

The Minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Advisory Group Meeting on 27th April 2017.

In attendance:

Annette Reeves	NCC Conservation Officer
Margaret Shaw	CARA, EWT
John Robertson	CAAG HELM
Marion Mead	Bridge St Traders
Bob Steward	Museum and Archives
Ian Hay	The Greenses'
Catherine Kent	Civic Society
Julie Kennedy	Community Development Trust

1. **Apologies:** Margaret Thomas, Cllr Gavin Jones.
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 30th March and matters arising**

The minutes are agreed.

Matters arising:

Lighting Strategy:

The response from NCC to Councillor Gavin Jones, Margaret Shaw as Chair and AR as secretary on the Lighting Strategy and roll out programme of replacement LEDs was read out to the Group

The Street Lighting Modernisation Project allows for like for like replacement of lighting units, therefore, if a decorative column or lantern requires to be replaced, it will be replaced with a decorative solution as near a match to the original as is reasonably available. The contract does not allow for additional decorative apparatus to be provided where there was none previously. That said, if third party funding could be identified, then we would be happy to consider requests and suggestions in this respect. It would be the responsibility of those requesting the decorative apparatus to source and secure the additional funding.

The exercise to identify what is currently available in respect of LED solutions that retain a decorative appearance is still ongoing. Once we have concluded this piece of work, I don't see an issue with involving the NCC conservation team, however, I would point out that ultimately it is a matter for the street lighting section to decide what constitutes an acceptable and cost effective solution.

Let me know if you require further assistance or advice.

Kind regards

Steve Bucknall IEng MICE
Highways Delivery Manager

The CAAG considered this did not alleviate their concerns over the protection/retention of the 'Berwick Lantern', or for older style light fittings/lamp columns in the town to be preserved in situ e.g. the row of lamp columns on Quay Walls or on the Bridge. It was still not entirely clear what was actually being proposed or potentially replaced.

JR as CAAG HELM champion proposed the CAAG should be proactive in this regard, to undertake an audit (photographs, locations) of the three conservation areas to show NCC the columns/lamps that were of concern.

The CAAG were not looking for additional 'decorative apparatus', merely assurances that the 'locally distinctive apparatus' could be upgraded but essentially retained. It was not about the LED light (pollution), but about retention of the older style columns and lamps that were mentioned in the Character Appraisals and Public Realm Strategy (Tweed and Silk) as contributing to place, context and setting of the 3 Conservation Areas.

As it was the local and county elections and very likely a new Town Council would be elected with different membership, JR considered this audit/approach and request for TC assistance in protecting the public realm and locally distinctive lighting could be raised again. He proposed a letter should be presented to the first AGM of the new TC to ask for assistance whilst offering CAAG help with the audit. JR happy to present it if required as HELM.

The previous consultation and dissemination of information was confusing and inaccurate as nobody had a consistent understanding of what 'heritage lighting' or 'decorative apparatus' was; as well as precisely what was being proposed; and more importantly when this was.

AR advised that Alnwick and Hexham had similar experiences and suddenly noticed replacement columns (and some changed positions of light fittings) as well as inappropriate 'replacement' lanterns that bore no resemblance to the existing. It was a countywide issue.

The CAAG members agreed to split the 3 Conservation Areas into achievable sections (manageable walking distances) and to photograph and plot each traditional lamp/lighting column. Catherine Kent agreed to plot all these on a digital map.

Information to be brought back to the next meeting (25th May).

Draft letter to be ready for 5th May (HELM and Chair) ready for the Town Council AGM on the 15th May.

Cowe Building HLF visit and Civic Society Tour.

MS on behalf of the CAAG and CK on behalf of the CS wished to extend thanks to AR for the interesting tour of the Cowe Buildings and visit to the exhibition that depicted the cockle making family business.

3. European Walled Towns

4. CAAG Annual Conference

Items 3 and 4 were taken together as 'walled towns' agreed as the theme/topic for this year's conference.

MS advised the ABCD application form had been received from the Community Trust for assistance with the conference (thank you). This would be discussed at the sub group meeting to progress the conference content and speakers (MS, JR, AR, KC, JK, DS).

The conference dates had been confirmed and the Town Hall booked. Would need to check availability of other venues (like last year, perhaps Maltings/Henry Travers Studio).

5. CAAG website.

Domain name purchased. Would need to drip feed CDT (Joanne Douglas) the information to start to put things together.

6. HELM.

Nothing additional to report. JR suggested some future group training on Conservation Areas at Risk (after conference – November time?) to assist with the completion of the questionnaires, perhaps through Jules Brown? Either as NECT or as Historic England Area Advisor. AR to check.

7. Treasurers report.

No change to the Account. MM did advise the CAAG to consider fundraising to support the conference, whether this is through a charging policy or some other means.

8. Current Planning Applications.

None for consideration.

CAAG would be keen to see the Blackburn and Price application following the pre-app that sought to increase the volume/height of development.

Proposals for the leisure centre – would this impact upon the setting of the Conservation Areas? CAAG keen to draw attention to setting and would like to look at any applications that come forward.

9. Any other business.

MS – In Bloom visited yesterday, hoping for higher than a silver gilt.

10. Date of Next Meeting

25th May 2017.

Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Advisory Group

9.15 a.m. Thursday 25th May 2017

AGENDA

Nomination of Secretary.

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 27th April and matters arising.
3. European Walled Towns
4. CAAG Annual Conference
5. CAAG website
6. HELM
7. Treasurers Report
8. Current Planning Applications
9. Any other business
10. Date of next meeting

29th June 2017.