & 16A City Road** for a development of ground floor shops and 14 flats, is still near the beginning of its travels. Its general design and approach is still under consideration, and it was good to see that the original concept for the scheme was along what we thought were the right lines. Its design is of particular importance, because any new building on this site will set the precedent for the other developments along the north side of City Road and the south side of Swan Lane that will surely happen at some time in the future. Successfully carried out, these two schemes should provide some much needed enhancement to this part of the town.

University College Winchester is also doing its bit to improve its local environment. The **Master's Lodge, West Downs School, Romsey Road**, is to undergo major refurbishment and alterations, and a change of use to a postgraduate academic centre; the Trust welcomes the attention that is at last being given to this sadly neglected Listed Building. An application for a New University Centre on **Sparkford Road** has also been put forward, to replace the building that was given planning permission at the beginning of 2004, because it has been found that the University requirements have changed since then. The initial response of the viewing panels that saw the plans was very positive, and at the end of August members of the Trust's council are to have a presentation of the proposals for this exciting building.

Shione Carden

Photographs of Winchester 1977-2000 - TrustNews Sept 2005

At the end of 2004, David Marklew, the former City Engineer for Winchester City Council, deposited in Hampshire Record Office a large collection of photographs of the city which he had taken over the course of about 23 years. This forms a fascinating record for the student of the city's built landscape and it will certainly increase in significance as time passes, and as the numerous changes which we have all witnessed during these decades recede from memory.

These photographs are particularly unusual because many of them include features which many photographers actually choose to avoid capturing on film! They are, I would say, an engineer's view of Winchester's townscape and encompass numerous features which are not necessarily scenic but which have nevertheless preoccupied many people over a long period of time. They include subjects such as the city's changing street furniture, its one-way systems, its road markings, car parks and traffic problems, ail matters which have played a significant part in the physical development of the city and which are frequently mentioned in other documents but have not until now been depicted so fully on film.

Of particular note are the photographs of relatively new features in Winchester: the Park and Ride car park at Bar End; congestion on the former Winchester bypass and the construction of the M3 motorway; the paving of part of the High Street; and the building of the Chesil multi-storey car park. There are over one hundred photographs of the Brooks site, as it developed from archaeological dig to shopping centre between October 1988 and 1990, showing all the knock-on problems of a large construction site in the middle of the town, including muddy roads and streams and colossal cranes and diggers in our midst. The most recent photographs in the collection are those of the river in flood in November 2000 which illustrate the problems at the lower end of the town and include interiors of some premises. It is interesting that there are no photographs of the construction of Hampshire Record Office which took place during this period - but this has fortunately been fully documented on film by others!

The collection comprises 282 photographs and over 1600 slides. The catalogue is now available on-line at www.hants.gov.uk/record-office/catalog and the

photographs have the reference W/C29/3/5-32. If anyone wishes to see them, they are welcome to call into Hampshire Record Office where they can be viewed in the searchroom. The Record Office is open Mondays to Fridays 9am to 7pm and on Saturdays 9am to 4pm. Further details may be found on-line at www.hants.govuk/record-office.

Gill Rushton, Archivist

The Late Mrs. Barbara Thackery - TrustNews Sept 05

Mrs. Barbara Thackeray died peacefully at Sutton Manor on 30th January aged 91. She was a longstanding member of the Trust and an active supporter of its aims and aspirations. Under the terms of her will many charities were named as beneficiaries, and among them was The City of Winchester Trust to which she left a very generous £500.

She was Councillor for the Ward of St. Bartholomew from 1952, becoming Mayor in 1955. After her period in office she held many other pivotal positions in the life of the City and the County. Amongst other posts she served as a Trustee of The Hospital of St. Cross, was Vice President of the County Branch of the Red Cross and was Secretary to the Friends of Winchester Cathedral.

She will long be remembered for her dedication to all the civic and charitable enterprises in which she was involved. She brought a sparkle to all to which she put her hand.

Cittaslow Update - TrustNews Sept 05

A year ago we reported in TrustNews on a visit by representatives of the Trust to Ludlow, the first town in Britain to gain Cittaslow status and now the coordinator for other applicants. Since then the 'slow city' movement has spread across Europe with over 100 towns in 10 countries joining. It embraces defence of the environment and the promotion of local skills and production to encourage and nurture the local distinctiveness of each town. It is emphatically not about creating museum towns but about local control, local patronage and a pace of development that is appropriate to the place rather than being dictated by outside market forces in their rush for growth.

In Winchester we start with many advantages, such as the biggest Farmer's Market in the country; we can build on that.

We are to make a presentation to City councillors at the Town Forum meeting on 13th October. Graeme Kidd, mayor of Ludlow and Cittaslow convenor, has accepted our invitation to start the presentation by telling the Ludlow story.

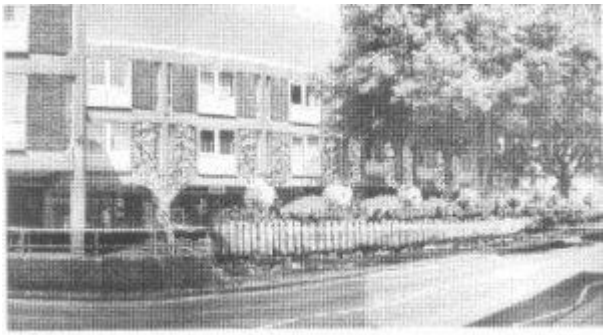
For further information:
www.ludlow.org.uk
www.slowfoodludlow.org.uk

Kate Macintosh

Lipstick on the Gorilla 5 - TrustNews Sept 2005



before



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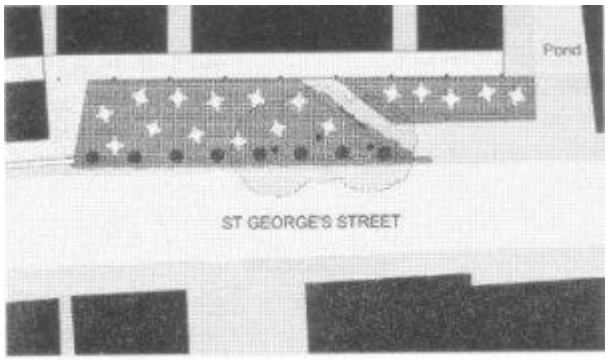

plan

This area of St George's street, outside a number of shops, is currently a rather grim and forbidding place. Shopkeepers and others would like to see this transformed into a useful and friendly space. This area is always in sunlight most of the day.

Here are illustrations of how it might improve. Railings and a hedge are shown running along the road edge, incorporating a line of Bay trees. Trellising is introduced to the 'Casson' building to grow climbing plants up onto the first floor panels. This will help soften an unattractive building.

Support is needed to improve this part of the City.



view across terrace

Huw Thomas