

The Minutes of Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Advisory Group Meeting – 13th January 2011

Annette Reeves	NCC Conservation Officer (Berwick)
Alison Cowe	Berwick Civic Society
Margaret Thomas	St Boisil's Resident's Association
Philip Miller	Building Study Group
Cllr Bowlas	Town Council
John Robertson	Chamber of Trade
Chris Burgess	NCC Cons Team Manager (Chair)
Dorothy Slater	Spittal Improvement Trust

1. Apologies.

Peter Watts, Margaret Shaw, Peter Rutherford.

2. Minutes of the meeting held 14th December and matters arising.

The minutes were agreed.

MT- Mount Road application has been approved but advised revised plans still not being displayed on the planning portal and NCC website. AR confirmed application had been approved with conditions (delegated decision) and CAAG comments had been taken into account.

3. Regeneration Strategy – Protecting and enhancing the heritage asset (update on the THI and Area Partnership Schemes).

THI – AR is progressing development work and meetings with building owners of the critical/priority buildings.

Meetings had been held with funders/partners/consultants in Newcastle last week to progress a number of the complementary initiatives. The artist's work (photographs/poems) had been published in the form of an A5 booklet. This had been funded by Inspire Northumberland as part of the development work for the THI. It will be used to inform other initiatives as well as form part of the launch for the heritage projects and ongoing archive work.

The detailed and costed designs for the public realm components of the THI and Bridge Street partnership scheme were also being

developed by the consultants who had produced the Public Realm Strategy. The detailed scheme designs would be ready by the end of March for further consultation and approval by the HLF.

Area Partnership Schemes – Bridge Street; Two completed applications being progressed. Additional application/quotations expected imminently on a property in single ownership and a further property survey has been commissioned toward the provision of a schedule of repair for a building in dual tenancy. If all apply before the end of March the estimated repairs are likely to take the Bridge Street scheme allocation over budget.

Castlegate is much slower with one application imminent and two further being progressed with quotations being sought - but not yet submitted. AR and Iain Ogilvie have met with English Heritage to discuss the scope of distributing the funding allocation more evenly across the schemes; as Bridge Street has really taken off in Year 1 (possibly on the back of the newly completed Dewar's Lane Granary) and Castlegate slower to get established.

EH will consider the distribution of grant; as the partnership schemes are for the same conservation area. AR/IO not looking to reduce the overall grant budget but don't want to have to turn down applications in Bridge Street as well as potentially lose grant in Castlegate because owners are not yet ready to apply or commit their 25% contribution.

EH informed AR/IO that Berwick received the grant award 'just in time' - as this is likely to be a future cut for EH under the government's review of EH and HLF functions. AR/IO and EH to work together to try to ensure there is no loss of funding for the duration of the Berwick Historic Area Improvement Schemes.

Changemakers – Project is progressing and Elizabeth Russell (advocate); AR and Linda Bankier accompanied Berwick Middle School to Bridge Street to complete the children's field work and survey analysis. Pupils asked pedestrians why they were visiting Bridge Street; some surveyed shop owners about their business/shop and who lived there while others carried out audits on the condition of buildings. The children are now working on collating their material and evidence on the 'past and present' before looking at their ideas for the 'future'. The project is due to be presented to CAAG at some stage and Changemakers deadline for a national presentation is in March. AR will showcase the Changemaker project as part of a collaborative

exhibition and launch of the Historic Area Improvement Schemes in March/April.

4. Berwick Listed Building Surveys (update).

Notification received that 33 Palace Street (listed in April 2010) is to be formally amended; as the owner has found a deed that confirms the property is older than first realised. This will not affect its listing grade but does affect the list description and means there has to be a 'legal amendment' to update the information. EH have notified the local planning authority but advise it will not be amending the list description until after their new computer data base is in place.

Other outcomes of 'second sift' building surveys still awaited and are with EH/Secretary of State but the Berwick listing project is coming to an end with fewer properties coming forward.

5. Building Study Group (Bridge Street Survey).

PM had circulated via email the group's surveys produced to date on Bridge Street and Eastern Lane. The volunteers had split into two groups – those interested in photographing buildings and those interested in archive research. They had also used Arthur Wood's panoramas as part of the presented information along with their own photographs and historic maps. List descriptions; title deeds and Trade Directories had provided a lot of useful background information. Even small bill heads and advertisements had conveyed useful information.

AR/CB confirmed the survey work would be very useful and there could be some budget (as it was Bridge Street) through the Historic Area Improvement Schemes to publish the BSG work. It would also be good to display the Bridge Street analysis with the children's research and ideas at the exhibition in March; as this was another element of community involvement and recording of the scheme area.

6. Design Guides – Progress AC/AR/CB.

AC had sent a 'sample' paper to AR/CB before Christmas on 'masonry' and had produced a further set of papers on 'doors and windows' and 'roofs, chimneys and rainwater goods'. AR had reviewed the masonry paper and confirmed it had taken all the relevant information from the Character Appraisals and Management Strategies. How 'prescriptive'

it needed to be was discussed as a principle – as the guidance was meant to be informative but not too onerous or prescriptive. It also needed to reference other strategies (like the Public Realm Strategy) in relation to palettes of materials and colours.

It was agreed that the guides should refer to other strategies as well as reference back to the Character Appraisals; without being too prescriptive.

AR/CB to review the draft papers and circulate for wider discussion at the next meeting.

7, **Berwick's Future (update on progress of project groups).**

Public Realm – document being signed off and will be published in February. Could provide a link from the CAAG website to NCC website to access and use the document.

Barracks – consultants appointed to prepare the 'next phase' of looking at the options analysis; financial appraisals and consultation with a view to looking at delivering a sustainable and viable scheme (via a possible design competition). Meeting held with English Heritage to discuss the approach from a 'guardian ownership' perspective; as well as important strategic site and significant heritage asset requiring investment. It was agreed at the meeting with EH that Development Management would lead on design and next stage process. Peter Rutherford will arrange an inception meeting with an appropriate Development Management; Conservation and Archaeology team to work with EH; Regeneration and the consultants appointed by the Berwick's Future Partnership.

CB reminded of the need for CAAG to be involved in the process. Concern expressed about the size of the proposed extension within the Barracks site and amount of new build (as conveyed during the consultation) and of CAAG's previous comments that requested it be made smaller.

AC/Civic Society concerned that the Barracks site was being promoted as the *only* option for a varsity hotel when buildings like the King's Arms in the town was now vacant. Are these sites still the top priority? There needs to be a wider spread of priorities to take account of changes in the town.

AR/CB/PR will ensure that CAAG will continue to be involved in the consultation process on options being developed by the Barrack's Project Group.

8. CAAG website.

CB had put CAAG minutes on the website (after they were approved) as well as update information supplied by the local groups (logos; text etc). Cllr Bowlas asked if CAAG website could contain a link to Rural Voices website. Updating information and 'news' pages ongoing and CAAG membership needs to provide information to CB.

9. Current Planning Applications.

None for consideration. Spittal Point application consultation still ongoing; no date for committee yet. Natural England/Development Management are in consultation to resolve conflicting issues.

10. Any Other Business.

JR – informed that there is a consultation event in the Guildhall on the 27th January; 12-4 p.m. on the Castlevale Park and Coronation Park projects. The consultation relates to history; land ownership and heritage value. The consultants Southern Green are looking to capture memories; photographs and local information on how the parks used to look to inform their ideas. Sue Finch has the editorial/publicity from Southern Green but JR encouraged CAAG members to participate and go along to the consultation event.

DS – asked about the Spittal Point application and information being collated. CB conveyed there were previously unseen photographs of Spittal Point and gun battery and these photographs should be part of the archive.

11. Date of Next Meeting (future meeting dates and venues).

Peter Watts and Margaret Shaw were thanked for providing the Trust's meeting room in the William Elder Building. Although Committee Room 1 is now available – CB suggested booking the Trust's small meeting room for the February meeting. The Trust was willing to provide the room at a reduced rate (£8 per hour) and CB agreed to fund the next meeting.

It was agreed to try another Thursday – but to change the time to 9.30 a.m.

Next meeting therefore, is 17th February – 9.30 a.m. in the William Elder Building (Trust's small meeting room).