

## **The Minutes of Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Advisory Group Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

### **In attendance:**

<b>Annette Reeves</b>	NCC Conservation Officer (Berwick)
<b>Alison Cowe</b>	Berwick Civic Society
<b>Margaret Thomas</b>	St Boisil's Resident's Association
<b>Peter Rutherford</b>	NCC Dev Management Manager (North)
<b>Chris Burgess</b>	NCC Cons Team Manager (Chair)
<b>John Robertson</b>	Chamber of Trade
<b>Dorothy Slater</b>	Spittal Improvement Trust
<b>Margaret Shaw</b>	Castlegate Area Resident's Association
<b>Peter Watts</b>	The Greenses/Development Trust
<b>Cllr Alan Bowlas</b>	Berwick Town Council
<b>Elizabeth Russell</b>	Changemaker Young Advocate

The meeting was preceded by a presentation from Elizabeth Russell, 'Changemaker Young Advocate' on her 6 months project placement with AR as part of the Future Cultural Leader's Programme. Elizabeth had developed her project with Berwick Middle School, Year 5 pupils looking at one of the Partnership Scheme Areas in Bridge Street. Elizabeth explained the aim was;

- To inspire and involve young people and children in the conservation led regeneration schemes
- To promote their views and ideas regarding future decisions
- To enable them to gain a better understanding of the planning process for now and in the future
- To help them articulate their ideas and gain a different perspective on 'regeneration'
- To record their information and different methods of working as a bench mark and model for future work with young people and schools
- To showcase their research and ideas and promote their input through CAAG and Berwick's Future Partnership

Elizabeth explained the classroom workshops, field trip surveys and pupil ideas had been developed with support from AR, Linda Bankier (Archivist) and the professional teaching staff who had designed the project to meet cross curricular activities including art and design; IT skills; archive research; geography; history and creative writing. Their analyses and research findings had been captured in a series of 'posters'; stories and individual building designs that would form the school's contribution to the exhibition on the 8<sup>th</sup> April in the Granary. Their project was called 'Past, Present and Future'.

Elizabeth as a final year planning undergraduate had used her project to inform her dissertation on young people and planning, particularly relevant with the emerging Localism Bill. The RTPi president had taken particular interest in her dissertation and project with a local school and her presentation to the Changemaker's final event was being used as a case study.

CAAG were impressed with the presentation and pupil's work; acknowledged the amount of time spent developing a project with just one class in one school; but wondered how this could be continued and how children/young people could be regularly contacted as part of the planning process.

ER/AR explained the work with Berwick Middle School would continue during the lifetime of the Historic Area Improvement Schemes; the children had not been specially selected; it was one whole class and they would be the ongoing 'monitors' of the partnership schemes. The legacy would be to engage on an annual basis with the school, to revisit the project; to map trends and record changes in Bridge Street as well as continue to seek their views and ideas. The teaching staff had designed a lesson plan and would continue to develop it as part of the school curriculum for use with other classes. As Elizabeth's 'Changemaker Champion' and sponsor AR's role was to ensure her project was promoted within the organisation and used as a successful method of engaging with young people.

CAAG suggested Elizabeth's project and findings could be presented to the Berwick Project and the Berwick Partnership as well as to Berwick's Future Partnership. Elizabeth was congratulated on a successful project and invited to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

1. **Apologies:** Tim Kirton, Philip Miller, John Robertson.

2. **Minutes of the 24<sup>th</sup> March meeting and matters arising.**

The minutes were agreed. Matters arising;

- Letter received from NCC enforcement officer acknowledging CAAG complaint
- Note – Rural Voices is still up and running
- CB will chase contractor concerning presentation of archaeology reports on Governor's Garden/Silver Street

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

**THI** – AR and Iain Ogilvie are progressing Year 2 programmes and action plans. Surveys/schedules of repair have been completed for the critical and priority vacant buildings within the THI but as yet; no applications have been submitted.

The THI complementary initiatives: 'Hometime Dark' artist publication of poems/photographs; the public realm detailed designs for Bridge Street car park/Maltings car park/open space; Changemaker Project and Building Study Group record of Bridge Street would form part of the collaborative exhibition and mini launch of the Berwick Historic Area Improvement Schemes in Dewar's Lane Granary on the 8<sup>th</sup> April.

Area Partnership Schemes – Bridge Street; 3 applications being contracted on. Two projects are likely to commence in April/May (weather dependent). Additional application expected end of April.

Castlegate; 1 application being contracted on. Despite many meetings with potential applicants and some quotations/survey work being undertaken there were not completed and contractual standard applications able to be processed within Year 1. AR will continue to work toward successful completed applications but we have to acknowledge Castlegate is much slower and a different scheme to Bridge Street which is closer to the THI and completed Dewar's Lane Granary.

AR hopes the exhibition will generate some publicity as well as the Berwick's Future Newsletter (due end of March) that contains articles on the projects, complementary initiatives and Granary exhibition.

**Changemakers** – Changemaker Project completed (presentation received at start of meeting). End of year event attended in London on the 16<sup>th</sup> March and case studies/evaluations are being completed by AR and ER.

#### 4. **Berwick Listed Building Surveys (update).**

AR advised 3 rejection notifications had been received;

- The William Elder Building (56-58) and Nos 60 & 62, Castlegate – Edwardian commercial building and associated manager housing has been remodelled and the interior subdivided and therefore, too altered. Complete redevelopment works to the rear also a factor.
- 23 Hide Hill – large scale alteration since its conversion to a commercial property and too altered to be of special interest in a national context, of local interest only.
- 44 Walkergate – although relatively unaltered survival of a farm building in a built up area it is not of the high level of architectural quality or historic significance necessary for listing, of local interest only.

3 buildings had been statutorily listed Grade II;

- Ice House, Bank Hill – relatively early example of an ice house constructed for the fishing industry; intact pre-1840 structure; historic interest linked to the nationally significant north-east fishing industry.
- Pier and Lighthouse – amendment to include specific reference to the lighthouse.

- Pair of smokehouses, Sandstell Road, Spittal – early C19 examples and conversion are good representations of influential developments in the fish curing trade; intactness – retain their internal timber framework and original openings which is rare on a national basis; historic reminder of the once predominant herring yards of the north east coast and this region's fishing industry within a national context.

## 5. Design Guides – Progress AC/AR/CB.

AR had appraised the draft leaflets pulled together by AC from the adopted Character Appraisals and circulated these (with comments/suggested amendments/additional information) via email prior to the meeting. AR confirmed the majority of advice was already contained within the Character Appraisals but care needed to be taken when referring to design information in isolation; the aim was not to lose emphasis; local distinctiveness or water down the character appraisals which were designed to be read holistically; as a complete contextual analysis of each conservation area. AR had amended some information and provided references to other guidance.

Philip Miller had provided comment to AR (as he could not be present at the meeting) along with a leaflet on Doors (also circulated to the group) prepared for the Civic Society and suggested more visual material and illustrations should be provided – perhaps an amalgam of the two styles of leaflet?

Catherine Dewar had also provided comments and welcomed the introduction of design guides and suggested making references to English Heritage published material and national design guidance.

CB suggested CAAG members should review the draft design guide leaflets and should return any comments or information to AC by **31<sup>st</sup> March**. CB will review funding streams and possible format/design of the leaflet.

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

**Public Realm/Movement** – looking at detailed scheme designs for Maltings car park and Bridge Street car park as part of THI and Area Partnership Scheme funding. Maltings to include all of the land/open space (not just NCC ownership). Also looking to have a development management meeting as part of final design (to establish need for statutory permissions) before community consultation and HLF/partner approval.

Both groups are looking at directional signage from the A1 and within the town; as well as potential sites for coach parking. Parade Ground has been selected as suitable (Southern Green design via the Public Realm Strategy) but there appears to be a conflict of opinion with NCC – statutory role versus local community input.

Concern and frustrations expressed with all the Berwick's Future project groups (**Barracks group included**) with NCC involvement.

Even though officers are part of the sub groups it appears that technical and statutory responsibilities are becoming a barrier to the successful delivery of projects that have evolved with a lot of community input and consultation. The Berwick's Future sub groups are working away – but seemingly in complete isolation. This was raised at the community conference regarding potential conflicts between Berwick's Future project groups and the 'Berwick Project'.

CAAG understands that NCC is a different organisation (as are all our partner organisations that have changed and downsized) that it continues to evolve and shift its priorities; that there are competing issues, resources and officer time but CAAG needs to work with the executive in setting its priorities.

There is a role for CAAG; the group is an independent forum that can articulate a group view around the protection of the heritage asset and wants to bring the focus back to Berwick. There does not appear to be a strong coherent 'Berwick voice' that is pulling together and delivering the schemes.

CAAG wishes to build on the positive spin following the publication of English Heritage's 'Valuing Places' publication and suggests writing to the Regeneration Manager for the North Area to offer support as well as express some of the concerns.

All agreed the letter should be consistently positive; recognise the continuing change process and difficulties of projects moving into the delivery phase but to stress the stability of CAAG as a community group and umbrella forum.

**Action.** Peter Watts will draft letter for circulation and comment. Letter will be sent from the Vice Chair on behalf of the group.

## **7. CAAG website.**

Minutes have been posted and url will be progressed. Discussed name – Berwick CAAG or CAAG Berwick – need to keep it short to ensure hits and easy access in finding site. EH enquired about previous Civic Society website and webcam that had been awarded grant. Need to ensure web cam; forum/blogs or 'news pages' are regularly updated on CAAG website.

## **8. Current Planning Applications.**

None for consideration. MS - enquiry about recent public notice in relation to Mill Strand application or the appeal?

## **9. Any Other Business.**

MS – concern over golf course/bowling green wall that is collapsing (adjacent to Cow Gate).

MS – CITTASLOW; Jus-Rol sponsored spring clean of Crawford's Alley taking place on April 13<sup>th</sup> and public spring clean on 16<sup>th</sup> April; Judging takes place of Berwick in Bloom on the 18<sup>th</sup> April.

DS – Spittal Improvement Trust concerns over traffic calming consultation for Main Street Spittal. Preliminary consultation suggests a number of intrusive options from chicane type barriers; speed humps/cushions and speed restrictions. View of community is that traffic calming not needed – SIT to respond to highways through community consultation that principal not required and would be detrimental to this part of the Conservation Area.

AC – Spittal Point application required Section 106 to provide traffic lights at the Bridge? PR confirmed was consultation with highways stated the junction was at capacity and to 106 requested a contribution to a design solution.

AC – Yesterday's Budget and proposed Planning reforms? Any response to this yet? NCC not decided how to respond and so need to 'watch this space' as if affects the three conservation areas.

AB – Bonasteads PH – Planning permission for redevelopment.

AB – Henry Travis studio opening at the Maltings; opening/tickets limited.

JR – Town Council decided to have quarterly planning meetings and want amenity groups to get involved; CAAG to be invited to send a representative.

MT – Asda illuminated signs; being left on all night; is affecting residential amenity – need to check planning permission.

MT – raised concern over Pier Maltings planning permission/listed building consent current implementation. AR confirmed is being investigated as formal complaint registered with planning enforcement.

## **10. Date of next meeting.**

21<sup>st</sup> April 9.00 a.m.

Venue - Chandlery Building (offered free of charge by Town Council).

