Chairman's Miscellany - TrustNews March 2007

Fifty years ago, in 1957, the Trust was founded to protect the character of Winchester from the policies of central and local government under the guise of ‘slum clearance’. It has had some success in saving buildings from demolition and restoring them to further useful life. It has also fought with some success against damaging road proposals and made constructive contributions to restoring buildings that Winchester can be proud of. The campaign to mitigate the effects of Government policy guidance (PPG3) was also successful in persuading the City Council to encourage the production of Neighbourhood Design Statements and Local Design Statements as planning guidance.

Emerging policies for the future will demand a continuing need for vigilance to ensure that the unique character of Winchester and its setting is maintained for future generations. Although the South East Regional Plan refersn to Winchester’s unique historic importance, the policies to safeguard Winchester from the inevitable development pressures are not yet apparent. The Government lays stress on the need for community involvement in formulating the plans for the future, so make sure that your views are made known to the planners before any decisions are taken.

The City Council has recently published a vision for the future of Winchester entitled “One Vision One Place Winchester - Towards Our Future”. It is available on the Council website and also, for ease of access, on the Trust’s website. Unfortunately there are no paper copies available although it is the stated intention of the Council to consult residents on the content. The Trust has been invited to a meeting on March 13th when the ‘Vision’ will be discussed. Inevitably there are conflicting ambitions that will need to be resolved but setting them out is a step in the right direction and we should like to have your views before the meeting.

Again this newsletter is going to be printed before the Trust Council has time to consider its response to the amended plans for Silver Hill, but the comments will be on the website and emailed to those for whom we have an address.

The first event to celebrate the 50th anniversary will be the launch on March 23rd of the book written and generously donated by Phil Yates for publication by the Trust entitled ‘Time Gentlemen Please! – The Story of Winchester’s Pubs, Breweries and Hotels Past and Present.’ After that date it will be on sale at P & G Wells bookshop in College Street, the SPCK bookshop and at the Heritage Centre, price £9.95.

Paul Grover, Director of the Solent Architecture Centre, has kindly agreed to give a talk for the Trust on May 22nd. He is a speaker whose enthusiasm for his subject is catching so we are sure it will be an event to enjoy – see Diary Dates. The Trust will also be running an Awards Scheme this year which is being organised by Norman and Ann Roberts. Our website is being given a new look by Barrie Brinkman and we hope you will find it interesting and easy to use.

The fact that councillors have been seemingly unable to discuss planning applications is a subject that has long been contentious among Trust members and Harvey Cole has kindly and helpfully addressed the issue in this TrustNews.

Finally I should like to thank members who sent in suggestions for marking this anniversary. They are all being considered for appropriate action. It has also been suggested that visits to places of interest in places such as Oxford, Portsmouth, Chichester etc by coach could be arranged if a sufficient number of members would support them. Please let us know if you would be interested.

Patricia Edwards

Planning Appraisal Group - TrustNews Mar 07

Commenting on the planning applications every week gives an interesting overview of the demands being made upon the general character of Winchester. These mainly seem to be at two completely different ends of the scale: many new large structures, or lots of loft conversions, their associated dormers and numerous 2-storey side extensions. The northern half of Winchester is clearly under pressure from large-scale developments, as is very evident from the many applications for schemes on Stockbridge Road, Andover Road and Chilbolton Avenue.

On **Stockbridge Road** these range from commercial developments (the proposed **Aldi** and **Waitrose** stores) to homes for the elderly (the demolition of **3-5 Burnett Close** for sheltered accommodation, and the demolition of **Warden Hill** and two other sizeable houses on the opposite side of the road for a 3-storey block of 80 assisted-living bedrooms). All these still await a decision by the Local Planning Authority or on appeal. This area also has to cope with all the residential developments that have already been built, such as **Salters**, **English Courtyard**, and **Weeke Manor**, and those that have been granted but are not yet built, such as **1-3 Westley Close**.

The character of **Andover Road** is under a less obvious challenge, because the siting of the largest development (the demolition of **Winton House** for 77 dwellings) will not impinge upon the street scene. However, although welcoming the reduced number of 19 dwellings it is now proposed should replace the **Greenacres Special School**, the Trust still feels the resultant density of 38dph is too high for a neighbourhood with no local shops and would be more appropriate for a site nearer the city centre. Decisions on both schemes are still to be made.

Chilbolton Avenue continues to suffer from the onslaught of proposals to demolish existing houses to make way for higher density residential developments. The recent proposal to demolish **Ardmhor, 38 Chilbolton Avenue**, and another house and build 10 dwellings in their stead has been withdrawn. A current application to demolish **Lang House** for a cumbersome block of fourteen 2-bedroom flats is however still under consideration. The viewing panels felt the mass and unbroken roof line of the pseudo Arts & Crafts 3-storey structure that is proposed would be an unsatisfactory replacement for the gables of the existing 2-storey house, which was built in 1910 and is one of the few original houses remaining in the road. The Trust objected to both these proposals.

Two-storey extensions, loft conversions and their apparently essential dormers can unfortunately be installed anywhere in the city in houses of any period. It is sad that only a small proportion of the additions are sympathetically designed to appreciate the scale and character of the original house, whether this is in a Victorian terrace or in an estate built in the second half of the last century. As might be expected, they are mostly designed from the inside, to provide the required additional accommodation, and all too frequently consideration of how it would look from the outside comes a very poor second, or is not considered at all.

The effect that large developments will have on the character of the suburbs of Winchester is very obvious, and it is hoped that the already stretched infrastructure will be able to cope with all the additional residents they are bringing into the city.

The 2-storey extensions and loft conversions have a less obvious impact on the character of the city as a whole, but they will have a cumulative affect that may take us all by surprise at a later date because of the precedents that have been set by granting them. A recent proposal for a roof alteration at **7 Alswitha Terrace, King Alfred Place** is a good example of this, because the Design Statement uses examples of ugly rear extensions in the neighbourhood to justify building yet another inappropriate and unsympathetic addition. As this would be detrimental to the character of the period terrace house and could also be seen by the general public, we objected to the scheme, feeling there is no need to compound the mistakes made by previous permissions.

Two recent developments proposed in the city centre are disturbing. The site at **23 City Road** has been sold on with permission to build 11 flats in place of the existing Winchester Tyre & Exhaust Centre. The new owner, Beechcroft Developments, wanting to return to the 14 flats that were found unacceptable on the first time around, has proposed a structure that would have too great a mass and height for its surroundings, with an inconsistent and pseudo period design which gives the building a fussy appearance that the crisp design of the permitted scheme had avoided. There would be no access from City Road, although one of the unreachable bedroom windows has been designed to appear like an entrance! Another scheme proposes to demolish nearby **38-42 Stockbridge Road**, to the east of the railway bridge, and replace it with a 3-storey residential development with a contemporary design that fails to respect the character of its neighbours – the remainder of the 2-storey terrace to the west and the single storey building to the east. We also found it unacceptable that there were no drawings of how the proposed development would appear in the street scene, a narrow part of the road where we felt a 3-storey building would be detrimental to the general ambience, especially for pedestrians. We have objected to both these applications.

The developers of the **Royal Observer Corps HQ, Abbotts Road**, have put in another application to demolish the existing structure, to which we have no objection. We wait with interest to see what will be decided by the Planning Development Control Committee this time around!

Shione Carden

A Winchester Treasure: Warden White's ceiling - TrustNews Mar 2007



In 1885 some interior alterations were put in hand to remodel the rooms at Winchester College, occupied by the Warden when in residence, to create what is known as ‘Tenth Chamber’, a dormitory for the Scholars. In the course of this work it was discovered that the partition walls were of reused oak boards covered with canvas and paper, concealing their original decoration. The then Bursar, T.F. Kirby, an active member of the Society of Antiquaries, recognising the black and white decoration as belonging to the 16th century, undertook some research and identified them as being attributable to Warden John White (1542-1554), and commemorating the marriage of Queen Mary to Philip of Spain in Winchester Cathedral on 25th July 1554, which he had attended as Bishop of Lincoln.



Kirby exhibited this find to the Society of Antiquaries in 1886. He reported that 135 8” x 1” boards about 6½ feet long were discovered. When assembled, some of the boards made up panels decorated with a pair of medallions, one bearing the initials “IW”, attributed by Kirby to John White, and either a female Tudor head or a male Spanish head. Other wider boards fitted together to form fragments of a frieze, decorated with portrait medallions or plaques containing “Vive le roi” or texts from Ecclesiastes. Kirby also said that he had had some difficulty in matching some of the pieces and concluded that a considerable part was missing.



The oak boards were stored at the College until 1915 when they were loaned to the Victoria and Albert Museum, where it was classified as a wall painting. It returned to the College in 1946, by which time it was clear that that some of the panels were from a ceiling, but no suitable site could be found where it might be reinstalled. It was stored for a time in the College Cheese Room and then in the Beer Cellar. In 1974, Elizabeth Lewis, the then Curator of the Winchester City Museum, who was researching timber ceilings, asked the College for permission to study the panels. This eventually led to an agreement between the City and the College to have the boards cleaned and restored for display in the Westgate Museum, which is not dissimilar in size and construction to the chamber above the Middle Gate of the College, where they were probably originally installed. Sadly, space does not permit an account of the highly professional process of restoration that was put in hand. The timber used in the majority of the panels is close grained and of Baltic origin. The other panels are constructed from English oak with a more open grain pattern.

White was born at Farnham in 1510 and entered Winchester College aged 11. He went up to New College, Oxford in 1527 and in 1534 was in the service of Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. In 1535 he became Headmaster of Winchester College, Prebendary of Winchester Cathedral 1541, Warden of Winchester College 1542, Bishop of Lincoln 1554, Bishop of Winchester 1556-1560, the last Roman Catholic to hold the post.

I am in the debt of Elizabeth Lewis whose detailed research into the origins of the ceiling is published in the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society, Volume 51, 1995, 137-165. I am also very appreciative of the help and advice I have received from Ross Turle of the Winchester City Museums Service, and Suzanne Foster, the Archivist at Winchester College.

Robin Merton

How free are planning councillors? - TrustNews Mar 07

If a controversial development is proposed in the area where you live, it might seem useful if your local councillor also serves on the committee which decides, but only up to a point. You will need to appreciate the basis on which applications are decided and also the limits within which councillors are required to act.

The Law
Section 38(6) ot he Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004 provides that in determining applications this shall be in accordance with the approved Development Plan ‘unless material considerations indicate otherwise’. ‘Material considerations’ will vary from case to case, but can include matters not directly related to the contents of the relevant plan. But the thrust of the provision is to enable plans to be interpreted with a degree of flexibility. As they age, conditions change: indeed, it is common for work on preparing a new plan to be started even before the current one has been adopted. It is therefore wrong to expect, as many do, that a proposal which conflicts with the plan will automatically be refused. (They rarely seem to adopt the complementary view that a scheme they violently dislike must nevertheless be approved if it conforms with the plan’s provisions.)

Councillors’ responsibilities
Members of planning committees are said to be acting in a ‘quasi-judicial’ capacity. Essentially this means that they must deal with proposals with an open mind and neither let their decision be influenced by personal or other interests nor allow it to appear that they may have been under such influence. In particular, it is unacceptable to form a definite view to oppose (or support) a proposal without giving it proper consideration. If, for example, a councillor is so fundamentally opposed to mobile ‘phone masts that he announces that he will never support one, a vote on any such application could be regarded as maladministration by the local authority concerned. It would be rather like a judge telling a prisoner who appears in the dock: ‘I don’t like your face.’ In such a case, the proper course for the councillor is to declare that he or she will not participate in the vote, without being prevented from taking part in the debate. In the debate, councillors need to ensure that they are present for the whole of the discussion, since leaving the room, even for a short time, can be deemed a disqualification.

So far, this probably all sounds straightforward common sense. But unfortunately in many areas (including both Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council) a combination of unjustified apprehension on the part of councillors and misguided pressure from officers has been threatening to weaken and undermine the effective role of councillors.

There are instances of local members being told that the very fact of sitting for a ward where there is an application means that they could be regarded as having a prejudicial interest and should not take part in the decision-making. More insidiously, where there is a proposal of such importance that the final decision may well be referred to a full committee rather than a subcommittee, or even to full Council, all the members have been warned that they may find themselves in a quasi-judicial role and are induced to be unnecessarily inhibited.

In some cases so many members have been persuaded to withdraw from discussion that it has been difficult to secure a quorum to take a decision. On one occasion a Council was led to request a special exemption on an application for a new football ground because virtually all the members held season tickets from the club involved.

Apart from producing the odd result that only councillors from other wards can actively discuss applications in wards represented by members who are also on

planning committees, the illogical conclusion of an over-restrictive approach is that the only action that committee members can take is to vote right at the end of the process: any earlier expression of opinion would, by definition, be made before all the evidence was available.

Planning committees are not juries. Individual members are more akin to judges - with the right and duty to ask questions and request information as a case develops, but reserving judgement until after the summing-up.

Some simple guidelines which HC found useful while serving on the County's Planning and Transportation Committee - and which never caused any problem - suggest themselves.

Starting from the Section of the 2004 Act quoted earlier, the key question to be asked of any new application is whether or not it appears to be in conformity with the Development Plan. This will indicate where the burden of proof lies: if it does conform, then the question is whether other considerations can constitute a valid reason for refusal. If it does not conform, what matters can be identified to suggest that public benefits from the proposal would outweigh upholding the plan?

The planning officer handling the case should be asked for his initial opinion as to whether the application would mean a departure from the plan or not. Members can then explain to their constituents how the proposal needs to be approached. They can, and should, gather information and make their own inquiries and feel entirely free to contact groups and individuals in their wards to sound out opinion.

As time passes and information accumulates, a (planning committee) member will inevitably begin to develop an opinion. There can be no objection to replying to questions about voting intentions along the lines: the burden of proof is on the council to show why this should be refused (or on the applicant to demonstrate why it should be allowed) and, on the basis of the information I have so far, I am inclined to oppose (or support) it. But I have not yet come to a final conclusion, and will not do so until the Committee has discussed the officer's report on the matter.

At the meeting itself, the member should report on the reactions received from constituents, setting them out in a full and balanced way on both sides of the argument so that a proper picture is presented to other members. At that stage it is perfectly in order to argue in favour of approval or refusal, on the basis of all the material that is by then available.

It is also vital to ensure that the judgement is influenced only by the relevant considerations. Many points raised by constituents will not be planning matters at all and may well not be material considerations either. In weighing the relative strength of support and opposition, it is almost always the case that a proposal arouses more active hostility than acceptance. Hence the frequency of the complaint 'they said they were consulting us but they never listened to what we said'. Councillors should of course listen – to both sides- but they can only make one decision. If councillors ensure they understand the planning process and attempt to convey its basic points to their voters, that is a refrain we might at least hear less often.

Harvey Cole & Patrick Davis

The English Centre at Winchester - TrustNews Mar 2007

The aim of the English Centre is to create a world-class attraction in Winchester enabling visitors from all over the world to see, hear and experience the global evolution of English from a mixed tongue of three tribes to the shared speech of two billion people.

Through an exciting variety of exhibits and facilities, many of them interactive, the English Centre will embrace the enormously varied forms of English from across the ethnic, social and geographical spectrum. It will show how English has been a vital tool of communication, constantly adapting to new demands and circumstances and meeting the world's need for a common 'second language'.

The proposed site for the Centre would be the Woolstaplers Hall at the heart of the new Silver Hill development. As a nineteenth-century warehouse it has ideal proportions and spaces for our needs and it will act as a cultural anchor to the town centre enhancing Winchester's core offer of cathedral, college and castle. The target date for opening is Spring 2012 to enable the Centre to be part of the 'cultural programme' linked to the London Olympic games.

We currently have the support of Winchester City Council, Winchester Cathedral, Winchester College, and Winchester University. For example, at the end of 2006 the University funded a feasibility study by consultants Leisure Catalyst which projected that the Centre should attract 100,000+ visitors a year and that this would generate an adequate income stream to cover all costs and to invest for a regular renewal of the exhibition content. Meanwhile Haley-Sharpe, a leading exhibition design company, has provided us with our first images of what might appear in the Centre.

Our next, development stage involves the commissioning of a concept and design brief, a capital costs study, a business plan and a fundraising Plan. This stage is being funded by local money. The implementation stage will be financed by a national and international fundraising campaign.

The Centre is being registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee under the name 'The English Centre @ Winchester Ltd'. The Directors of the company, all residents of Winchester, are Professor Christopher Mulvey (Chair), Evelyn Thurlby (Company Secretary), Julian Chisholm, Edward Fennell, and Cllr. Dominic Hiscock.

The proposed project has been described by professionals as unique and compelling. Beachcroft, a London law firm with a branch in Winchester, which has agreed to undertake the legal work for the English Centre on a pro-bono basis, says 'We are proud to be associated with a project involving learning, quality and heritage'.

For more information contact: christopher.mulvey@winchester.ac.uk.

Professor Christopher Mulvey

City of Winchester Trust Design Awards - TrustNews Mar 07

Do you know what you like when you see it? This year the City of Winchester Trust is inviting members of the public as well as its own members to nominate recent buildings for its Design Awards.

The Trust's Design Award plaques mark a steadily increasing number of the best of Winchester's new buildings down the years. The last were selected in 2004 and presented in early 2005 at the University of Winchester's Award-winning West Downs Centre.

Now it's 2007 and time for the next set of Awards. As before there are six categories of entry: new buildings (of any size); sympathetic extensions to existing buildings; rehabilitation / restoration of older buildings; landscape, planting and treatment of open spaces; shop fronts, fascias and facades; streetscape – lighting, signs, street furniture, walls, fencing and ground surface. Depending on the number and quality of entries, Awards may not be made in all categories. The buildings must be within the City of Winchester, be visible to the public (at least externally) and have been completed between 1 July 2003 and 1 May 2007. For these awards the public face of the buildings and their contribution to the Winchester scene are more important than interiors, unless these are public spaces.

The closing date for entries is Monday 14 May 2007, and the information required is simple and cheap to prepare, to encourage a wide range of entries. The judging will be by a panel of Trust members and others, led by George Ferguson, Past President of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He is a principal in Acanthus Ferguson Mann Architects in Bristol, and has a particular interest in historic buildings and towns. Voting for an additional Members' Award, which may or may not coincide with the judges' choice, will be at the Trust AGM in September, followed by the announcement of Award winners and commendations at a presentation ceremony in October.

This year members of the public as well as of the Trust are invited to nominate buildings to be entered. If you know the architect for the building you could prompt him or her directly. If not, just complete an entry form as far as you can and return it to the Heritage Centre as soon as possible for the Trust to check its details and, if the building is eligible, pass on to its architect or designer for entering. Entry forms are available from the Trust at the Heritage Centre, 32 Upper Brook Street, Winchester SO23 8DG, tel 01962 851664 email secretary@cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk.

Norman Roberts

Snapshots of Winchester - TrustNews Mar 07



At the end of 2004, David Marklew, the former Winchester City Engineer deposited in the Hampshire Record Office a large collection of photographs taken by him between 1977 and 2000. This recently-catalogued collection forms a fascinating record for the student of the city's built landscape and will certainly increase in significance as time passes and as the numerous changes during these decades recede from memory. Many of the images are unusual because they include features that photographers often choose to avoid! Far from the picturesque images of historic Winchester that abound in local postcard collections, this engineer's view of Winchester's townscape encompasses numerous features which may not be scenic but which have nevertheless preoccupied people over a long time: the city's changing street furniture, its one-way systems, its road markings, car parks and traffic problems - all matters which have played a significant part in the physical development of the city and which are frequently mentioned in other Winchester High Street - Preparing for paving 1975 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. Over 100 photographs of the Brooks site, as it developed from archaeological dig to shopping centre between 1988 and 1990, show 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.


Junction Middle Brook Street/Friarsgate,1979

The most recent photographs record the river in flood in November 2000, illustrating the problems at the lower end of town - a situation resonating through Winchester's history, going back to the building of the cathedral on marshy ground and its underpinning in the early 20fh century, and echoed in a 19th century engineer's warning of some devastating epidemic likely to arise from Winchester's cumulative 'cesspool evil', leading to the move of the Royal Hampshire County Hospital from the city centre to Romsey Road.

Edited from "Friends Reunited" The Friends of Hampshire Museums and Archives Service newsletter

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The Black Swan A story of our Time - TrustNews Mar 2007

Once upon a time there was a Black Swan that lived on a building in Winchester on the corner of Southgate Street in Winchester's Conservation Area where it was admired by passers by and valued by the citizens as a longstanding local asset. One day, the Black Swan disappeared from the building but nobody seemed to know why although there were rumours that there had been an accident.

Enquiries established that the building belonged to Winchester City Council. Now it happened that the granddaughter of the craftsman who had carved the Black Swan many years ago heard about this sad loss and told the City Council that one of her relations would be able to restore the bird to its former glory. But the City Council said it was not their concern because the building was leased to the Atlantic Housing Association so she would have to talk to them. This she did and the person she spoke to agreed to look into it and 'get back to her'.

Months went by and nothing happened so she contacted the City of Winchester Trust who agreed to help in this quest for restoration. They too contacted the City Council and the Atlantic Housing Association with similar results though the representative from the Housing Association assured the Trust that he would contact the granddaughter of the original craftsman to arrange for the restoration. To date he has not done so …the Trust will continue this quest. (To be continued)

A Home for King Alfred Buses - TrustNews Mar 07

Over the 22 years since it started the King Alfred Bus Day each January 1st has brought many visitors to Winchester and carried something like 7.000 passengers free of charge! Whilst the Friends of King Alfred Buses is a registered charity, only the Hampshire County Council has given a small grant towards the restoration of a 60-year-old King Alfred bus located in an Irish field, which we hope, will be returned to full working order and seen again in Winchester. At the moment, the storage of the buses is a major problem as they are scattered in various places.Luckily our good friends at Stagecoach offered the use of their old garage on the Broadway bus station but, with the redevelopment of Silver Hill, the Friends will have to leave. The point of this article is to ask if you know of a suitable piece of land that the Friends could purchase to create a garage, ideally somewhere in the immediate vicinity of Winchester. If you have ever been to Long Handborough railway station yard and seen the amazing Oxford museum workshop, you can see the sort of facility we envisage, complete with educational areas. Recently they have opened a new hall devoted to William Morris - Lord Nuffield - complete with his early push bikes, cars etc. and even pieces of carpet with a Morris Minor car woven into it. Surely we in Winchester can create another asset to add to the City's heritage for future generations.

New Members - TrustNews Mar 07

Welcome to our new members:

Vera and Mark Hogg,
Mr & Mrs G.M. Morris,

During the last few months the Trust has been sorry to record the deaths of three longstanding and supportive members -
Mr Bill Kirby,
Mr Dick Sawyer,
and Miss Lucy Busser.

Electronic Mail - TrustNews Mar 07

It would help us to keep you better informed if those with e-mail would send us their addresses. The best way to do this is by e-mailing the Trust to:
secretary@cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk

We will not disclose the information to any third party.

Hockley Viaduct - TrustNews Mar 07

You have no doubt seen in the local press the decision of the Minister, David Lamy, to refuse the granting of listed status for Hockley Viaduct. The Friends of Hockley Viaduct have offered some funds to make good the damage to the parapets and are currently in discussion with Winchester City Council.

Dates for Your Diary - TrustNews Mar 07

Thursday 8th March at Winchester Family Church, Stanmore Lane at 7.00 pm

Public Meeting arranged by Winchester City Council to hear your views on the development of Winchester over the next 20 years.

Saturday 31st March – Book Sale, St Maurice Covert

Tuesday 22nd May "*Community voices in designing for the future*"

A talk by Paul Grover, Director of the Solent Architecture Centre
at the Milner Hall, St. Peter Street, Winchester 7.15 pm

Summer Evening Walks – Advance notice – The first walk will be on
Thursday, 7th June at 6.30pm. Meet at the Cathedral West Door.
This will be a special event including 2 tours: 1. William Walker 2. Stained Glass