Chairman's Miscellany - TrustNews June 2008

I write this in the first day of more normal May weather - grey and cool. The recent wonderful sunshine has advanced those members' gardens which will be open on Sunday, 8th June so there should be a repeat of the great success of last year. Do visit these differing gardens, relax with other Trust members and, in some, enjoy tea. You will find the list of gardens on a flyer in this issue of TrustNews. My thanks to the gardeners for their willingness to repeat this event.

I am pleased to report two splendid gifts to the Trust in memory of Pat Edwards. The first comes from her daughter Susan. Those who attended the AGM last September will recall the presentation to Pat of a painting by Keith Leaman of Cheyne Court. It was prized by Pat and it has now returned to the Trust. The second gift is from Jeffrey Smith, one of our Vice-Presidents. It is a painting of the Westgate and marks his appreciation of Pat's work for the City and particularly her interest in and support for that notable landmark. These paintings will hang in the Heritage Centre and the Trustees are most grateful for such generosity.

Members will recall my mention, in the last TrustNews, of a seminar to be held in March on the Dean and Chapter's proposals to build in the Inner Close and, particularly, in the Dean Gamier garden. The seminar was postponed and will now take place on 4th June. I will attend with Michael Carden and will comment in the next issue.

Sterling work by the Policy Group produced thoughtful and far seeing comments on the Winchester Town Access Plan. More hard work for the Trust took Norman Roberts to a conference on traffic in historic towns organised by the English Historic Towns Forum and to preparing a full report. The impact of traffic in the city has to be tackled and we welcome the broad approach being taken by Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council. The comments and report mentioned above can be read on the Trust's website.

Finally, you will see details of a full and exciting list of walks this summer. My thanks to those who will lead the walks and especially to Chris Pile who has organised the programme and the successful series of winter talks in the Heritage Centre. May the sunshine return to enhance the enjoyment of the walks.

Iain Patton

Planning Appraisal Group - TrustNews Jun 08

An essential attribute of the successful developer is persistence, as is clearly demonstrated on many sites by the repeated applications for similar schemes, coupled with skilful use of the appeal system.

A good example of this is **Lang House, 27 Chilbolton Avenue**, where it is always claimed the house had no architectural merit and should be demolished for a high density development. On each occasion we objected, saying it made a considerable

contribution to the street scene and had the merit of being one of the original houses in the road. The first scheme, a 3-storey block with lower ground floor and three detached houses at the rear, was put forward in August 2004 and refused in September. It went to Appeal, but was withdrawn before the Public Inquiry took place. The second scheme, by Millgate Homes for a 3 & 4 storey block of 14 flats, appeared on the lists in January 2007, was refused in February, went to Appeal by Informal Hearing in August, and was dismissed in November because the Inspector considered the development would harm the character and appearance of the neighbourhood. The third scheme, very similar in scale and design to the second, was put forward in July 2007, before the second (later dismissed) scheme had even been lodged for appeal; it was refused in October and Millgate Homes have gone to Appeal yet again. Only a few changes have been made since the second scheme was dismissed last November; there is, however, a different Inspector and this could be why it's worth while going to appeal again — perhaps he might have a different opinion. We attended the Informal Hearing into the third application and now await the decision with fingers crossed.

Other developments are going through a similar process. Banner Homes want to demolish **17 Bereweeke Road** for a residential development: their first proposal for 12 dwellings was made in June 2007, refused in September and went to Appeal by Written Representation in March 2008 — a decision is still awaited. Their second scheme for 11 dwellings was put forward in January 2008, when we again objected. No decision has yet been made by the Planners, who might perhaps be waiting to see the results of the appeal. The first proposal to build an **Aldi store in Stockbridge Road** on the site of **The Chimneys, 1 Burnett Close**, was in April 2005, and was eventually dismissed on Appeal by Public Inquiry in March 2007. There were further attempts at getting planning permission during 2006 and 2007, culminating in March 2008 with the present scheme, which still awaits a decision by the Planners. The development proposed in 2007 was refused in September and has just gone to appeal by Public Inquiry; we will be writing in support of the Local Authority's refusal. We have objected to all the Aldi proposals, feeling this is not an appropriate location for a store such as this, any more than it is for the permitted Waitrose store.

It has just been announced that Banner Homes have withdrawn both their Appeals against refusals of two schemes at **35-37 Dean Lane**. Is this due to the present economic uncertainty? If so, it could perhaps indicate a welcome relief in the pressures on Winchester for development in its suburbs.

Decisions have been made on several schemes mentioned in previous TrustNews. The applications for a nursing home in place of the **Stanmore Hotel, Stanmore Lane**, and for residential student units at **Erasmus Park Student Village, Easton Lane**, have both been refused, as have the demolition of **Kirtling House, 52 Chilbolton Avenue** for 12 new dwellings and the new shopfront at **6B Parchment Street**. The proposal to convert the barn of **Wharf Farm, Wharf Hill**, and build 4 new dwellings has been withdrawn.

The Trust has objected to four major schemes.

We felt the mass and scale of the replacement building proposed for the demolished **Heart in Hand, 40 Bar End Road**, were too large for its surroundings and that its undistinguished design would do nothing to improve this important route into the city. The new structure, housing a hair dressing salon/physiotherapy unit and 12 cramped flats with virtually no storage space, would take up the whole of the site and have a bulk we felt would seem overpowering and be detrimental to the appearance of the modestly-sized terraces that make up much of this part of Bar End Road.

We also felt the scheme to refurbish the existing 3-storey office block at **Winnall Corner, 1 Winnall Valley Road**, and build a 3- (and partly 4-) storey office block in place of the existing 1-storey warehouse was a missed opportunity of improving a site at the interface between areas of industrial and residential use, and that the height of the new block could be detrimental to the amenities of those living nearby. The aim to build the new offices in the out-dated 1960s style of the existing block was thought a great mistake, and we felt the landscaping proposed for the large car park was inadequate for this position.

Banner Homes want to demolish **West Hayes Lodge, Sarum Road**, for 10 dwellings. As is usual for houses proposed for demolition in this area, it isn't claimed to be structurally unsound, but that it has no architectural merit (except, in our opinion, that it's one of the original houses). We objected to its demolition, the loss of trees and the large area of hard surfacing needed for 20 parking spaces.

We also objected to the 31 residential dwellings and community/retail unit proposed for the site of the **Winchester Laundry, Hyde Abbey Road**. While having no problem with a contemporary design here, the "office block" style proposed for the 4-storey block on the corner of Hyde Abbey and Gordon Roads was felt most unsympathetic to the character of the neighbourhood. Other aspects of concern were the lack of internal access to the bin and cycle stores and the full-length windows on the facades facing onto the road, which could prove unsightly unless care was taken to ensure nothing was stacked against them. Members of the Trust also attended a workshop arranged by WCC for local residents to allow their views to be heard and included in the design brief for the site. Their main concerns were that the height of the development should be mainly 2-storey, the sight lines for vehicles on the dangerous corner should be improved by setting back the corner building, and that there should be full on-site parking because of existing parking problems in Gordon Road.

Shione Carden

ROMANCE in the Upper High Street - TrustNews Jun 2008

Romance in the Upper High Street? Hard to believe, isn't it? But ROMANSE? Yes. If you don't know what lurks behind the discreet plate on the door of number 5, you will be no wiser but a small group of Trust Council members were privileged to visit the Romanse control room recently and get the inside story.

Romanse stands for "Road Management System for Europe" which began as a research project, funded by the EU, initially based in Southampton and later also established in Winchester by Hampshire County Council. Behind that discreet door is a hi-tech control room, equipped with computers video walls and communication desks overseen by two controllers. The screens show not just the roads in and around Winchester but across Hampshire and further afield. Here they monitor traffic flows at many locations and respond to problems and incidents.

The Romanse unit's work covers three main areas, traffic and traffic signal monitoring, information for drivers, and public transport information. The staff work closely with the police, the local radio stations and the Highways Agency to ensure that up to date information is available to the public through radio, TV, variable message signs, commercial information systems like Traffic Master and websites. The car park occupancy signs and the bus stop information signs are also managed from this control room.



Every set of traffic signals is connected to the centre and even if one bulb goes out an alarm sounds straight away. If problems arise such as an accident or broken down vehicle the signal phasing can be overridden to suit. Of particular interest to the Trust members was how the traffic signals are phased. The group was given an explanation of how the UTC (Urban Traffic Control) computer links the signals and optimises the demands of traffic and pedestrians. Inevitably neither drivers nor pedestrians get the priority they desire but it was explained that the primary function of signals is road safety rather than simply maximising traffic flow.

The group found the visit very enlightening and it may be possible to arrange another visit for Trust members in the future. If you are interested please contact the Secretary at the Heritage Centre.

Further information about Romanse and live traffic information can be found at http://www.romanse.org.uk/winchester.htm

At the end of April a group of about a dozen Trust council and panel members were given a tour of the newly completed first phase of the County Council's refurbished offices at Ashburton Court. This followed consultations during the design stage.



The group was shown around by Hampshire's Assistant Director Property Services, Steve Clow, who reiterated the reasons for the project which is costing £40m, including the purchase of other property as part of the County Council's Strategic Property Review. This aims to intensify the use of a core of buildings. The County Council took the decision to refurbish Ashburton Court because it had reached the point where major repair and refurbishment had become essential. "Doing nothing was not an option" he said. External cladding had major defects and most of the services, lifts, windows, internal lighting and ceilings were at the end of their life. Patching up the building was ruled out as costly and an unsustainable investment, not least because of the need to remove asbestos, which had been used extensively throughout the building. Instead the County resolved to strip the building and create a highly sustainable new envelope around the existing structure, aiming to reduce the building's energy consumption by at least 50 per cent through the use of highly insulated materials and natural ventilation, the installation of efficient plant, heating and lighting systems, and the recycling of waste heat from the IT suite. At the same time, it meant the opportunity could be taken to make the building more acceptable to the Winchester scene.



In addition to being more energy efficient, there will be room for over 1000 staff, compared to the 600 who previously occupied the building. The work is being partially funded from capital receipts that will be generated from the sale of vacated offices elsewhere in Winchester. The top deck parking (about 250 spaces) has been relocated to Bar End to be replaced with more office space, a staff restaurant, meeting rooms and landscaped courtyards. The three wings of Ashburton Court are being refurbished in sequence. The east wing is already complete and re-occupied, work is in progress on the north wing and has now started on the west wing. The building is being stripped back to the concrete frame with all the walls, ceilings and services removed. Instead of false ceilings the floors have been raised to take cables below and the ceilings are now the original coffered concrete, simply painted. The concrete is an important part of the energy saving process, being cooled at night by fresh air in summer as well as retaining heat in winter. Ventilation is by large "chimneys" or wind troughs which draw air naturally through the offices from the courtyards. This avoids the need for air conditioning to most of the building.



The offices have been furnished to a good standard with desks and work areas which allow flexible working; lighting automatically adjusts to the correct brightness for the prevailing conditions and senses when people are present.

The outside appearance of the building has been transformed: the height has been reduced and the severe concrete cladding replaced from the ground up, with brick from the local Michelmersh brickworks. The City of Winchester Trust was grateful to have its contribution recognised when Steve Clow and Ian Parker, formerly the Head of Estates, thanked the Trust for its input at the design stage.

David Marklew

Summer Walks 2008 - TrustNews Jun 2008

Walks start at 6.30pm from the Heritage Centre (unless otherwise stated). Please arrive at the start point in good time to allow a prompt start. There is a suggested donation of £2 per person. Non-members welcome.

5th June	**Alfred, The Final Chapter** (Meet outside the River Park Leisure Centre)	**Barbara Hall** President of the Friends of Hyde Abbey Gardens
12th June	**Are Spaces Important?**	**Keith Leaman** Architect & Trust Council Member
19th June	**My Likes and Dislikes** (Meet Orams Arbour adjacent to Chimney House)	**Andrew Rutter** Retired City Conservation Officer
26th June	**Magdalene Hill Down** (Meet opposite cemetery, Alresford Road)	**Lynn Fomison, Don Bryan**
3rd July	**St Cross Hospital and Chapel** (Meet at Porters' Lodge, St Cross)	**Michael Carden MBE** Trust Vice Chairman
10th July	**Regency Winchester**	**Elizabeth Proudman** Blue Badge City Guide
17th July	**Winchester College** (Meet at Porter's Lodge, College Street)	**Suzanne Foster, Patrick MacClure**
24th July	**Theatres & Cinemas of Winchester**	**Phil Yates** Trust Member & Author
31st July	**Terraced Houses of Winchester**	**George Saumarez Smith** Director, Robert Adam Architects
7th August	**Myths & Legends of Winchester**	**Matthew Feldwick** Author
14th August	**The University of Winchester** (Meet outside main reception, Sparkford Rd)	**John Mann** Director of Estates
21st August	**To Be Annonced** Please check at Heritage Centre or Website	
28th August	**To Be Annonced** Please check at Heritage Centre or Website	

4th September	**Hospital Field Excavation** (Parking opposite cemetery, Alresford Rd)	**Simon Roffey** University of Winchester

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Trustees 2007/8- TrustNews Jun 2008

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Winter Talks Review - TrustNews Jun 2008

An interesting variety of topics was presented for our programme of seven "Winter Talks", held at the Heritage Centre. I am very grateful to our speakers and thank them for their time and effort, and also to Iain, David, John and Jo for their attendance and help with the coffee and biscuits! I thank all who attended for their support and donations, which exceeded £200, for the benefit of the Trust. I welcome

any comments or suggestions about this programme, or ideas for future consideration.

Chris Pile

Subscriptions - TrustNews Jun 2008

Membership subscriptions for 2008/9 were due on May 1st. Thank you to all those who pay by Standing Order. If you pay by cheque please can you ensure we have your subscription as soon as possible. The cost for individuals is £10 per annum and for joint/family is £15 per annum. Please make cheques payable to "The City of Winchester Trust" and send to the Heritage Centre, 32 Upper Brook Street, Winchester, SO23 8DG.

Thank you.

Visit to Poundbury - TrustNews Jun 2008

The Trust is hoping to arrange a visit to Poundbury in September.

The visit will be limited to 18 people and there will be a charge of about £20 to cover the coach.

Poundbury is the mixed urban development of Town Houses, Cottages, Shops & Light Industry, designed for the Prince of Wales by Architect Leon Krier on the outskirts of Dorchester.

If you are interested in coming on this visit please contact the Trust Secretary for more details.