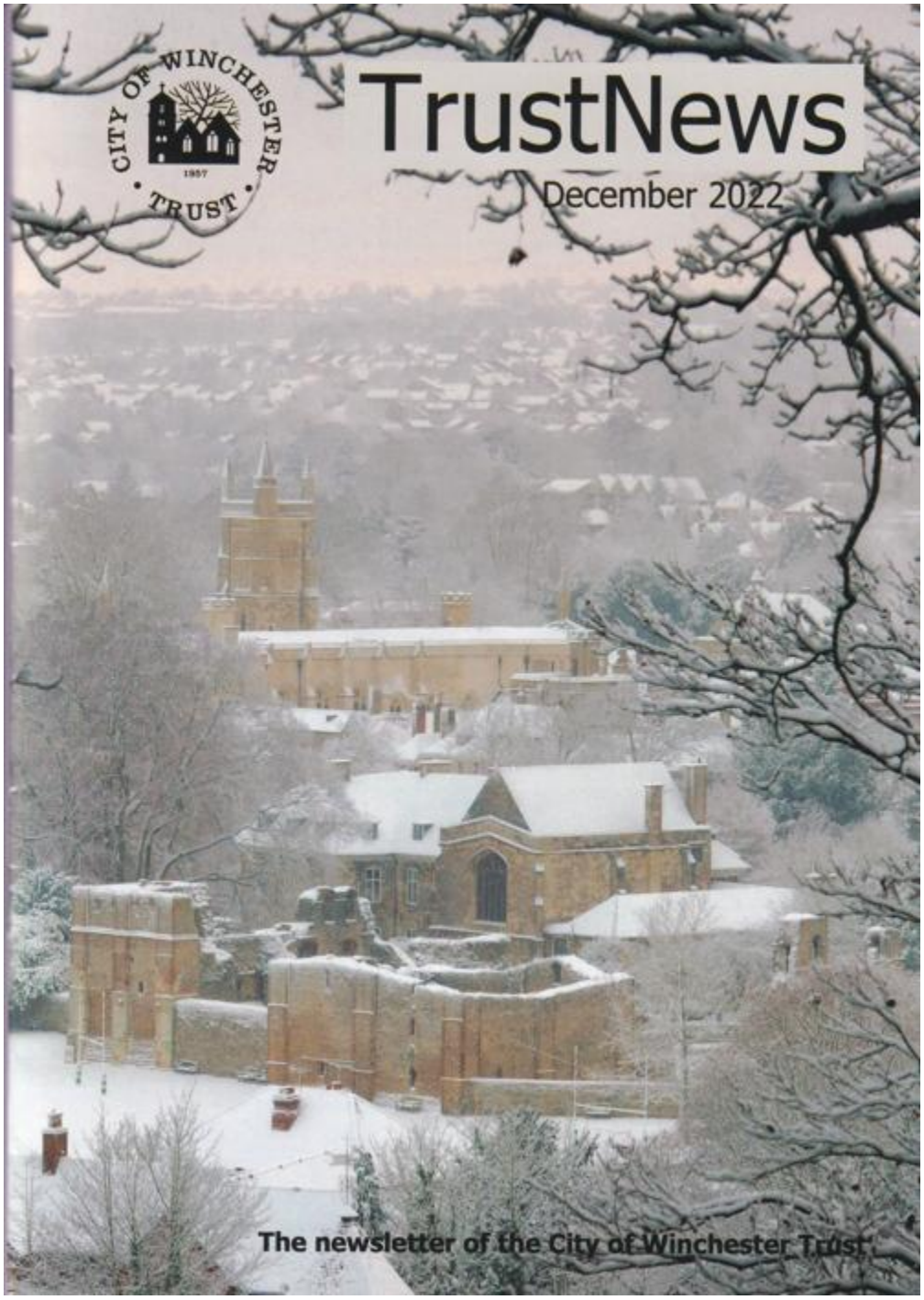
Wolvesey Palace image - TrustNews Dec 22



Wolvesey Palace in the snow
(Photo Joe Low www.joelow.com)

Chairman's Jottings - TrustNews Dec 22



St Cross Hospital (Photo City of Winchester Trust)

"Beauty", a Government mantra currently being used where buildings are concerned is, as said by the Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto, to be "an aspect of architecture that should be self-evident but in fact is extremely difficult to capture."

As a student architect in the 60s, my class of about 30 students was roughly divided into two factions, those who followed and were influenced by architects who practiced a more organic form of architecture such as Aalto and Frank Lloyd-Wright, or those that followed the refined engineered form represented by Mies Van Der Rohe and Philip Johnston, for example.

The philosophy that lies behind architectural thinking has evolved and is evolving, fast driven by the recognition by most architects that climate change is a fact that requires some radical re-thinking and addressing. As a result, new architecture is becoming more science-driven, which, when well-handled, arrives at a sympathetic, satisfying solution compatible with the environs in which the building is placed.

We seem to be drifting away from the refined glassy engineered buildings, moving towards the more organic route - a route that is possibly more sustainable, more thoughtful and human-related. Also important is the greater use of local and more sustainable materials where this is considered possible. This helps to anchor the building or buildings into the location for which it is destined, which in turn helps towards providing a satisfying solution that maybe could be called 'the beauty factor'!

The one major area which escapes the 'beauty factor' is mass housing schemes. Mass housing is the Cinderella of the building world, yet surely it must be one of the most important, as it affects us all one way or another. The average modern housing

estate seldom delivers beauty or shows any signs of a design philosophy. It is pattern-book building churned out, and can be dumped anywhere in the country. Looking back to student days, we never explored anything to do with mass housing. It was, and still is, considered to be the province of specialist housing developers, who certainly do not want the expertise of good designers, so the government's idea of promoting 'beauty' and 'good design' is sadly probably remote.



Keith Leaman

Planning Appraisal Group - TrustNews Dec 22

We report on the Group's work over the last quarter

Summing up the last quarter's work it has become all too clear how interlinked planning issues in the city truly are.

The Trust's work on planning in Winchester encompasses all levels. At the top is the overarching policy work we do, for example on the Local Plan, and not forgetting our ongoing efforts to persuade the Council of the essential need for a strategic plan for development in the City. In the middle is our longstanding work on the proposed major development areas, particularly Station Approach and the regeneration of the Central Area. And at a more local level, there is the crucial work of the PAG panels in commenting on individual planning applications, which is so important in safeguarding the special characteristics of our historic city.

All these levels came together recently in two planning applications for central Winchester: the proposed demolition of the old Friarsgate Medical Centre and the redevelopment of the RAOB building in Cross Keys Passage. PAG panels and those working on the Central Area and the Local Plan collaborated on the Trust's formal response to the two applications - you can read what we said (Central Winchester Regeneration).

Otherwise the panels have had a relatively quiet quarter, with a much smaller number of applications to deal with than usual. It is unclear why this is the case,

although we can certainly speculate whether uncertainty about the cost of living crisis, the spiralling price of materials and other factors has led people to postpone renovations and improvements for the time being.

Once again we thank the PAG panels! Members who are all volunteers, for carrying out their important work.

The Trust welcomes informative comments from local people, but must avoid being influenced by vested interests or persona! matters. individuals who believe their interests are being affected by proposed schemes are advised to contact their Ward Councillors, who have more influence over such matters. If you would like to see details of Trust objections to planning applications and their fate, please go to the monthly PAG reports on our website.

Station Approach - TrustNews Dec 22

John Hearn on the Trust's response to the recent consultation

In the September TrustNews I reported on the Council's Station Approach Study Area consultation, which finished on the 21st October. During the consultation period some Trust members had meetings with the council and its consultants, and we have sent detailed consultation responses which included a number of issues. It is expected that we will be invited to further meetings.

It would take too long to include everything we have raised, so I thought I'd focus on a few matters. In our response we tried to follow the format of the council's on-line questionnaire which many of you will have seen.

We agreed with the Council's four development principles: a connected sustainable development; development for Winchester's future; high quality design; co-creating with residents, businesses and stakeholders. We asked the council to extend the first principle to include the three priorities of the adopted Winchester Movement Strategy (ie reduce city centre traffic, support healthier lifestyle choices; invest in infrastructure to support sustainable growth).

We emphasised that the public realm, particularly Station Hill, Station Road and pedestrian and cycle links from the station to the city centre and other parts of the city, particularly the link along Upper High Street, should be well designed with pedestrian priority and be implemented at an early date.

We considered that developments within the study area should include a mix of uses, including residential and commercial. We considered that given the topography of the area, large floor plate commercial development is unlikely to be suitable. We emphasised that given the sustainable location of the area and the need to respect the priorities of the Movement Strategy, no car parking (other than essential spaces) be provided to service new residential and commercial uses.

We emphasised the need for well-considered contextual townscape design which respects the character of the conservation area, adjacent listed buildings and the setting of the city.

The Council intends to report back on the consultation process over the winter period.

The Trust's response can be seen on our website www.cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk.

Central Winchester Regeneration - TrustNews Dec 22

Richard Baker reports on some recent developments.

While the Council continues its year-long exercise to find a development partner to regenerate the Area, the Trust has objected to two planning applications lodged within the Area.

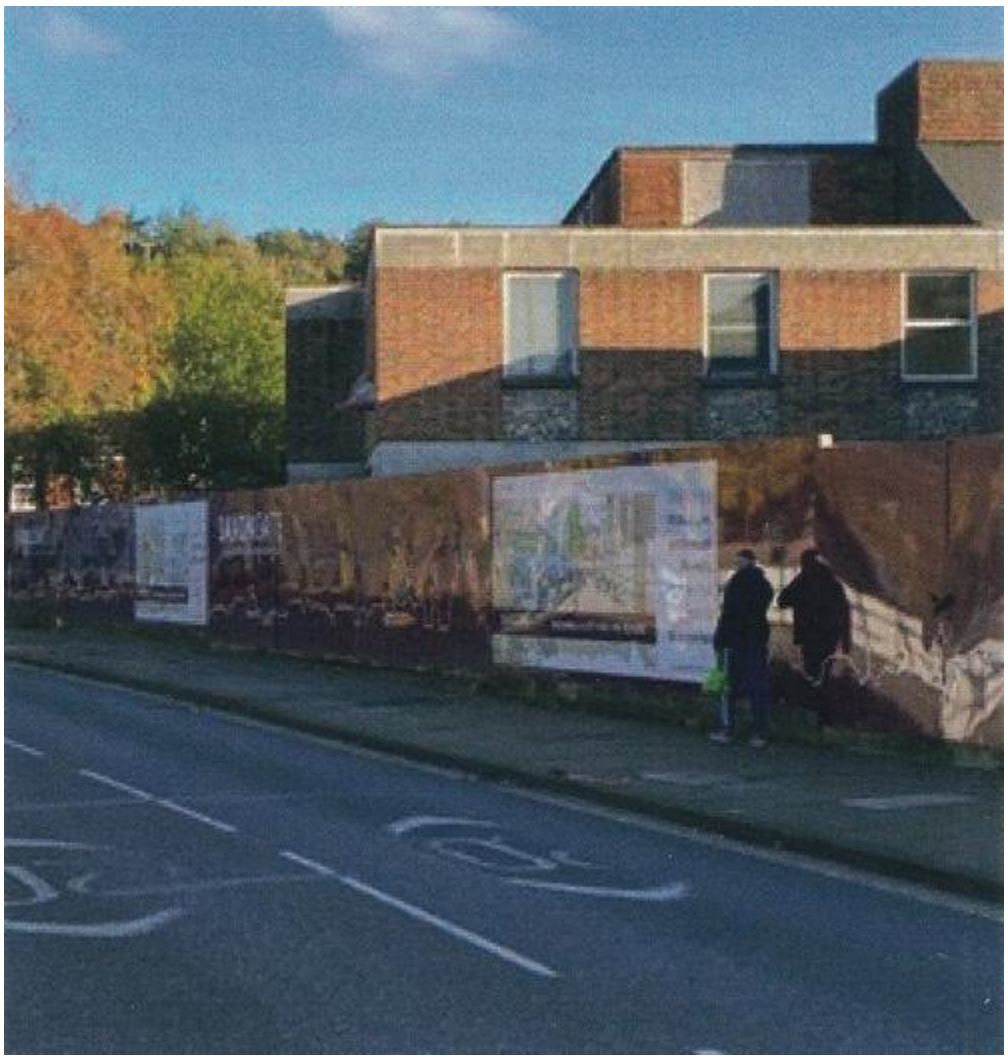


The old RAOB building in Cross Keys Passage (Photo R Baker)

An application (22/01961) for the redevelopment of the site of the RAOB building at the northern end of Cross Keys Passage, for commercial/retail use on the ground floor and a residential block, was supported in principle by the Trust. Objection was made to the proposed height of the five storey, flat roof residential block. The height of the block would be higher than the Woolstaplers Hall to the east. The Trust suggested the block be reduced to four storeys, with the top storey being accommodated within a pitched roof.

The second application (22/01882), made by the Council, was for consent to demolish the Friarsgate Medical Centre and for the site to be made available for temporary use as a 'meanwhile pocket park'. The Trust objected on the grounds that the application does not comply with the Council's own policy DM28, which requires that consent to demolish a building in a conservation area needs to be supported by an approved proposal for replacement development, and not a temporary use.

The Central Area is one of 11 sites, both carried forward and new, allocated for development in the draft Local Plan. It confirms that planning applications for all or part of the site should demonstrate compliance with the adopted Supplementary Planning Document (2018). It makes no reference to the need to prepare a masterplan for the Area or the need to comply with the context of a Movement Strategy.



The old Friarsgate Medical Centre (Photo R Baker)

Redevelopment and cutting carbon? - TrustNews Dec 22

David Gleave ponders the issue of renovation vs demolition


The 92 year old Art Deco M&S store at Marble Arch

The new Winchester District draft Local Plan says at the outset that it addresses the challenge of combatting climate change head on, and rightly so if we are to meet the Council's ambition for the district to become carbon neutral by 2030, in just eight years.

This fundamental commitment brings with it many interesting implications.

On 4 November, a two week planning inquiry in London closed. It was held to examine a proposal that has remained in the spotlight since Westminster Council granted planning permission in November 2021 - the demolition of the famous M&S Oxford Street store at Marble Arch.

The basis of the inquiry, ordered by the Government, was whether it was right to grant consent given the heritage and historic environment issues.

However, it also addressed another controversial aspect - the immediate release of 40,000 tonnes of embodied carbon caused by replacing the store with a 10 storey office block. This quantity of carbon is equivalent to a typical car driving 99 million miles - more than the distance to the sun. The inquiry heard that the proposal would pay back the carbon lost within 17 years of the 120 year lifespan of the new building.

When they emerge, the planning inspector's conclusions will be reported beyond the specialist architectural and planning journals and hopefully will offer interesting guidance on the retrofit versus redevelopment debate.ack in Winchester, as Richard Baker reports (Central Winchester Regeneration), the Trust has objected to the City Council's application to demolish Friarsgate Medical Centre on grounds including

that there has been no investigation as to whether it could be temporarily re-purposed as housing or anything else.

Now, Friarsgate and the Marble Arch store are on vastly different scales, but given the urgency of the challenge and the Local Plan's emphasis on cutting carbon, it is interesting to wonder how the issue of embodied carbon may affect applications involving demolition and the broader issue of redevelopment?

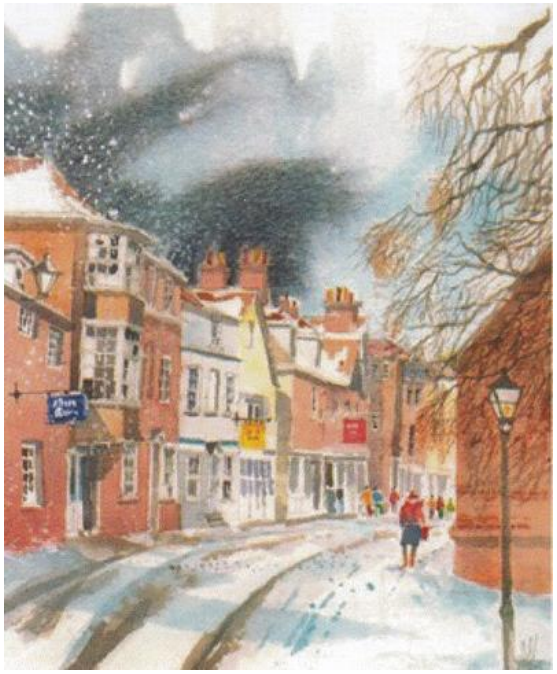
The old Friarsgate Medical Centre (Photo R Baker)

Christmas Cards - TrustNews Dec 22

As you may have heard, there will be no charity Christmas card shop in Winchester this year that is free to participating charities, so our Christmas cards will only be available from our online shop or in person from our office.

This year we are offering one design of large cards, and two types of smaller cards a mixed pack of five designs and a pack of a single design. Cards are available in packs of 10 cards and envelopes.

Further information on how to buy cards from our online shop or collect them from the office is available on our website.



A planning merry-go-round? - TrustNews Dec 22

Patrick Davies on the uncertainty surrounding the government's planning policy

As we report on (Local Plan), the Trust, and individual members, will be responding to the City Council's new consultation on its draft Local Plan.

The City Council has decided to proceed now despite numerous uncertainties about national government planning policies. As a result some neighbouring local authorities are deferring work on their local plans. it remains unclear when precisely the Government will clarify these outstanding issues.

House building targets for local authorities have been an integral part of the local plan process, but the last Prime Minister and the then Secretary of State vowed to change the system and remove the national directive. In addition the so-called "Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill" has been slowly making its way through Parliament for the past six months, with significant changes proposed for the National Planning Policy Framework and the local plans system.

The Secretary of State, Michael Gove, who started this process, has now returned to the job following two other short-lived colleagues. It's now unclear how and when the bill will proceed.

The other major change in the wider planning system which may have consequences for this area, is the concept of "Investment Zones". The previous Chancellor announced their creation in September and included Southampton as one of those areas he favoured. Other councils were invited to express interest within weeks, and though no list has yet appeared, press reports suggest Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, Dorset and Bournemouth may have done so.

Precise rules for these have yet to appear but tax incentives are an integral inducement for their success. Local authority boundaries in Hampshire are fairly artificial so what does or doesn't happen in our neighbouring authorities might have a significant impact on Winchester.

By the time you read this the Chancellor will have made his 17 November financial statement, and we will know whether it touched on these issues.

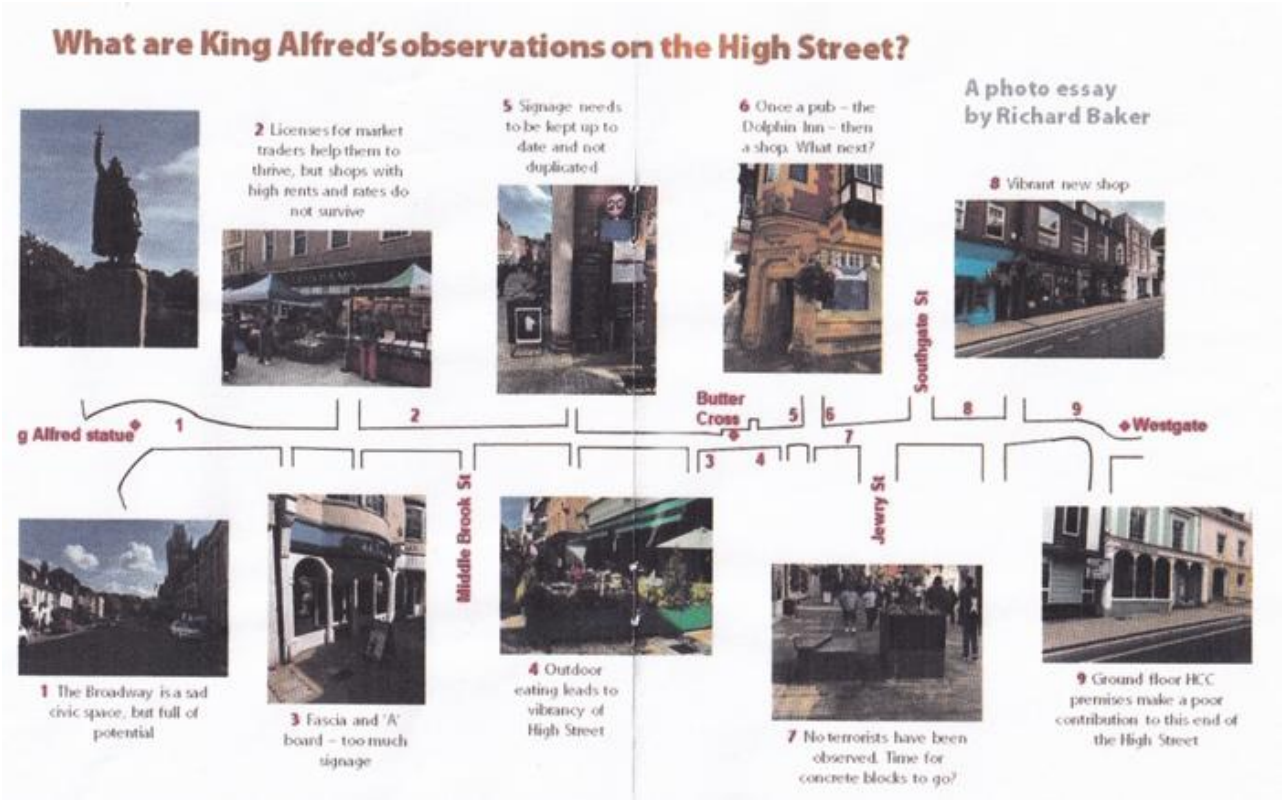

Jeremy Hunt set to scrap Truss plan for investment zones

Looser planning rules in new zones

Low tax 'investment zones' to boost building

What are King Alfred's observations on the High Street? - TrustNews Dec 22

A Photo essay by Richard Baker.



King Alfred's observations on the High Street

Victoria, enthroned in the Great Hall - TrustNews Dec 22

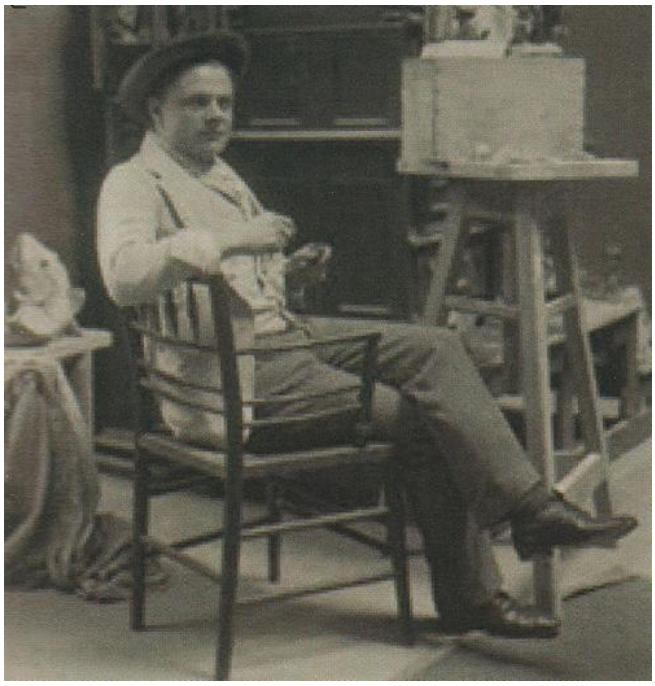
Arthur Morgan on a masterpiece in the wrong place.


Statue of Queeen Victoria in the Great Hall, Winchester

Approach our Queen, look into her face and you'll see a faint bemused smile. I'd like to think that her thoughts are, 'We are not amused', and I'd like to complete her sentence, 'by being relegated to this dark corner'.

We see her now from Sir Alfred Gilbert's monumental regal portrait. This reached Winchester in 1887, commissioned by William Ingham Whitaker, High Sheriff, for her Golden Jubilee, but had yet to be completed - this took another 25 years. Gilbert, though a consummate and accomplished sculptor and goldsmith, was not too good at meeting his commissions on time. Most of us are more familiar with Gilbert as the artist for the Shaftesbury Monument in Piccadilly, erroneously known as Eros - even that was late. Originally, the monument to Queen Victoria was to be of marble as it was to be indoors, but when Gilbert discovered it was to be placed outside he changed to bronze. However, a marble version of the monument was eventually created in 1899 for India and can be seen at the Watson Museum, Rajkot in Gujurat.

Our Victoria is an astonishing tour de force as the figure is not only massive in its sculptural monumentality but it has a lightness of touch from all the delicate decorative elements that surround it, as well as the change of material and tone from dark bronze to gold gilt. This is heightened by reflective faux-jewels in the fabulous crown that hovers above her head. Gilbert knew how to catch the eye and for his sculpture to be a visual delight, not just a statement. He worked from photographs and also drew upon his own mother's character, and this probably gives us greater accessibility to the personality of Victoria as someone not always so aloof. During her reign, especially towards its end, many sculptors were commissioned to provide monuments to celebrate civic pride in their monarch across the kingdom (some 86) and the empire (another 75). She was not only Queen but Empress, and there is a charming subtle reference to this by the Indian bangles she wears on her right sceptred arm. Her other symbol of state is the orb, which rests as a globe in her left hand, and this is surmounted by a small, exquisite figure of a winged Victory delicately balancing upon it.



Sir Alfred Gilbert in his studio, c 1889

But we are looking at the completed masterpiece. When it was unveiled in Castle Yard it was without the large plinth, and many of the niched figurines were plaster models. These soon suffered vandalism, notably the Victory which was purloined by a carousing soldier worse for wear. To make things worse, the suspended crown fell down. It was considered that Abbey Gardens would be a better place so it was moved in 1894, but returned to Castle Hall in 1910 on the instigation of Sir Edward Poynter PRA. By this time all repairs had been effected, bronze figurines installed and the massive bronze plinth was added, cast to match the one Gilbert had had done for his Newcastle-upon-Tyne version of Queen Victoria. Now complete, it was newly inaugurated in 1912.

Contemporary reactions to Gilbert's Jubilee monument varied from the sublime to the ridiculous. in 1888 Gilbert's maquette was exhibited at the Royal Academy and Auguste Rodin described it as "the finest thing of its kind in modern times", whereas the Punch cartoonist, Harry Furniss, could not resist his take, "Descent of the crown", illustrated by this elaborate confection falling around Her Majesty's ears due to the failure of a clumsy operative for a supposed lifting mechanism!

As a postscript, a century later, in 2010, the sculpture was loaned, with some pride, to the Royal Academy for its exhibition "Modern British Sculpture" held January 22 - April 7, 2011, and then returned to the Great Hall. Surely at this moment Nikolaus Pevsner's crie de coeur, written in his 1967 Guide, should have been met:

"Can Winchester really not find a better place for this?"

Hammer beams roofs - TrustNews Dec 22

Westminster Hall and William Wykeham

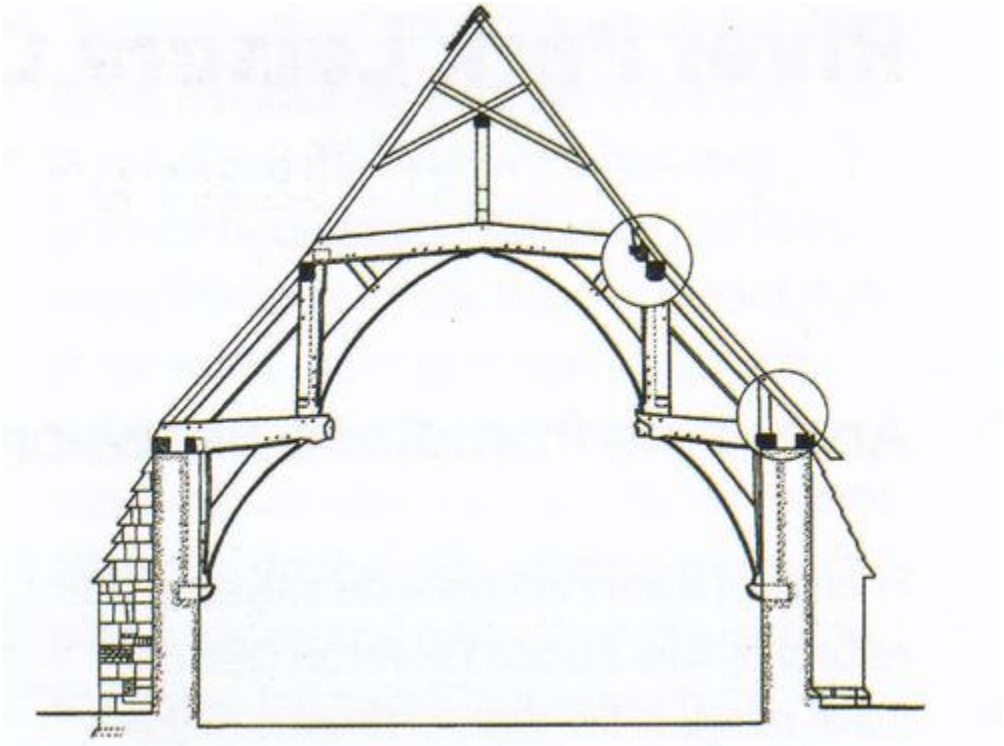
Keith Leaman on how architecture and history interact



HM the Queen's lying in state, Westminster Hall

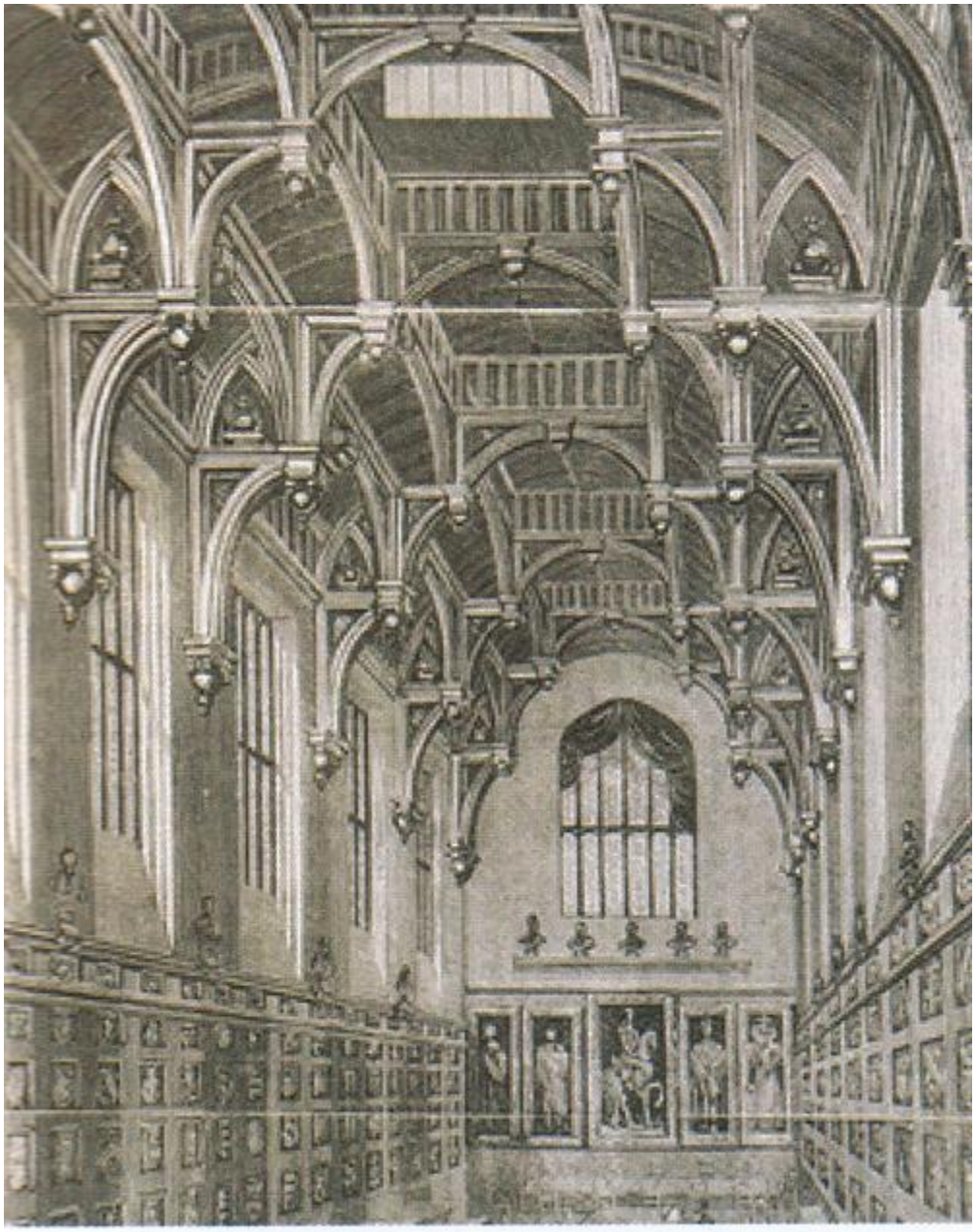
While viewing the Queen's lying in state in Westminster Hall, the commentator talked about this impressive space, covering half an acre, its hammer beam roof trusses, created to span the area, weighing a total of 700 tons. This started me thinking about this spectacular building and the achievement of those involved in designing such a project. The hall was ordered by Richard II, and was part of the Westminster Palace, completed in 1399.

There was a precedent for such a roof design, and interestingly it is in Winchester where the earliest such roof truss arrangement can be found - in Pilgrims Hall (1310), at that time part of the Priory. The Clerk to the Royal Estates at that time was William of Wykeham, who as he was also Bishop of Winchester, would surely have known the significance of the Pilgrims Hall's hammer beams. These may have influenced the thinking behind the Westminster Hall, bearing in mind that was the next known example of hammer beam construction.



Pilgrims' Hall illustration taken from The Pilgrims Hall, Winchester by John Crook. Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club Archaeological Society, 1982HM the Queen's lying in state, Westminster Hall

During the following century, hammer beam design evolved and became more and more flamboyant, culminating in double hammer beam truss construction. An example of this is the striking double roof trusses at Middle Temple Hall, built between 1562 and 1572.



The double hammer beam roof at Middle Temple Hall.
Illustration taken from: Old England: a pictorial museum of Ecclesiastical Municipal, Baronial and Popular Antiquities vol. 1 by Charles KnightHM the Queen's lying in state, Westminster Hall

Hammer beam construction is an example of engineering in timber and is created by forming compound beams out of short but strong pieces of timber to span a space wall to wall. This is unlike, for example, the Great Hall roof in Winchester Castle, which is spanned by a series of arched tie beam trusses requiring columns, with the hall widened by adding side aisles.

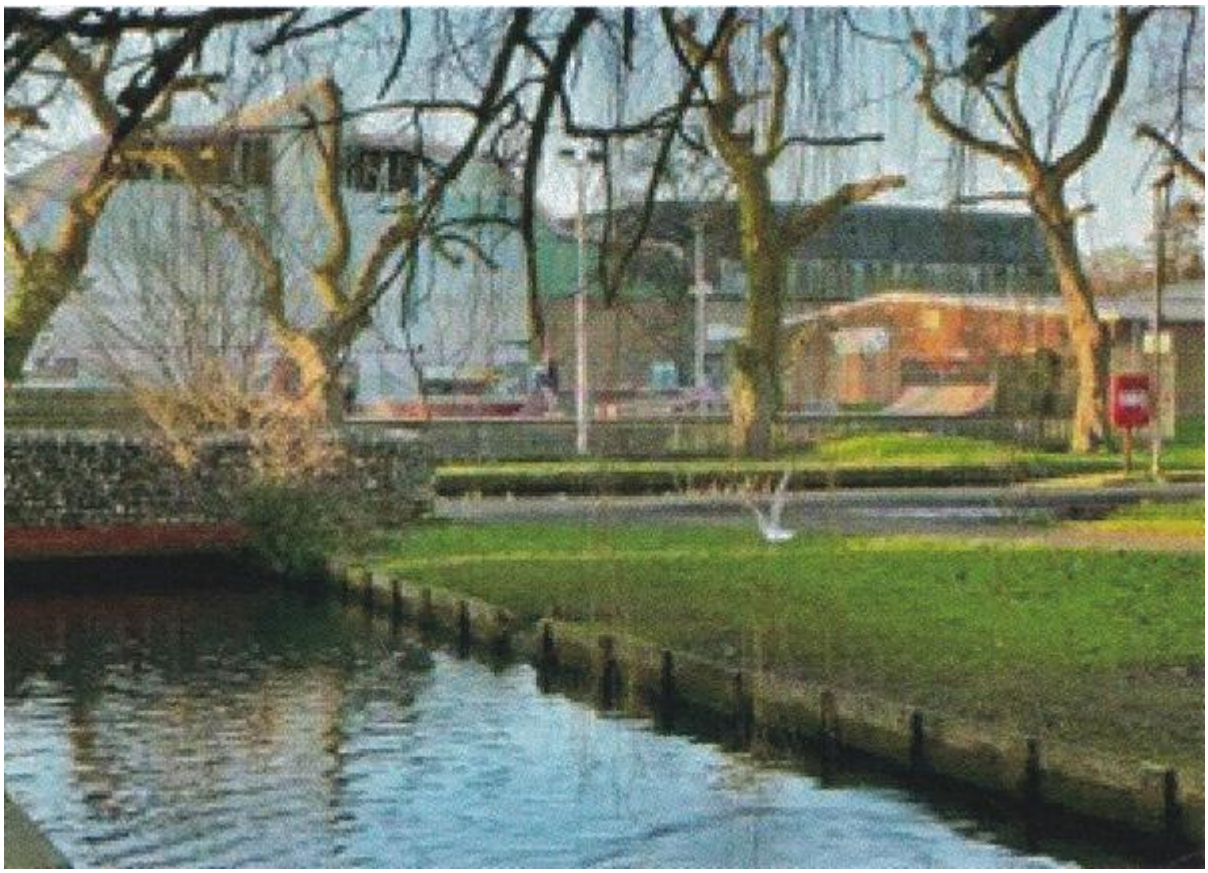
It is fascinating to attempt to try and understand the background of William of Wykeham's time, which is from 1324-1404. This meant he witnessed both the first plague of 1350, when 40 per cent of the population died, and the second plague of

1361, when 20 per cent of the population died. This is known to have decimated the pool of craftsmen.

His appointment in 1356 as Clerk of Works to the Royal Estate meant overseeing building work to many great buildings. The lack of craftsmen must surely have stretched his ability to deliver projects. This, coupled with satisfying the demands of kings, makes one realise he must have had amazing organisational ability as well as diplomatic skills. His career culminated in delivering Westminster Hall, with its vast space covered over with that spectacular hammer beam roofscape.

River Park Leisure Centre site - TrustNews Dec 22

An update from Rose Burns on behalf of Friends of River Park



River Park Leisure Centre

Friends of River Park were dismayed at the refusal by Mrs Justice Thornton DBE of leave to apply for Judicial Review of the Council's decision to sell this site. It seemed to us extraordinary that she decided, effectively, that because the Council was making expansive concessions to remedy any or all unlawful actions from now on, our claim was academic. I should say that we haven't yet received the transcript of Judgment, so I am summarising what we understand was the thrust of the decision.

The learned Judge opined that it wouldn't make any difference to the Council's plans even had they acted unlawfully, so she declined to make any findings, for example,

as to whether the site constituted open space, in legal terms, or whether the lack of public consultation because of defective advertising might vitiate the eventual decision. Because the Council has committed to following the correct procedure with regard to appropriating the site before the lease is finally signed, they should be permitted to continue with their proposals. She also held the view that it was not the role of the court to challenge, or police, public authorities' administration.

It seems to us that Judicial Review is there precisely for the purpose of challenging unlawful, overbearing behaviour by local authorities, particularly when they make decisions about publicly owned assets without consulting the public in advance of doing so. We naturally wish to appeal this decision because it gives licence to the Council to continue making unlawful decisions and then to correct them retrospectively if and when someone is brave, or rash, enough to challenge them. This is the 20th (or perhaps the 21st) legal challenge to the Council's decision-making since the Silver Hill debacle in 2015.

Our primary purpose is to prevent the loss of recreational green space and the precedent that its sale sets for the rest of the area which lies so close to the Winnall Moors Nature Reserve. This is a precious piece of recreational land, in the centre of our small, historic City, and it provides access to the countryside beyond through a network of public footpaths.

The site is bounded on three sides by the river Itchen's clear, chalk streams, and it is at a pivotal point in the formation of the flood plain which underlies the whole of the lower part of the City of Winchester. An Environment Agency report in 2013, commissioned by the Council, says that 'The land mostly lies in a zone (3A) where floods are highly probable, and it is upstream of the city and the Cathedral'. It also says that 'a new design that increased the existing building footprint or the impermeable area within the floodplain would not be appropriate in this location', also, 'replacing the existing leisure centre buildings with open space might have a beneficial effect on downstream flood risk'.

The Recreation Ground, of which the site forms a significant part, lies in the City Ward of St Bartholomew. When the political boundaries changed in 2016 to bring Winnall into the Ward, it meant that there was a shortfall of open space for public recreation. We say that this supports our view that the Council cannot allow this open space, where people can play, exercise and enjoy their leisure time, to be handed over for development.

It is with heavy hearts, therefore, that we have issued a notice of appeal to the Court of Appeal. The Council clearly intends to pursue their opposition to our challenge, as does the University of Southampton.

We have asked the Court of Appeal to list our matter after the hearing of a parallel case on similar grounds in the Supreme Court, which is due to take place on 7th December 2022.

Members' visits 2023 - TrustNews Dec 22

We have put together a wide-ranging and, we hope, interesting programme of members' visits for next year. Dates will be announced in the March issue of TrustNews.

Churches in Hampshire and West Sussex

A follow up to last July's tour of painted churches led by Chris Maxse, featuring other interesting churches.

Bletchley Park

We toured this some years ago and felt it as definitely worth another trip.

Victorian forts around Portsmouth

Also known as 'Palmerston's Follies' as they appear to face the wrong way.

Houghton Lodge

A Grade II* listed Cottage Orne, arguably one of the most beautiful privately owned homes and gardens in Hampshire.

West Horsley Place and the Theatre in the Woods

We hope to re-schedule this postponed visit to this fascinating house and grounds, home to Grange Park Opera.

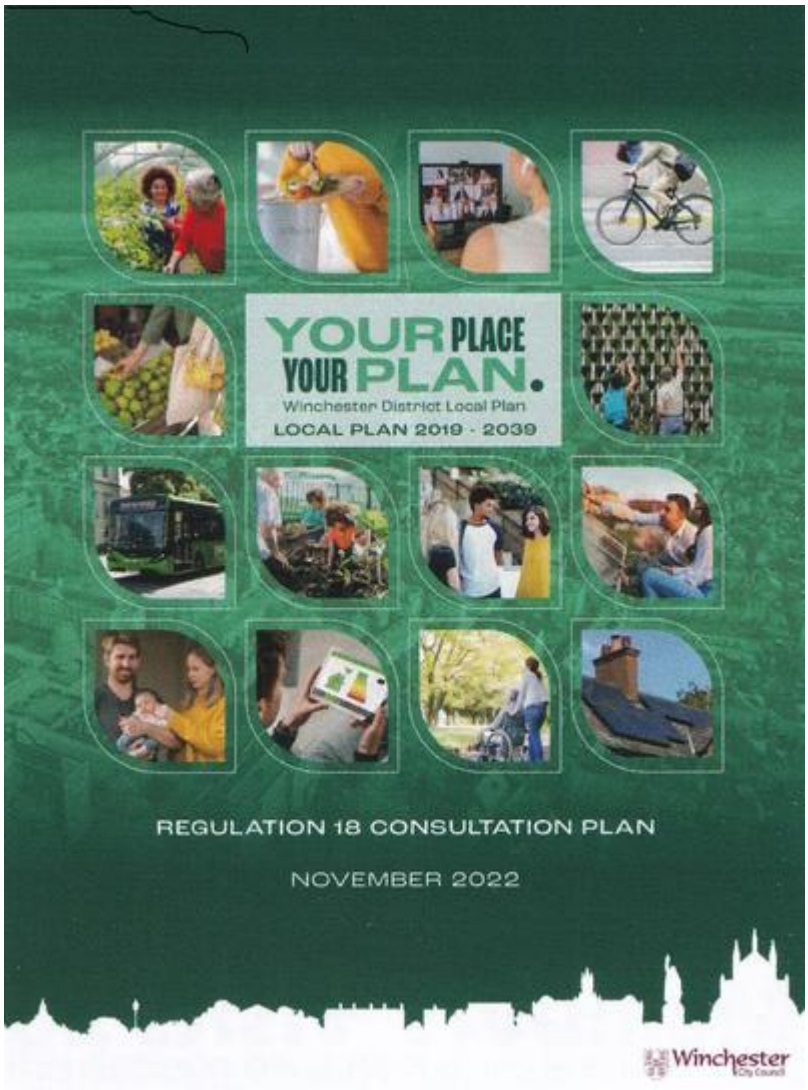
Winchester District Regulation 18 - Draft Local Plan 2019 – 2039 - TrustNews Dec 22

This lengthy 560 page document has been published for public consultation by Winchester City Council. Comments have to be sent to the Council by Wednesday 14 December 2022.

The Plan sets out the vision and objectives of the Council for future development across the Winchester District, outside the South Downs National Park. The Plan covers a wide range of topics. Climate change (which influences all parts of the Plan), design, transport, biodiversity, historic environment, housing, employment and development allocations.

The Trust will be responding on the policies and proposals that are concerned with the future development of Winchester City. A key proposal for the City are the eleven site allocations for development shown in the plan. Four sites are existing allocations: Barton Farm, Station Approach, Central Winchester Area and Bushfield

Camp. The capacity of these sites for housing development, plus windfall sites, has been calculated in the Plan. They could provide 5671 new houses in the plan period.



The 2021 census gave Winchester City a population of 45,184. On the basis of 2.5 persons per household, 5671 new houses would increase the population by 14,177 to 59,361.

The population of Winchester in 1861 was 14,776. The Trust plans to challenge the 'capacity calculation'. The critical criterion for additional houses is 'need', and the capacity of infrastructure to serve them whilst conserving the character of the City and protecting its landscape setting.

The City of Winchester Movement Strategy Consultation started in Autumn 2017. Detailed proposals to implement this Strategy remain to be set out and adopted. The Trust had hoped that in 2022, polices and proposals for the City in this draft Plan

would have been fully informed by the Strategy. Instead the Strategy remains in a state of aspiration.

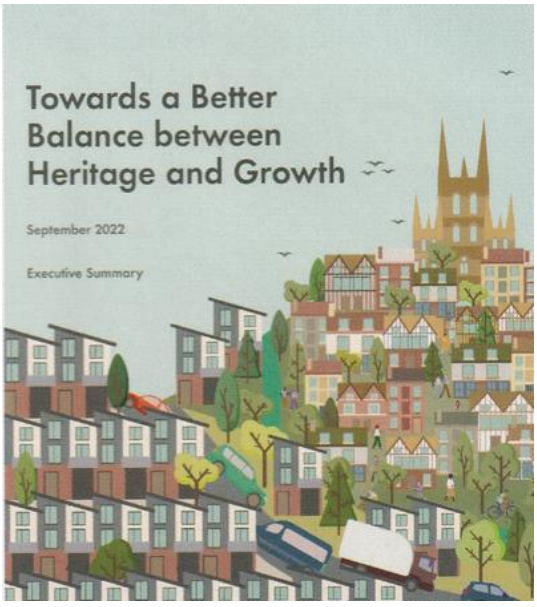
The Trust would like to hear comments from members about the draft Plan (which can be viewed online at www.localplan.winchester.gov.uk. The Trust will be submitting a comprehensive response to the consultation. This will be published on our website.

Heritage and Growth in Cathedral Cities: finding a better balance - TrustNews Dec 22

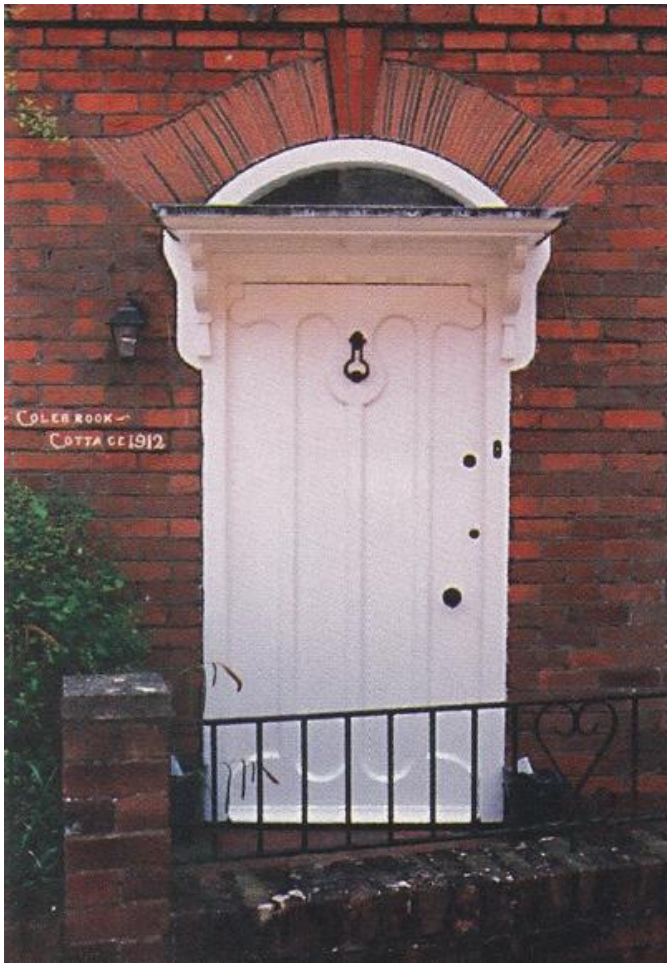
The Trust is one of 13 civic societies located in historic cathedral cities which have contributed to a report analysing the impact of recent developments on their character, setting and heritage assets. The aim of the work is to show how their historic character can be maintained while also accommodating development. The work began in 2019 and the final report was published in 2022.The report is the result of a collaboration between the Alliance of Historic Cathedral Cities and Towns, the Historic Towns and Villages Forum and Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, with funding from Historic England.

The Trust has organised for the authors of the report to present their findings and recommendations to Trust members and other interested parties. We will be inviting representatives from Winchester City Council, in line with one of the recommendations that civic societies should work collaboratively with their local authorities in protecting heritage and fostering good design.

The meeting will take place at 5pm on 23rd February at St Peter's Pastoral Centre, Jewry Street, Winchester SO23 8RY. All are welcome. If you would like to attend please RSVP Tessa at secretary@cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk



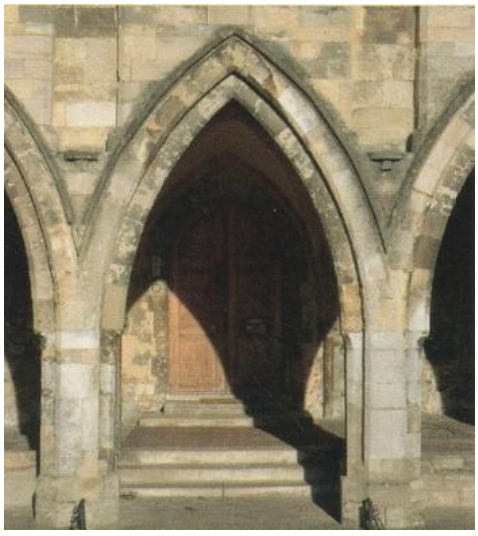
Architectural details in Winchester - TrustNews Dec 22













Footer - TrustNews Dec 22

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