

The Minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Advisory Group Meeting on 1st June 2010.

In attendance:

Annette Reeves	NCC Conservation Officer (North)
Chris Burgess	NCC Conservation Team Manager (North) Chair
Tim Kirton	Regeneration Team (North)
Cllr Bowlas	Town Council
Philip Miller	Building Study Group
Margaret Thomas	St Boisil's Resident's Association
Alison Cowe	Berwick Civic Society
John Robertson	Tweedmouth West End Resident's Association
Nick Best	NCC Archaeologist
Claire Carey	NCC Conservation Team

Eastern Arc Area Action Plan – Issues and Options consultation.

A presentation by David Rowlinson (NCC Planning Strategy) preceded the meeting. David explained how the EAAAP would be the new statutory plan for Berwick as part of the local development framework. The need for the plan as it relates to the three neighbouring conservation areas was based on the following;

- Berwick's uniqueness – due to its history; built heritage and setting
- Its tremendous development and tourism potential; but underperformance economically.
- Its built heritage is a valuable asset but requires investment.
- Its setting is an asset but the various heritage/environmental designations attached to the coast and estuary have to be respected.

The role and purpose of the Area Action Plan is to;

- Test, bring forward and deliver an area based regeneration programme.
- Strengthen Berwick's role as a market town/rural service centre and improve its economic competitiveness.
- Improve its role as a tourism destination.
- Seek to create more sustainable communities.
- Not radically increase the *quantum* of development – but improve the *quality* of development and manage change sensitively.
- Provide a statutory basis and certainty required to build investor confidence required to deliver sustainable regeneration.

Although there was some concern expressed as to the amount of “consultation”; lack of tangible outcomes and *where* the consultation events were being held in local communities; CAAG were generally supportive of the ‘issues and options’ being explored in the document and emphasis given to ‘conservation’.

AC reported the Civic Society was pleased to see 'design quality' issues raised in the document.

There was some concern in relation to 'flood risk' and the flood management plan. David confirmed that other agencies and partner organisations would be commenting on the document; these views would be taken into consideration as part of the consultation process.

AR explained how the EAAAP document provided the planning policy framework for the successful bids to HLF and EH as part of the Berwick's Future work.

Most CAAG members would be attending the various 'drop in' consultation events as part of their organisations' input/comment and David agreed to supply his presentation to help disseminate information.

AR to circulate presentation with the minutes. CB thanked David for attending CAAG and for providing a helpful presentation.

Formal business resumed.

1. Apologies:

Peter Rutherford, Peter Watts, Margaret Shaw.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 4th May and matters arising.

The minutes were agreed subject to an amendment to **item 11**; (PM Interpretation panels at Berwick Station – remove last line).

Matters arising;

- 9. Tweedmouth Riverside Project** – JR was not at the CAAG meeting where the project was discussed in detail but wanted to convey that Tweedmouth West End residents had *not* been consulted on the document. WE residents wanted it minuted that St Boisil's did not represent their part of the community in Tweedmouth. MT had circulated the document to CAAG members prior to the meeting and AR had also attached a copy with the minutes. CB advised JR that a copy would be forwarded to him and that it was important for all CAAG members/local groups to provide input and comment on all projects and related issues affecting the conservation area(s).
- 10. Dock Road application** – MT conveyed there was confusion over land ownership; TK had enquired about purchase through NCC but had received no response; AR confirmed the planning application had been withdrawn (as noted on the agenda).

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

AR conveyed the THI development grant was continuing to be spent on surveys and additional research to support the Stage 2 submission. The reports were being collated as part of the final bid. AR was meeting the Heritage Lottery Fund on the 7th June. Due to the delays following reorganisation and condensed period for putting the bid together HLF had agreed an extension of time. The bid would be submitted at the end of June. HLF Board decision and award of grant expected in September. The HLF are already expressing an interest in promoting the Berwick bid as a “case study” on their website.

The scheme would run for 4 years in line with the two English Heritage Area Partnership Schemes (Bridge Street and Castlegate) that had been announced in the press last week. The bids made the front page of the Berwick Advertiser and AR had recorded a piece on “drivetime” BBC radio Newcastle. This initial publicity had produced a lot of interest from prospective applicants in Bridge Street. AR will follow these up and begin to process applications once the Stage 2 bid has been submitted.

CB advised that interviews for backfilling AR’s conservation post would take place on the 8th June.

4. Berwick Listed Building Surveys (update).

AR advised no additional buildings had come forward since the last round of formal notifications but Hannah Saxton at EH was providing AR with the inspector’s “initial assessment reports” (without recommendation) for information and use as part of potential local recording projects.

AR had included the continued research; archiving and production of a possible local list within the THI Stage 2 bid.

5. Design Guides (continuation of discussion; proposals list [AC] funding options [CB]).

AC researching all current references to ‘good practice’ and ‘design guidance’ in existing documents; particularly the Character Appraisals which contained a wealth of material. She had identified a number of headings and partial text that could be used to provide summaries or condensed “homeowners” guidance. This research was raising a number of queries. AC requested a discussion with AR/CB before reporting back to CAAG. CB had not been able to progress funding options.

CB/AR/AC to meet to discuss the suggested proposals list and funding.

6. Berwick's Future (update on progress of project groups).

- Barracks Group – consultant appointed to prepare “options appraisal” for future viable uses.
- Public Realm Group – consultant interviews imminent. First meeting with appointed consultants on 16th June.
- Movement Strategy – CB reported that Castlegate car park planning application was being progressed as a matter of urgency. TK reported that coach parking on the Parade Ground was being looked at by the engineers. Also engineers being asked to cost up restoring Marygate “car parking bays”. AR expressed concern that this was in advance of the public realm strategy and also required conservation input and CAAG consultation to any scheme proposals on sites within the conservation area. It is unclear what is being proposed. TK to ask if Movement Strategy group minutes can be made available to CAAG and to convey concern that this appears to be in isolation of the other strategies and Berwick's Future work.

7. PPS5 – brief overview (CB/AR)

CB advised that briefing notes were still being prepared but asked Nick Best (in attendance) to provide an overview (from archaeology perspective). NB advised that PPS5 was more concise and accessible to the public; it gave more certainty to developers on what was required in relation to assessment; prior to submission as part of the Design and Access statement. Building recording had been in PPG16 and more often used as a condition but he considered there was greater ability to seek recording of non-listed buildings in conservation areas that could be used to inform planning decisions.

AR reminded CAAG (from built conservation perspective) what was conveyed at the last meeting; that PPS5 was holistic; it amalgamated previous advice contained in PPG15 and PPG16 as well as landscape and cultural values that reflected the ‘significance’ of the heritage asset and its setting. It was more concise but the accompanying guidance document from EH re-iterated and stressed the current legislative framework and designation process of listing; scheduling; conservation areas; world heritage sites; historic battlefields etc., which remained unchanged.

CB advised that a report was being produced that sought to summarise the document.

8. **CAAG website – example page (CB).**

CB had not received any information from groups (logo's; links) or other material to put on the website. He will put on minutes and other CAAG information (like the remit report) but needs other material as discussed previously.

Please forward any material directly to CB. Email addresses in the circulation list.

9. **Current Planning Applications.**

34, Dock Road had been withdrawn but Civic Society invited (by applicant) to discuss proposals on site. MT/AC think a pre-application meeting has been requested. AR advised she will be consulted by the case officer regarding any fresh proposals and if an application is submitted CAAG will be consulted.

10. **Any Other Business.**

- i) TK relayed that tenders were finally being sought for the bridge illumination project.
- ii) TK had also reported CAAG concerns to Berwick's Future Communications Group. A regular article was to feature in the Berwick Advertiser (alternate weeks with the Community Development Trust) so hopefully press coverage and communication would improve.
- iii) AC expressed concern at work being undertaken to 12, Palace St East which was not a listed building but within the conservation area. This building had been assessed by EH (under the current survey) but was not deemed to be of national importance. How does work to local vernacular buildings get protected and appropriately restored? Civic Society alarmed at the amount of material (stone/brick) coming out of the building and apparent destruction of dating features. AR conveyed she was involved with the case officer in overseeing and advising on repairs which had gone well beyond the planning application submission that could only control windows/doors under the article 4 direction. Planning conditions had been applied however, that sought the retention/rebuilding of the chimney; external render and retention/repair of windows. The building had planning permission. Any further intervention could only be through careful negotiation/advice. Meetings were being held with the owner/applicant but this was an unlisted building and there had been no planning 'breach'.
- iv) PM advised that the 'Berwick in 1850' exhibition was now open in the Main Guard (22 panels). This was only half the available material on display. The Building Study Group was concentrating on Bridge Street buildings (comparison; working out what buildings still remained).

- v) CB advised that Cllr Smith was no longer the Executive portfolio holder for regeneration and had expressed an unwillingness to continue as HELM. CB to speak to the newly appointed portfolio holder and to establish who will be appointed as HELM (HELM and Design champions at member and officer level both need to be appointed). HELM/Design champions are county wide posts and so no guarantees that it will be someone familiar with the north area or the three conservation areas in CAAG's remit.

11. Date of Next Meeting.

Tuesday 6th July 2010 (Committee Room 1).