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Place Hereford Civic Society

The City's built environment forum

Speculative Housing

Let's stop suburban sprawl

Winter 2017/18

Balfour Beatty's City Link Road

Are they fit to design our infrastructure?

Planning procedures

Disgraceful behaviour

Amazing Places

The Streams and Mills of Hereford

Hereford Now

City Link Road

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Further information on Back Page

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PREFACE

As ever Hereford Civic Society is pushing for a Vision of Hereford that we can all work towards. With so much information and knowledge about I continue to worry that we are, often, just not able to get through the detail, draw a sensible conclusion and then build it. By "we" I mean all of us, I prevaricate as well as the best; but we must drive forward positively.

PLACE endeavours to be the go-to précis of all things relevant to the built environment in Hereford.

On page 3 we severely criticise the design of the new City Link Road. Our main feature considers Speculative Housing with some suggestions as to how we might just save our precious Herefordshire from suburbanisation. Planning Matters, on page 7, highlights some disgraceful conduct by local and national politicians.

Consultation on improvements to the Straight Mile in Rotherwas will take place later in the Spring, based on the HCS idea of a small expert panel trying to iron out the complicated details, before going out to full public consultation that is understandable and easy to engage with.

And David Whitehead writes engagingly about another 'Amazing Place'.

John Bothamley

NEWS & COMMENT

Civic Voice (CV) Convention

20th October 2017 saw the annual meeting of CV, with over 150 members participating, in Wakefield. Sharing best practice was much discussed with excellent examples from around the country, especially Local Design Awards by some societies in major cities. The CV Design Awards is the successful national scheme (now in its fourth year) with projects proposed by local societies, not by architects. Conservation Areas were celebrated, being the fiftieth anniversary of their setting up, with over 10,000 across the country. Duncan Sandys was instrumental in setting up the process and his daughter Laura (vice president of CV) spoke passionately about the need to monitor the effectiveness of conservation areas. In particular she was concerned by the large reduction in the number of conservation officers employed by local authorities. In Herefordshire Council we now have 3 conservation officers to cover our 6000+ listed buildings and 64 conservation areas.

Wakefield Civic Society (WCS)

The CV Convention was hosted by WCS in considerable style, starting at the Unity Works, an impressively refurbished nineteenth century



building incorporating function spaces, offices and shops. Kevin Trickett, their enthusiastic president, has run the Society for over twenty years and they even have their own, rent free, offices in the Town Hall! Councillors please note. WCS makes a huge contribution to the administration of their City, being a trusted and respected partner in all matters built environment. It was particularly pleasing to hear their approach is much like our own, respectfully criticising planning applications and ensuring the maintenance of the best historical buildings.



Herefordshire Tree Week

This year's recent celebrations were notable for their action-packed variety, with a range of events taking place across the county, from tree-focussed walks and talks, coppicing and digital mapping workshops, information stalls run by the Wildlife Trust and Tree Warden Network in Hereford and Leominster - to an invitation to meet the Gruffalo and interact with The Biophilic Wishing Tree at Queenswood Country Park. Every year, National Tree Week seeks to raise the public's awareness of the value and importance of trees to both our - and our environment's, health and wellbeing. Hopefully, the message of better protection and monitoring of Herefordshire's wonderful trees will continue to spread to those parts not yet convinced that we need them far more than they need us. And not least, Tree Week does give an opportunity for us to collectively celebrate their invaluable contribution to our uniquely beautiful landscape. www.herefordshiretrees.net

TTROs for the Link Road

HCS was surprised to receive an email on 23rd November 2017 from Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) "To allow for the current timescale for the opening of the new road, Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) will be in place for the opening date which will then be replaced by the permanent orders that are the subject of the consultation. Should you wish to make a representation on the proposals it should be made in writing to either..... by 14th December 2017 the date set for the opening of the road". Our enquiries suggested that this procedure is all in order; but if millions of pounds of tarmac have been laid based on extensive traffic modelling to the nth degree why is a temporary TTRO required? We respectfully suggest BBLP might have overlooked the subject.

St Owen's Street Consultation

The many consultations for improvements, especially around the question of a contra flow cycle route continue. HCS was considering the latest proposals together with the previous iterations and wondered just how much our councillors have been spending and not actually delivering. Our FOI request asked for the cost of consultations from 2001 to date. Herefordshire Council wrote: "the cost for this financial year (letter dated 13th October 2017) is £10,100 Balfour Beatty Living Places are delivering the scheme". If that means 2016/17 then there are the current costs for this present year of 2017/18 or if it means 2017/18 then there are the costs for 2016/17 to be added. So HCS estimates the costs for the current consultation of £20,200 as a lot of work occurred before April 2017. "Previous consultations took place in 2006, 2007 and 2008. Our finance systems which were in use at that time record total project spend.....therefore unable to provide the information requested."

Also add to these figures the time costs of Herefordshire Council staff - at the latest meeting HCS attended there were four HC staff and four BBLP - then we suspect the overall costs to think about and consider improvements to the street to be £20,200 times four years for contracted out services plus say 30% of this figure for HC costs gives a grand total of c. £105,000.

Why did councillors need four consultations?

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RIBA

Contributors

Robert Adam - Architect

John Bothamley - Chairman HCS, developer and chair of charitable grant making trust

Mo Burns - Environmentalist and member of HCS

John Faulkner - Retired chartered civil engineer, chairman of HCS 2003-2006

Rob Macdiarmid - Redrow Homes

Stanley Vincent - Planning visionary

David Whitehead - Hereford historian and author

Design & Layout - Gary Nozedar

Front Cover

City Link Road - Balfour Beatty Living Places MJ0002-C-110

NEWS & COMMENT



widemarsh kerbs

Widemarsh Street

There has been another rash of tripping and criticism of the low kerbs. One of our artistic members thinks he understands one of the possible reasons; because the design uses the same granite kerbs at two levels. Where there is a change of level one expects to see a change of material. Traditionally there are paving slabs on a footpath, a granite kerb and then tarmac on the "road". It is easy for the brain to translate this as two levels. In Widemarsh Street we observe a second kerb at a lower level, possibly confusing our interpretation. Each different level in a street should be of a different material?

City Link Road Instructions

We have heard many sarcastic comments about the instructions on how to negotiate the new road as published in the Hereford Times. The images show buildings not yet built and this expensive advertisement appears to be little more than a techie's indulgence. Why do we waste money on projects like this?

Bikeability

Cycling training for children is funded by a dedicated grant from the Department for Transport (DfT). Councillor Durkin, Herefordshire

Council Cabinet Member for Transport and Roads, said "Bikeability is a high quality cycle training programme which gives confidence and skills to those who wish to cycle safely. Our scheme provides free practical cycle training to over 1,000 pupils and adults". A shame it only covers about one half of one percent of the population. More information from move@herefordshire.gov.uk

Attend our Annual Lecture in May 2018
Upcycling Cycling – see front cover.

Conservation Area Stats

Heritage Counts 2017 is the 16th annual survey of the state of England's historic environment. 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of conservation areas through the Civic Amenities Act 1967.

The evidence shows that conservation area designation isn't about preventing change. Neither is it about increasing property values. It's about preserving and enhancing the distinctive character of a local area. This is what makes conservation areas so popular amongst members of the public and residents. They are places people want to live in because conservation area designation ensures careful consideration is given to the design of any new build scheme and how it harmonises with its surroundings. In this sense, they are good examples of good place making.



Hereford United FC

Hereford Football Club has signed an agreement with Herefordshire Council (dated 19 December 2017), which will secure the club's tenancy at the Edgar Street stadium for a further 10 years. The extended lease will allow for future development of the club's stadium as part of a wider area that is set to further improve following the opening of the Old Market shopping development and the construction of the new City Link Road. The proposed 'Urban Village' project, part of the Hereford 2020 Edgar Street regeneration, could potentially mean a new stand and associated facilities to return the ground to a four-sided stadium.

HCS is concerned that the press release referred to 'as well as more retail outlets nearby' Sorry Cllr. Bramer the rest of the area is earmarked for the Urban Village – that means more housing, which will help to bring more vitality back to High Town and adjacent historic streets.

HEREFORD NOW

City Link Road

The long awaited road is open being an intriguing collection of traffic light controlled junctions and an effective barrier for pedestrians to get to and from the station and proposed transport hub. HCS has long criticised the Herefordshire Council's choice of highway contractors in Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP). Here is proof that our criticisms have been valid. Councillor Philip Price talks about a once in a lifetime opportunity to put Hereford on the map; here the Tories have delivered an old fashioned scheme that exceeds the silliness of the 60's link road in Croydon! When we have asked HC about the process of reviewing the work of

BBLP we have been told "they are an international company with over 10,000 employees" (p8 Summer PLACE) Street Design for All (2014) is an update of national advice and good practice following on from the 2007 Manual for Streets by the Department for Transport. Robert Goodwill, Minister for Transport wrote. "In recent years there has been a significant step change in attitudes to street design and management". Presumably BBLP has not provided CPD for their staff.

At the base level sheep pens for pedestrians is outdated and unacceptable – or have we got it wrong, is this an ironic design feature to reflect our close connection with agriculture?



barriers to the city

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NEW HOUSING

This quarter we take a deep dive into the perplexing situation around new speculative housing on the periphery of Hereford. The developers say they build what we want, many of us would prefer better. HCS believes that the rashes of pseudo cottages, and executive homes, (e.g. Saxon Gate) are hardly good examples of what we ought to be seeing. For a start we could do with some decent sized windows, and attention to putting these predominantly on south elevations. That is the view of most HCS members, here we consider various projects and report different opinions, both house design and housing layouts.

These are the criteria HCS uses when assessing planning applications.

- eco minimalism – including orientation, thermal mass, high levels of insulation
- logical layout - respecting landscape, creating a sense of place
- local reference
- respect for adjacent buildings
- creating communities

A developer writes

There is a misconception that all housebuilders are solely focused on churning out homes without thought for the communities they are establishing. Sustainability and creating places where people want to live are not optional extras for Redrow, it's firmly entrenched in our DNA. For us sustainability is not just about building with sustainable materials and protecting local wildlife. It means creating thriving communities that are fit for the future.

The starting point for each of our developments is our place-making principles which are embedded in the design and layout of our sites. These include ensuring that schemes fit sensitively with the local area, that they feature large open spaces and plenty of nature habitats, that residents can easily make their way around the

area and are well connected to public transport.

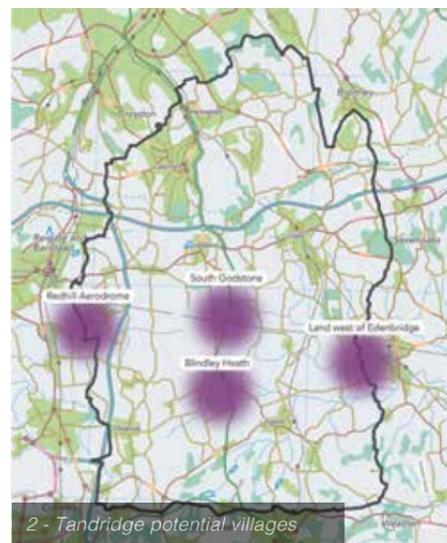
For example, 95% of our homes are within 500 metres of a public transport link. All this ensures a place that fosters a sense of wellbeing among the people living there – and the broader community too. These new communities offer residents swathes of green space, orchards, allotments, running trails, cycling infrastructure and the homes are constructed to the highest quality standards we can deliver.

Rob Macdiarmid, Redrow Homes November 2017



Vision for South Godstone

When I moved to Herefordshire in 2000 I did not think I would be using my old local authority in Surrey as an exemplar of where to site new housing. The map shows a number of towns and small isolated villages; but unlike Herefordshire, they have opted for new garden villages, complete with train stations and more. The numbers are larger than here but what an enlightened approach, instead of adding a few houses to every hamlet and village. It reminds me of my, apparently audacious, plan for the enlargement of Ewyas Harold. (See PLACE Summer 2015) See small plan – could not we consider this again? Do we really want to see our hinterland swamped with little executive homes in cul-de-sacs?



facilities, a wealth of green space and easy access to the countryside around. One third of the development will be high quality public spaces, recreational areas and parkland.....We propose to create a new primary school with nursery provision. A new secondary school will meet the needs of the south of the district. A new village hub and market square..... a new heart to the community, including shops, a supermarket, a local farmers market, community and employment space and a food quarter. New pedestrian and cycle routes to integrate the existing village with the new parkland and facilities.

We aim to reduce reliance on cars encourage people to cycle or walk to the shops, station and services. We envisage 5,000 beautifully designed homes to meet all tastes and sizes. We will include Starter Homes, shared ownership and retirement homes, meeting the whole community's needs. Being at the centre of the District means that new healthcare, education and other services will reduce the need to travel. Buses and trains will play an important role. *John Bothamley*



Tandridge Council's pitch - We want to deliver a self-sufficient and sustainable South Godstone, creating a community which balances the best of town and country. It will be a place where people can live in attractive homes close to amenities and walk to school or catch the train to work. The Garden Village will continue the rich heritage of distinctive towns and villages that the District of Tandridge enjoys, with a range of modern amenities and community



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Images

- 1 Derwenthorpe - uncluttered and workable?
- 2 Tandridge potential villages - inspired place making?
- 3 Grafton Lane Site Layout - Taylor Wimpey - arbitrary blocks?
- 4 Kingstone - original scheme - all principal windows facing south
- 5 Bad highway design for a residential street - bizarre houses?
- 6 Church Pastures - small windows on south elevation
- 7 Local materials - big south facing windows
- 8 Huge cul-de-sac - poor orientation - application refused

DESIGN CODES

It is desirable to control the form, quality or detail of future building on a new development to improve the character and consistency of the public realm. Design Codes can be an appropriate tool to provide design control if some measure of regulation is required by a local authority or landowner. Design Codes allow some freedom of choice for the future developer or designer. Codes constrain and direct design options with a view to maintaining some consistency across a development as well as, or alternatively, ensuring a level of quality. Codes can control the way a development is planned or the way individual buildings are designed within a plan, or both. Codes can dictate a style or just control particular features such as materials or heights. The use of 'non-stylistic' design coding is increasingly popular. Adam Architecture

Urban Design Lessons:

Housing layout and neighbourhood quality

Lessons learnt from 100 design proposals and financial data submitted for the Delivery Partner Panel 2 procurement.

The report shows that good urban design does not have to cost more and can have many benefits. Urban design principles are illustrated by layout examples, demonstrating good practice and areas for consideration. This excellent Government report, of less than 30 pages, proves the point that good design layout benefits everyone. It is hoped the lessons may inform future design proposals, assist in the assessment of bids and improve the quality of housing-led developments. As part of a recent framework procurement process, bidders were asked to submit a design response on specific sites and a detailed financial appraisal of the scheme. There were four case study sites, one for each of the geographical areas of the framework. Looking at 100 different layouts throughout the country offered a valuable opportunity to analyse and capture good practice and lessons learnt.



5 - West Midlands daftness

When assessing designs for the same site that respond to the same constraints, differences were found which could impact on the overall quality of place. The best third of the proposals, scored three times higher

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on quality than the lowest third. This represents a significant difference in design quality, which can ultimately result in costs or added value to quality of life. Equally, our comparative analysis of urban design quality and the accompanying indicative financial assessments, show that better design can deliver benefits to developers, in terms of the return on their investment. Further guidance can be found in HCA's *Urban Design Compendium*. Homes and Communities Agency – 1st January 2014



6 - Church Pastures

Urban Design Lessons -Quality assessment criteria

Legibility & permeability. Active Frontage Street design. Parking Landscape Building form perimeter blocks, through routes, minimised blank walls and garden fences, continuous building lines, pedestrian friendliness, paving quality, maximised on-street parking, minimised rear courts and front-garden parking, public street trees, green SUDS, green front gardens, minimising single-sided flats. Full report - www.gov.uk/government/publications/urban-design-lessons-housing-layout-and-neighbourhood-quality

Design codes, diffusion of practice in England Urban Design Group

An update of Bartlett School of Planning report 2013 – July 2017

How widespread are the use of design codes in England today?

In excess of a third of local planning authorities have had codes produced for them, sometimes through developers voluntarily submitting them as part of a planning application. The use of design codes is advocated in policy in a quarter of local planning authorities, and this is rapidly increasing. The overall diffusion of design coding (in policy and / or practice) is about one half of local authority areas. A significant element of diffusion is being driven by private developers, landowners or consultants submitting unsolicited design codes as part of planning applications.

What benefits do the use of design codes have and do these match those

identified by the national design codes pilot programme?

The key aspirations for coding are to secure higher (sustainable) design quality; to deliver more consistent outcomes across the multiple development phases of long-term projects; and to provide a more effective planning process, through expedited reserved matters processes, swifter permissions for those who comply, and by offering greater certainty for developers.

What support exists for the continued use of design codes in the future?

The assessment amongst planning authorities was overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority of those who had previously used design codes declaring their intention to use them again as and when the right opportunities arose (namely sites large enough to justify their production).

Planning authorities particularly welcome the increased control design codes give them over the outputs of the volume housebuilding sector, although stressed the need for an in-built review process to maintain flexibility.

The use of design codes is just one part of a much needed culture change in the design and delivery of new housing.

Ultimately, despite their perceived benefits, the effectiveness of codes will depend on whether those responsible for their production consider their preparation to be a worthwhile investment. In this regard, despite all their potentially positive benefits, practitioners also remained cognisant of the limitations of design codes; that this tool alone could not change established patterns of behaviour.

As one respondent put it:

"The point of private developers preparing design codes is that they are not trusted to do what they say they will. Planning authorities and other public agencies see design codes as a way of holding them to their word. To the same end the developer tries to write them in a way that appears that they are doing this without actually doing so ... if that is not too cynical!"

Matthew Carmona - Professor of Planning & Urban Design - Bartlett School of Planning, UCL



7 - Leominster social housing

Action required

What do we take from these paragraphs? There is some good work proceeding, some stalled and some poor proposals at risk of despoiling our county. These examples prompt HCS to lobby the Hereford Area Plan Steering Committee requesting full-on design codes to be included; lobbying councillors to make amendments to the Local Plan, (the overall plan for the County ratified in 2005) and Neighbourhood Development Plans, to incorporate design and sustainability more comprehensively.

Please respond to us with your views, our membership is growing, we have a voice, and believe we have a positive contribution to make Hereford the vibrant city it deserves to be. The Herefordshire Council Planning website is easy to access – check out the proposals for our built environment – are these the sort of places we want to see?

Councillors please note

Although design codes are most often used as part of the planning application process they can be used via formal adoption, principally through a Local Plan or neighbourhood plan.
Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 26-036-20140306
Revision date: 06 03 2014



8 - Bovis Aylston Hill

Extracts from NPPF - Requiring good design

58. Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area.

- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture.

National Planning Policy Framework - March 2012.

More new villages

Stafford Borough Council announced in November 2107 that a garden village could relieve the pressure to build more homes in other towns and villages across the borough. The council, neighbouring local authorities, and local enterprise partnerships that form the 'Constellation Partnership' plan to engage the government to progress opportunities.

Recommendation – HCS commends this website and the excellent short lectures it features on youtube. An excellent range of insightful lectures.

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AMAZING PLACES OF HEREFORD

The Streams and Mills of Hereford

It is good to hear that the Wildlife Trust has received funding for a conservation project to study the ecology of Hereford's brook-system and rather ironic that on their first day of exploration in November it found the system below Commercial Street virtually dry.

In the distant past this was not unusual since the demand upon the Yazor-Widemarsh-Eign system by several mills often exhausted the limited supply. Until the 20th century the brook system was very complex and served a variety of purposes. The Common Council of the city reiterated regularly that 'the water from the Horse Pool at Yazor' was 'by the King's prerogative' given to the city 'to strengthen its defences'. This probably occurred in the late 9th century when the Saxon defences were constructed and a culvert – later known as 'the King's Cut' - was engineered from Canonmoor (the Bulmer's compound) to the 'burh' ditch near Eign Gate. Eign is an old river name, perhaps linked with the Welsh iain 'cold'.

The system was extended when the defences were renewed in the late 12th century. Notwithstanding opposition from the Council, mills developed along its course. St Guthlac's minster, the earliest church within the city, had a mill outside Eign Gate and another below the walls of the castle, where the stream fell back into the Wye. Both mills were destroyed by royal license to improve the defences when the city was besieged by Roger Mortimer in 1265, but only the Castle Mill was rebuilt and survived until 1854.

The natural route of the Yazor Brook, and where most of the water continued

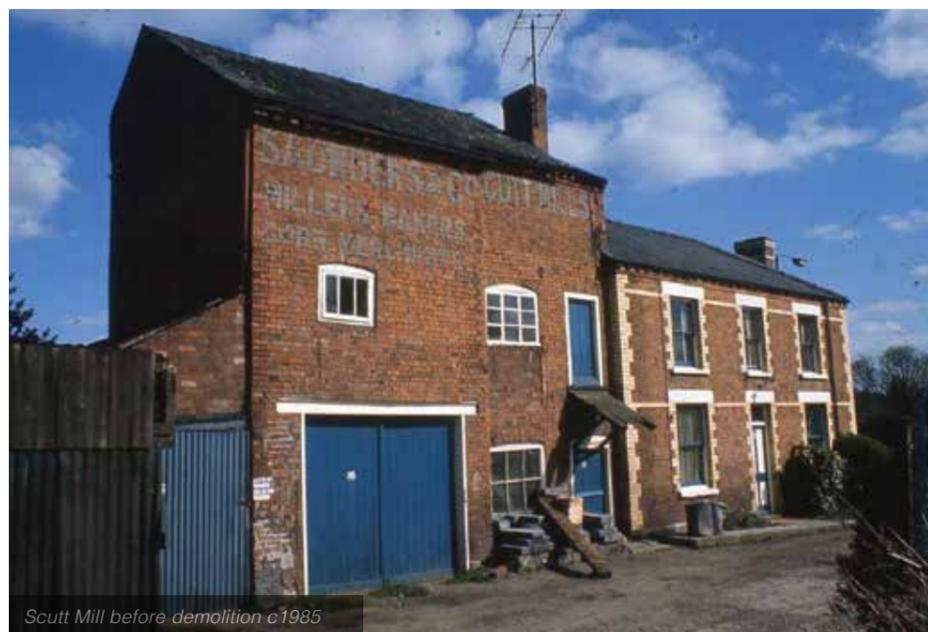
to flow, was across Widemarsh, which was more than 300 acres in extent in the Middle Ages. It picked up three tributaries: (1) the Widemarsh Brook, which rose somewhere near Yazor Road; (2) the Ayles Brook, which drained the fields below Holmer and (3) an unnamed stream, which ran down from the site of the Wiggins plant and later fed the canal. The first mill, Widemarsh Mill, was near Moor House, where the remains of a brick culvert brought water into the gardens of the mansion. In the Middle Ages the mill belonged to the canons of Llanthony Priory, but after the Dissolution (1536) it passed to the owners of Moor House. In 1664 Humphrey Haworth of the Moor, and his miller, John Tanner, were in trouble with the Council for diverting water from the city ditch to their mill. This left the city surrounded by a 'filthy noisome' ditch and inconvenienced many citizens who used the water for domestic purposes. The weir and sluice at Canonmoor were apparently out of repair.

The wide-marsh stretched right down to Widemarsh Street where the combined streams passed under Barre Bridge, where travellers from the north were checked before approaching the city. Here a tributary called Smalpors was taken off the main stream, passing the convent of the Blackfriars and providing

water for the vats of a tannery and a 'walker' - a specialist in removing the oils from newly woven cloth. An alternative name for the stream was the Tan Brook. It crossed Bye Street (Commercial Road) where there was another mill – Monk Mill – close to St Guthlac's Priory (on site of the hospital) and re-joined the main stream below Aylestone Hill. Buck's prospect of the city (1732) marks a 'Leather Mill', which later belonged to the Hatton family. It's lost under Morrison's.

The main stream watered the Portfields and reverted to its old name of Eign and on a bye-way to Tupsley we find Scutt Mill – scytte Old English for 'dam or weir' – and referred to with this name in the late 12th century. It seems to have belonged to the bishop and the tenant in the early 13th century was William the Goldsmith, who paid a high rent of 50 shillings per annum. It was

presumably a busy mill. The Georgian building survived until 1985 and I have a garden path made from its hard frost-proof bricks. Further south, just before the stream debouched into the Wye there was Eign Mill, which belonged to the Dean and Chapter and above it was the vineyard of St Guthlac's. The mill prospered after the Wye had been made navigable in the late 17th century and a deep-water quay was created at Eign, suitable for large boats that could not reach Hereford. In 1780 it was described as a 'stack of corn-mills', belonging to John Lacock, a maltster, 'remarkably well situated for Bristol or country trade'. Perhaps when water is permanently restored to the Eign Brook system we could design some rustic mills, with their sluices and ponds, and create some beauty as well as electricity for the city. David Whitehead



Scutt Mill before demolition c1985



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HCS comments posted on HC website – Kingstone application (173522)

This application is presented as a similar proposal to the previously permitted one by Archihaus. This is not valid as there are significant differences.

Archihaus secured an innovative and contemporary consent being a new approach to speculative housing development. In particular it

- proposed principals of "eco-minimalism" which surely should be incorporated in all 21st century developments – orientation, heatsink foundations, high levels of insulation etc.
- Positive interpretation of traditional local styles using contemporary materials.
- Inclusion of live/work units
- Community facilities
- Permeability through the site including access at the south end.

The current application, whilst having to meet minimum building regulation standards, makes no steps towards

- Harvesting heat from the sun, generally incorporating little cottage style windows with no consideration of orientation.
- Refers to "traditional elevations" (Cerdea Planning submission) illustrated by poor modern interpretations of old cottages. Houses that have little link with the traditional styles and materials of Herefordshire.
- No provision for different life styles of working in this century
- No community facilities – this has no benefit for the present neighbours of the site or, indeed, the potential new occupants.
- No access from the south shown on the site plan. Design and Access Statement. p18

Brown Field Register

All councils have to publish by 31.12.18 a schedule of all brown field sites suitable for development and HC lists 29 sites totalling 13 hectares, all of which have full or outline planning consent. HCS was of the opinion that sites without consent should also be included, i.e. potential sites that are derelict and forgotten and need to have a purposeful future.

Straight Mile Consultation

Following the success of the St.Owen's Street consultation based upon a pre-consultation session of local people representing many interests, HCS is pleased to report that HC is again considering using this approach for the long awaited improvements to Holme Lacy Road due under the South Wye Transport Package; meeting scheduled for January 2018.

PLANNING MATTERS

Top of the League Tables

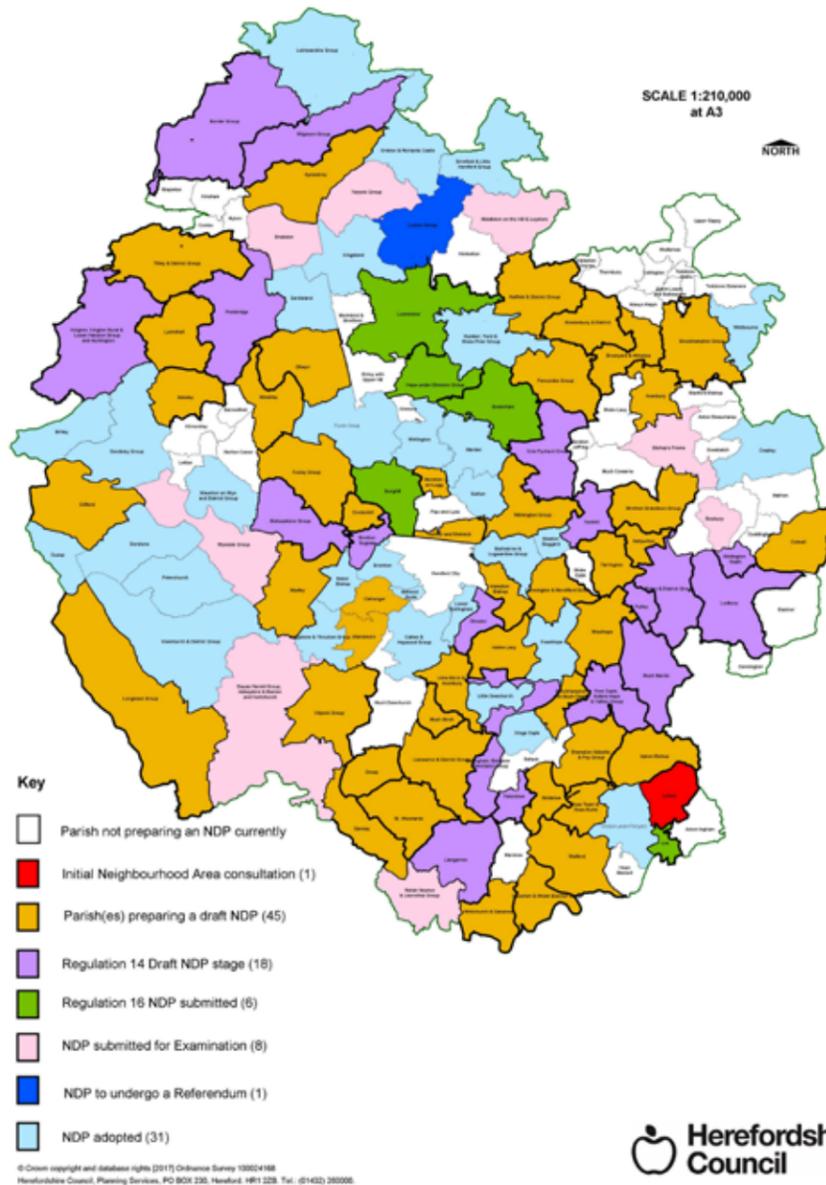
In November 2017 Cabinet Member Philip Price said:

“Producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is an exciting chance for towns and parishes to have a real say in how their community grows, such as by proposing where new homes and businesses can be built and what they should look like.

“I would like to show gratitude to the 109 designated neighbourhood areas, where community members have given up their time and taken up the challenge of neighbourhood planning, making Herefordshire the lead local planning authority in the UK.”

Now read the next paragraph below!

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) in Herefordshire



172704 Middle Common Piggery - Maescoed

Piggeries often stink and the consent on this planning application certainly does. With a ratified Neighbourhood Development Plan in place why did the planning committee chose to ignore it, and permit a larger number of houses than the NDP cited? No less than 10 councillors voted for it with just four against. Inspired by the previous local councillor, Graham Powell, five parishes gathered together to produce

the NDP. After hundreds of hours of volunteer time working through the complicated NDP process (soon to be further changed by Westminster!) our elected councillors overrode it. One of the suggested reasons is the fear of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) being relied upon at appeal; but that is spurious. HCS committee is so concerned by this action that the members of the planning committee have been invited to individually justify their decision – information on which



way individuals voted and their reasons will be published in our Spring edition.

Nationally

The picture is no better with our Minister, Sajid Javid. He ignored inspectors' advice on 14 occasions; and in 64 out of the 69 decisions on called in applications or recovered appeals since last June, when he took office, involved sites in Conservative constituencies!
Irwin Mitchell – Planning, 20th October 2017.

Losing the Big Society

These two examples illustrate the apparent contempt that so many politicians have for the electorate. Whilst we all hope that politicians enter the fray to improve the lot of the rest of us it is entirely unacceptable that they act without integrity – especially having encouraged us to become active in the planning process only to ignore what has been agreed. Where has the Big Society gone – launched and scuppered by politicians in a remarkably short space of time.

But Khan exhibits integrity

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has refused planning permission for an estate regeneration project in Barnet, which would have resulted in the net loss of 257 affordable homes. The application was for the redevelopment of Grahame Park estate in Colindale, including the demolition of 692 homes currently available at social rent and replace them with 435 homes. Khan withheld his support for the

COMMENT

Top of the league tables

As Herefordshire remains the top county, by a long way, for the number of NDPs in progress and agreed I question the merit of that distinction. With some NDPs being for very small villages and clusters of less than 400 people we have a situation where parishes are pitched against each other for the expensive services they want such as schools and social care, without full consideration of the overall picture. These items are all part of the equation when balancing proposed housing numbers etc etc. Everywhere seems to want a local primary school but it is economically unviable. Politicians have to take the decision of where these are to be sited; they cannot continue to prevaricate – but if councillors are weak over a planning application then they are unlikely to rationalise the school estate. National politicians have shirked the decision as well by saying every school must become an academy; but the absence of an overall plan, leaving the market to decide, is incredibly expensive and wasteful of resources. This correspondent despairs of the state of our democracy. SV

scheme and told Barnet Council, which approved the application in November, that it must continue working with City Hall planners and the developer to redesign the scheme to replace the lost affordable homes.



Steven Thomas of Watkins Thomas

Steven Thomas first joined the company in 1987, and became Director of Watkins Thomas Ltd in 2012. Born in Hereford in 1964, Steve graduated with a BSc. in Estate Management in 1986; is a Fellow of the National Association of Estate Agents (FNAEA) and a Member of the Association of Residential Letting Agents (MARLA).

5 King Street, Hereford HR4 9BW

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MEETINGS

Thursday 19th October 2017 City in a Parish.

Hereford Town Clerk, Stephen Kerry explained how to survive and thrive in a local government conundrum. An enthralling evening when Steve trod the delicate path, always respectful; a management lesson on how to get results in a complicated democratic system.

Society's Annual General Meeting included approval of our accounts and reports covering the 12 months to August 2017 and election of committee members for the coming year. Information on our web site.

Thursday 16th November 2017 Libraries in the modern age.

Expert, Les Watson illustrated how libraries can succeed now, and into the future, by grasping new technology. He is clearly disappointed by the lack of progress on the future of Hereford Library and the complicated potential funding routes.

Thursday 14th December 2017 Community Land Trusts in town and country.

Local Community Land Trust Chairman, Andy Johnson described this exciting new initiative for empowering local communities.

Planning Issues

Confidence in the planning system is plummeting amid a culture of 'planning by appeal', according to a poll. A survey of 100 housebuilders by law firm Gowling WLG found almost half are "serial appealers", bringing more than 30 per cent of rejected applications to appeal.

"This volume of successful appeals is almost certainly caused by an absence in some areas of up-to-date local plans," said Gowling WLG. "If authorities do not have an up-to-date local plan and are unable to

YOUR OPINIONS



hereford wards

demonstrate that at least five years' worth of land has been allocated for local housing, then development on sites that could or should have been allocated to this need are very likely to succeed on appeal if initially rejected." Herefordshire Council has a Local Plan in place but a five year land supply remains controversial as we need to provide an additional buffer of 20%.



Sustained Vision

In 1979, 49% of all qualified architects in the UK worked in the public sector, designing housing, schools, hospitals and parks, in the rosy days when local authorities still had budgets for such luxuries. Now that figure is just 0.7%. The dramatic decline has been due to both the removal of councils' powers to build their own housing, which ended under Margaret Thatcher, and the atomising of the planning process into specialist areas of expertise. Planning applications are now examined by officers responsible for heritage and highways, trees and bat welfare, but rarely is there someone with an overarching design vision for the place in question.

Oliver Wainwright, Guardian 9.11.17



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Forthcoming Events

All meetings at the Kindle Centre, by ASDA, Belmont, Hereford HR2 7JE. 7.00pm refreshments for a 7.30pm start

Thursday 18th January 2018
Hereford's City of Culture bid - the experience and the legacy David Marshall and Roger Morgan, chair of the Cultural Partnership board

Thursday 15th February 2018
Humphry Repton in Herefordshire - a bi-centenary celebration David Whitehead (unmissable – a preview of a forthcoming exhibition)

Thursday 15th March 2018
Skylon Park - update on the Hereford Enterprise Zone Neil Kerr – HEZ board member. New builds, new employment, heritage protected and enhanced, new connections.

Thursday 19th April 2018
Brian Hatton - The Harrow and the Plough. Robin Thorndyke will review the work of Hereford's renown and talented artist. A large body of his work is in the custodianship of the County Museum Service.

Thursday 17th May 2018
Annual Lecture. Upcycling Cycling How Hereford Can Integrate Cycling into our Everyday Lives **NB** hosted at the Hereford University Centre, Folly Lane, Hereford HR1 1LS 7pm, for 7.15pm start and 8.30pm close See panel on Front Page

Join Us

If you want to influence the future of the City and enjoy lectures and discussions about the built environment, old and new, JOIN US - your membership fee covers printing and distribution of our magazine, meeting expenses, web site and publicity costs. It does not cover members' time - all of which is freely given.

Subscription: Single £15 pa. / two memberships at the same address £25 pa. Questions? 01981 580002 chair@herefordcivicsociety.org.uk

Join By Cash

Pay at one of our meetings.

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Send a cheque and your details including address, phone and email address to David Fowler, Stable Cottage, Kingsthorpe, Hereford HR2 8AJ

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