Title Picture - TrustNews January 1987



Drawing by Michael Carden of 75/76 Eastgate Street

60/61 Colebrook Street - TrustNews January 1987

At the time of writing it appears inevitable that these early 19th century cottages, a sketch of which formed the front cover of the December 1985 Newsletter, will be demolished. Since there has been a good deal in the press on this subject, members may wish to know where the Trust has stood and what action it has taken.

In January 1985 it was noticed that the cottages were boarded up and the Trust made inquiries as to their future. We were told that there was no question of demolition and, indeed, towards the end of 1985 the City Council invited us to consider acquiring them ourselves (e.g. as a Heritage Centre or for some other purpose). In association with the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust we spent a good deal of time and some money inspect¬ing the buildings and drawing up plans. We considered that they could be restored but before we reached any conclusions as to acquisition, we were told, in February 1986, that the Council was considering renovating them for its own use.

In May we heard that the City had received an adverse survey report; that the buildings would be too expensive to repair and that it was intended to demolish them. We suspect that the belief that the cottages were beyond economic repair was a major `actor in the minds of Councillors who voted in favour of their demolition. However, it is the view of the Trust, based on professional opinion, that it was perfectly possible to restore the cottages at a cost which would have enabled them to be sold profitably on the open market, and this was the view also of English Heritage, whose Structural Engineer inspected the buildings, and who strongly objected to their demolition.

Preservationists are popularly supposed to have a Pavlovian reaction to all forms of change (e.g. "They" are pulling it down, "We" must oppose it). However, Winchester Preservation Trust endeavours to take a balanced view of every case on its own merits, since we believe that not everything that is old is worth preserving and also that heed must be paid to what is proposed in its place.

We therefore delayed expressing a view until we had been given a presentation of the plans of the office buildings which the City Council proposes to erect for its own use on the site of the cottages. Our conclusions were that the cottages were of sufficient interest to be retained and that the City Council's plans for their replacement were not of sufficient merit to warrant their destruction.

The cottages, though unlisted, are in a Conservation Area. As the application for constent to demolish was made by the City Council, it had to be referred to the Secretary of State for the Environment for determination.

In September we learned that this consent had been granted, and we also learned that some of the objections which had been lodged with the City Council (including our own) had not been passed on to the Secretary of State.

We felt at the time (and feel now) that since the City had sought representations from various amenity bodies, including ourselves, and the Secretary of State was aware of this, common sense and fairness would indicate that any representations received should be passed to him, since otherwise he would conclude that no one had objected.

We also believed (mistakenly, as events proved) that this was required by law.

The various Acts of Parliament and Regulations governing these cases are complicated and not always well drafted and we felt that on this occasion the City,

inadvertently, had slipped on a banana skin. This sentiment was shared by the Hampshie Buildings Preservation Trust, with whom jointly we had a meeting with the City.

"Far from it" was the view expressed by the City at our meeting, "...we have been meticulous in following the legal procedures" (which proved to be correct) "...and furthermore, we have done far more to consult the public than the law requires" (well maybe, but rather less easy to see).

Our objective at this meeting, and in further interchanges with the City, was to persuade them that the question of demolition should be referred back to the Secretary of State, since his original decision had been taken without benefit of all the objections received. In this we failed. Despite having spent a good deal of time taking legal advice we were unable to establish beyond doubt that there were grounds for requiring the City to do this. Our opinion remains that they should have done so in any case.

Thus it appears that Winchester will lose two more cottages, perhaps of no great architectural merit, but undoubtedly of historic interest and some charm, which could have been restored and fitted into a sympathetic redevelopment scheme. In their place we will get offices of questionable architectural merit.

All of this has happened despite the opposition of the Civic Trust, the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust, English Heritage, the Acanthus Group, Winchester Ratepayers and Residents Association, to say nothing of the Winchester Preservation Trust and, judging by letters to the press, some sections of the public. The fault of course is largely our own: we should have got together earlier and shouted louder. The law is an uncertain weapon and popular opinion is a very much more potent one.

David Middleditch

Footnote: 75/76 Eastgate Street

(see drawing by Michael Carden on the front cover of this Newsletter)

These two Regency cottages - like 60/61 Colebrook Street - are unlisted buildings in a Conservation Area. An application has been made for their demolition. This application would have to be referred to the Secretary of State only if the applicant was the City Council (as in the case of Colebrook Street), otherwise the City Council can decide itself whether to give permission for demolition.

The City Council in fact owns one of the cottages. The application to demolish was, however, made by the owner of the other one. Whatever the circumstances there is something of an anomaly here. At least the planning law needs to be made consistent.

DSM

Heritage Centre News - TrustNews January 1987

The Duty Officers and Management Committee have been gratified to see so many visitors to the exhibitions in the Centre (over 2,200 from May to the end of November).

Visiting groups included Gloucester Civic Society, The Sherborne Society, Shell Pensioners' Association, women's organisations and other groups invited by the Urban Studies Committee and school parties from Southampton, Chandler's Ford, Hursley and North Baddesley. On one memorable occasion we had more than 60 children and their teachers in the Centre at one time.

We are hoping to build on this increased interest from schools, and Brian Milloy, a local Headmaster, has joined the Committee with the express purpose of fostering links with schools and children.

The RIBA, who rent an office on the first floor, are moving to larger premises. With them will go about one third of the money needed to keep the Centre open. Also additional money will have to be found in the near future for roof repairs.

In order to provide a new source of income for the Centre, the Management Committee has commissioned an audio/visual (slide-tape) presentation on Winchester. It will last about 20 minutes and be shown at regular intervals in the upstairs committee room from April to October. This new facility will enable us to charge visitors (other than members) a modest entry fee, as it will greatly increase the Centre's attraction.

Audio/visual presentations on these lines are operated with success in other historic cities, and Committee Members were impressed by one made recently in Oxford entitled "The Oxford Experience". This is shown at St. Mary's Church, Radcliffe Square, and during its first six months of operation in 1986 it attracted over 20,000 visitors. The producers are a young partnership, Patrick Rudden and Caroline Grace, and we are using them to create the Winchester presentation.

This will form an excellent adjunct to the main exhibition "Discover the City" and will give visitors an admirable foretaste of what Winchester has to offer.

Ken Johns & Alan Clarke

Collection of Slide Transparencies - TrustNews January 1987

The Urban Studies Committee's intention to establish a slide collection, mainly of Winchester buildings and events, was mentioned in the 1986 Annual Report. The collection will provide a useful visual reference for use at lectures, etc. It will also be available for loan, and some slides may be selected for inclusion in the new audio/visual presentation being prepared for the Heritage Centre.

Offers have already been received, and the Trust would welcome more. Donations of slides, with brief details of the buildings and events photographed, the approximate date when taken and the name and address of the donor, should be sent to Harold Sturges, C/o. Winchester Heritage Centre, 52/54 Upper Brook Street, who will be pleased to acknowledge all gifts received.

Harold Sturges

The Brooks Development - TrustNews January 1987

The following is a summary of the comments which the Trust has circulated to developers. The full text may be seen in the Members' Room in the Heritage Centre:

Development in Winchester should whenever possible enhance its character as a city, and make it more enjoyable as a place for living.

Development of the city's own property should be more biased towards these prime objectives than can be expected of private property development.

We believe that the brief for the Brooks Development should therefore include the following specific requirements:-

Architectural quality in materials, form and scale which will continue the unique character of Winchester.

A reasonable proportion of small shops, ensuring that some of the site will be used by local businesses.

Some residential units, preferably above shops (but with separate access), ensuring that the area remains inhabited out of working hours.

In addition, the Trust would ask developers and their architects to do whatever they can to achieve the following general objectives:-

Reduction of the over-heated success of the small High Street precinct by dilution into the Brooks area.

Promotion of an environment which will be attractive to tourists, relieving some of the pressures elsewhere. In particular it is desirable to find ways of encouraging tourists to stay overnight.

Re-creation of a special Brooks ambience which might include re-opening sections of the streams which run through the area.

With regard to traffic, the Trust disagrees with the official requirement for visitor car parking on the site, both because it will perpetuate the intense existing traffic/pedestrian conflict, and because we believe it will seriously inhibit the opportunities to meet all the previously stated objectives. We therefore ask that developers should consider the following points:-

Alternatives to their official schemes showing how reduction of visitor parking could improve their proposals.

Suggestions for making any visitor parking provision reversible; that is to say convertible to other uses in future so that parking need not be a permanent feature of the site.

The advantages of pedestrian dominated roads (as in the lower part of the High Street) over total segregation, including the advantages of compromise on unloading facilities so that off-street provision does not spoil the built environment.

Michael Carden & Chris Gillham

Landscape Committee - TrustNews January 1987

The Committee has been concerned to act as a watchdog to guard against the erosion of the city and its spaces. Everyone can help by informing it of situations which need attention. The more detailed and factual the informaction which can be supplied with each situation, the better it will be to help members to act.

Comments made to the City Council concerning the paving and seat at The Weirs has prompted assurance that the paving will be resurfaced with something more sympathetic to the surroundings and that the broken seat will be mended or re¬placed. Elsewhere our efforts have drawn attention to areas of neglected paving blocks and other unsightly places in the town. Photographs of areas in the town which need attention would be welcome.

The Committee has actively supported a scheme to encourage replanting in Nuns' Walk which has been sadly neglected in recent years. A donation of £100 has been made by the CPRE towards the cost of putting in new trees in this area.

The Richmond Society has kindly donated a tree which has been planted to commemorate their visit as guests of the Winchester Preservation Trust. The tree, a Red Oak, has been placed in North Walls Park at the end of Park Avenue, where it will make a splash of autumn colour. It was planted by Mrs. Barbara Carpenter

Turner on 1st December 1986 in the presence of Ward Councillor Mrs. Pamela Peskett and Mr. 'Peter Bowyer of The Richmond Society, and a happy ceremony cemented the friendship between these two societies.

Objection has been made to the City Council's proposal to remove a further 53 memorials from West Hill Cemetery. The Trust has on several occasions made representations about the Cemetery, both in writing and face to face with Officers of the City Council, to explain its importance and the reasons why it should be maintained in a way which continues to serve the visual and social needs of the city. It has also proposed that a maintenance policy should be devised which allows the memorials to remain undisturbed and has suggested that a nature reserve would fulfil this purpose.

Hugh Watson

Amenity & Preservation Societies are more important than ever before - TrustNews January 1987

(Article contributed by Keith Egleston)

Amenity and Preservation Societies are now more important than ever before - for three reasons.

The first is that we have seen increasing evidence that Central Government is not abiding by the conventions of our Planning System built up over 40 years and is using its powers for its own reasons as far as development is concerned to over-ride the wishes of local communities.

The second is that although local Councils often declare themselves in favour of creative conservation - in the same way as they are against sin - they are apt to do little about it. The reality is that they are often too much influenced by party politics to judge cases on their merits or to take a long-term view, especially where their own interests are concerned.

The third reason is that, by and large. the local public is very docile about environmental matters and only makes its voice heard when it is too late, at the end rather than at the beginning, when something awful is foisted on it, such as a building out of context in height, scale or design with its setting, or over-development in the wrong place.

Of course there are many areas where creative conservation is a fact; they are areas where there is a long-standing or new built-in ethos and pride in both local government and the local community in creative conservation - and the results show. To mention a few - Chester, Durham, Norwich, Ludlow, Richmond (Yorks.), Haddington (E. Lothian), Bath and latterly Shrewsbury spring to mind. York of course, but largely owing to York Civic Trust in the early days, and very interestingly Bradford.

Winchester ought to be in this category, but although it has made impressive strides over the last five years, I don't think it is there yet. If it was, 60/61 Colebrook Street would have been handled differently.

Throughout the country most local Councils - and Winchester is no exception - welcome strong, virile Amenity Societies and Preservation Trusts. They know that they are apolitical and can bring a wealth of experience and professional knowledge ,with objectivity and single-mindedness, to conservation and development matters.

The best working arrangement is for such bodies to work in conjunction with local Councils in the form of a continuing creative dialogue both sides understanding that on some issues there will be disagreement. That is how the Winchester Preservation Trust works.

But here we come to numbers. Numbers count for they reflect a Preservation Society's virility and its ability to keep in touch with its members, who incidentally, are also electors. In brief, within reason, the greater the number and spread of members the greater the influence with the Council Chamber.

It is for this reason that the Winchester Preservation Trust values every single one of its members. Membership is a barometer of its efforts and it is most encouraging that at this critical time it has increased to over 800. It is widespread and nationally influential as befits England's ancient capital. But new members are urgently wanted and welcomed. So I will make this plea to our present members. Please let your Council know of your individual views on planning and development controversies - they are very important; they help the Council to better represent you.

And please help by persuading people who are sympathetic to the aims of the Winchester Preservation Trust, which is open to everyone, to become a member. You and they will be helping in the task of guarding Winchester against despoilation and helping the Trust in its efforts to reinforce and improve Winchester's individual identity as a great European Historical City, in conjunction with all other like-minded people and bodies.

There are plenty of challenges ahead, some of which are reported in this Newsletter.

Keith Egleston

(Keith is a member of the Council of the Trust, he is a former Director of the Heritage Education Group of the Civic Trust and is currently working on a number of projects for the National Trust)

Footnote: A Membership Recommendation Form is enclosed with this Newsletter. Please make use of it.

Who are they? - TrustNews January 1987

In this issue we feature Ian Skeet, who was elected to the Council of the Trust at the last AGM and now serves on the Town Planning Committee.

Ian and his family have been living in Winchester since 1977. He has recently retired from Shell International and from a working life that for many years took him abroad, mostly to the Middle East. He and his family lived at different times in Qatar and Oman in the Arabian Gulf and in the Sudan. Since 1972 he worked in London and was responsible for international and government relations for Shell International.

While in Oman he wrote a book on that country. His interest in history and political development has led him to carry on writing in retirement and he continues his interests in current oil and energy developments as a consultant. He is married with four children. His wife has been much involved in Winchester life since their arrival here. Now that he is no longer committed to commuting he looks forward to helping in the work of the Trust.

Twyford Waterworks Trust - TrustNews January 1987

The Twyford Waterworks Trust is endeavouring to restore and preserve, with limited public access, the Edwardian Water Pumping Station. It hopes to restore much of the machinery to working order. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument with important natural history aspects as well. For £10 individuals and companies can become patrons of the project. Enquiries to the Secretary, Mrs. Pam Moore, 51 Porteous Crescent, Chandler's Ford. Tel. 923-63447.

Land Owned by Marston’s Brewery, Hyde Street/North Walls - TrustNews January 1987

We understand that Marstons are leaving Winchester and that their site, which extends to over 2 acres, is on the market for redevelopment.

This very historic site is bounded to the south by the Roman Vallum and to the west by the site of the Northgate. Here the city ditch is still visible, together with the mediaeval bridge under the road approach to Northgate. The site includes the Brewery Buildings, the White Swan, Northgate House and the Bowling Green and Pavilion.

The Trust has submitted a report to the City Conservation Officer, who has acted very quickly in recommending that a Building Preservation Notice be served in respect of the White Swan, Northgate House, and the Brewery Office and Counting House.

Urban Studies Committee - TrustNews January 1987

The Committee's display in the Heritage Centre of old and new photographs of the High Street, together with up-dated drawings, ended on 27th November. It was based on the Trust's booklet "From Cathedral to Castle" and proved very popular.

The exhibition was visited by several voluntary groups and many school parties. The children were then taken to look at the great variety of old buildings still to be seen, even if only on the upper floors. A tape recording by Miss Muriel Croft and Chris Webb of their impressions of the High Street provoked much discussion.

Frank Chippindale

Programme - TrustNews January 1987

Continuing
Discover the City - a permanent exhibition at the Winchester Heritage Centre, 52/54 Upper Brook Street.

*** Wednesday 28th January 7.00 p.m.**
Local Authority Sheltered Housing in Winchester - informal discussion led by Noel Mullins RIBA, Director of Housing and Architecture, Winchester City Council.
Winchester Heritage Centre. Number limited to 30 - see Note below.

Tuesday 10th February 12.45 - 1.45 p.m.
Lunchtime Lecture - Experiencing, Understanding and Shaping Places - by Rex Beddis, Humanities Adviser for Avon County Education Authority.
Winchester Heritage Centre.

Tuesday 10th February 7.30 p.m.
Members' Open Meeting-A Chance for Members to Express Their Views on Issues of Concern (e.g. the Brooks Development).
St. Lawrence Parish Room, Colebrook Street. (Members only).

Thursday 26th February 7.00 p.m.
Speculative Private Housing - informal discussion led by Keith Leaman RIBA.
Winchester Heritage Centre. Number limited." to 30 - see Note below.

*** Tuesday 10th March 12.45 - 1.45 p.m.**
Lunchtime Lecture - Recent Archaeological Activities in Winchester - by Mike Morris of the City Archaeologist's office (Mr. Morris will be directing the Brooks excavation).
Winchester Heritage Centre.

Wednesday 18th March 7.30 p.m.
Alternative Uses for Redundant Churches - a talk by Ashley Barker, OBE, FSA, FRIBA, AADip(Hons.), Head of London Division and Surveyor of Historic Buildings, English Heritage.
St. Lawrence Parish Room, Colebrook Street.

*** Tuesday 24th March 7.00 p.m.**
Car Parking: Chesil Street Multi-Storey Development -informal discussion led by the project architect.
Winchester Heritage Centre. Number limited to 30 - see Note below.

Wednesday 15 April
Coach Trip to Portsmouth- to see Unusual Aspects of H.M. Naval Base. Members and guests only.
Further informatic on back page. Applications before end of March.

Sunday 17th May
Coach Trip to Sherborne, Dorset (at the invitation of The Sherborne Society). Members and guests only.
Further information on Additional Programme Information. Applications before end of April.

Tuesday 19th May 6.00 p.m.
Unusual Aspects of Winchester Cathedral - tour of the roofs, tower, stair turrets, etc. led by Mrs. Corinne Bennett, Architect to the Dean and Chapter. Members only and number limited to 12.
Further information on Additional Programme Information. Applications before end of April.

* Note. These informal meetings in the Heritage Centre will provide an opportunity to meet some of those responsible for decision making on new buildings in Winchester. City Officers and Councillors on the City Planning Committee will be present at each meeting. As accommodation is strictly limited, members wishing to join in the discussions on 26th February and 24th March are asked to visit the Heritage Centre and sign the appropriate list not later than two weeks before the date of the meeting.

Heritage Centre Hours
Sunday 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.;
Wednesday 12 noon - 4.00 p.m.;
Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.
(Closed Monday and Tuesday).

Additional Programme Information - TrustNews January 1987

Unusual Aspects of H.M. Naval Base, Portsmouth - Wednesday 15th April
Coach leaves Winchester Broadway (outside St. John's House) at 10.00 a.m. (N.B. It will return to The Broadway via St. Cross). Arrive H.M. Naval Base at 11.00 a.m. The tour will be conducted by Commander B. Sparks, R.N. and it will involve a fair amount of walking. There is a cafeteria. Coach leaves Portsmouth at 3.30 p.m., arriving Winchester Broadway at approximately 4.30.
Cost: £3.20 to approx. £3.80 per person (depending on size of coach and number of seats filled) plus a tip for the driver. Applications to Mrs. Brit Croft, Downlands, Sleepers Hill, Winchester, S022 4NP (tel. Win. 52978) before the end of March. Please enclose s.a.e. and £3.20 deposit (cheque payable to Winchester Preservation Trust).

Coach Trip to Sherborne - Sunday 17th May
Coach leaves Winchester Broadway (outside St. John's House) at 10.00 a.m. to arrive at 12 noon. Guided tour of the Abbey. Your own picnic lunch in gardens (or in hall if wet). The Sherborne Society will provide coffee. Walk around Sherborne led by Mr. Pitman. Afternoon tea provided by the Sherborne Society. Short visit to the Almshouses. Depart by 6.00 p.m., arriving Winchester about 8.00 p.m.
Cost: £4.20 to approx. £4.80 per person (depending on size of coach and number of seats filled) plus a tip for the driver and contribution towards donation to The Sherborne Society. Applications to Mrs. Brit Croft (address and tel. no. given above) before the end of April. Please enclose s.a.e. and £4.20 deposit (cheque payable to Winchester Preservation Trust).

Unusual Aspects of Winchester Cathedral - Tuesday 19th May
As the number of participants is strictly limited to 12, applications must be sent to Mrs. Brit Croft (address and tel. no. given above) before the end of April. If necessary, a ballot for places will be held on 1st May and the successful applicants will be notified shortly thereafter. Meet outside the South Transept at 6.00 p.m. Wear sensible shoes and bring a torch if you have one. If you are allocated a place and have to drop out, please notify Mrs. Croft (even at the last minute) so that someone on the reserve list can take your place. A collection will be taken and donated to the Cathedral. Newsletter contributions should be sent to Mrs. Gill Graham, Hon. Secretary and Editor, Highways End, Highways Road, Compton, Winchester, S021 2DF. (Tel. Win. 713072).