

The Minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Advisory Group Meeting on 29th September 2011.

In attendance:

Chris Burgess	NCC Conservation Manager (Chair)
Annette Reeves	NCC Conservation Officer (North)
Cllr John Taylor	Chair of North Area Planning Committee
John Robertson	West End Resident's Association
Margaret Thomas	St Boisil's Resident's Association
Wendy Ross-Smith	Chamber of Trade
Alison Cowe	Berwick Civic Society
Tim Kirton	NCC Regeneration (North)
Peter Watts	The Greenses

1. Apologies:

Peter Rutherford, Alan Bowlas, Philip Miller, Dorothy Slater.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 25th August and matters arising.

The minutes were agreed (subject to a correction on the date). Matters arising;

- i) Following the presentation on public realm designs for Bridge Street and Eastern Lane, CB had received concerns from NCC archaeology (north) that archaeological considerations were not being properly considered. AR confirmed the technical officer group had involved archaeology colleagues. The enhancement of the wider conservation area should *not* be at the expense of any other heritage asset. There needed to be a balance between achieving a cohesive design that met the funding criteria, planning/archaeology and highway considerations, as well as be within budget. Avoiding known areas of archaeology had been suggested; as planting/deep tree root pits were an issue in Berwick. This appeared to be the main area of concern.
- ii) TK had contacted the Harbour Trust regarding condition of the timber jetty at Tweedmouth Dock. The Trust was aware of the deterioration; had aspirations for significant improvements and possible changes. AR advised there were two issues; the long term regeneration of the harbour and short term need of the timber structure (that was part of the character and appearance of the conservation area). TK to encourage informal discussion with AR concerning repairs (given the Breakwater was being repaired in consultation with NCC). No statutory consents required.

- iii) MT enquired as to whether the deteriorating condition of the CEF building had been investigated by Development Management (as reported at the last meeting). AR to discuss with PR. TK advised there was developer interest in the building.

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

AR pleased to report EH had formally offered the award of grant for Year 2, with no reduction in overall budget provision. As well as conditions relating to the original award, EH also require 'conservation area at risk' surveys be completed for Berwick/Tweedmouth/Spittal by 31st March 2012 and the backfilling of AR's post be advertised before 31st October 2011. CB confirmed there were 2 conservation officer posts; these would be advertised by this date (interviews set for the 8th November.)

THI – HLF had approved the grant application for 39, Marygate without conditions. This was a substantial project with a 9-12 month contract period. AR and contract colleagues are meeting with the applicant and appointed agent in October to run through the contract programme. There are highway implications for the Eastern Lane/Marygate access due to limited space for scaffolding. This needs to be managed.

Other smaller THI grant schemes are still being discussed/progressed in West Street and one building is currently out to tender for repairs to roof/stone/brickwork. An application is expected.

HLF have appointed a monitor for the THI who is meeting with AR/Iain Ogilvie in October to run through financial procedures for delivering the grant schemes.

Area Partnership Schemes – Bridge Street; 11 Bridge Street now completed. 9/11 Bridge Street (2 separate applications) represent significant improvements to this Grade II listed building. Whilst the structural repairs were complex (and largely hidden within roof/gable end) the overall improvement to the frontage (involving 2 local businesses) showcases the 'heritage led regeneration' schemes. The applicants have received positive comments from their customers/clients and visitors.

Work has commenced on 26 Bridge Street (approved in Year 1). The repairs involve stonework, lead work/guttering and roof repairs and improvement of all traditional joinery details and windows.

Application recently approved for Café Curio (whole building). This scheme is expected to commence in November.

Application also expected for Magna Tandoori (whole building) that occupies a significant plot in Bridge Street and rear to Dewar's Lane Granary courtyard. Schedules of repair/tender prices are currently being sought. AR is working with the applicant and appointed agent.

Castlegate; 1 application contracted on at 14 Castlegate, works delayed due to other internal repair issues (separate to grant aided work).

Application recently submitted for 71 Castlegate (following planning approval) for replacement window (from Upvc to traditional sliding sash) and shopfront improvements. The Free Trade PH also looking at window repairs (adjacent to 71 Castlegate), which would result in a cohesive repair to a pair of buildings, particularly at first/second floor.

Application for 85 Castlegate expected following receipt of planning approval for shop front/window improvements. Discussions are continuing with a number of property owners and their appointed agents.

Overall, the Berwick Historic Area Improvement Schemes are looking healthy for the projected Year 2 Delivery Plan(s).

Public Realm (Maltings and Bridge Street car parks) Designs and costings are being finalised following technical officer input and consultation with CAAG, but unlikely to commence in Year 2.

4. Berwick Listed Building Surveys.

EH listing project concluded. CB/AR and Liz Williams (NCC conservation) are developing a student project to capture the data. Information will be useful to inform a future 'local list'. AC reported Civic Society would be discussing local lists at their 4th November meeting. CS does not want to lead on a project but would be willing to get it underway (PM building study group information also of assistance).

CB discussing local lists across the county as part of the LDF process. Other towns/areas are interested. CB looking to facilitate a process; provide a written model that could be rolled out across the county to ensure a consistent approach. Written brief to be provided within the next couple of months; could be used as a HLF 'small grant scheme' bid. Local listing must involve local communities in the decision making process.

Who would be the applicant if CAAG/Civic Society or individual local groups wanted to be involved? The Town Council may be able to assist/partner NCC but likely to need another agency (like the North of England Civic Trust) to run a scheme of engagement/consultation. Agreed to keep 'Local Lists' as a regular agenda item.

5. Design Guides – draft leaflets (AC).

AC produced readable text that flows from the Character Appraisals but needs pictures/captions/illustrations. Would be looking to produce as PDF files. AC to liaise with AR/CB.

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

- PW confirmed there would be a facilitated event to re-launch the Berwick's Future Partnership looking at boundaries, steering group membership (given a lot of the original partners had gone) and how to engage with the third sector. Communication and dissemination of information an identified issue. Public conference to be held in Nov/Dec.
- **Movement Group** – progressing three schemes; Bridge Street car park (Area Partnership Scheme); Maltings Lane car park/open space (THI) and Golden Square bus stop improvements as well as implementation of Castlegate car park. Ongoing debate regarding coach parking. Group is concerned with the lack of strategic transport support from NCC. Re-structuring/rumoured disbandment of the strategic transport section a potential issue for the Berwick schemes. Implementation of the Masterplan and Regeneration Strategy projects reliant on NCC transport input. CAAG concerned this could undermine the ability to deliver these schemes. Agreed the Vice Chair to write to NCC Chief Executive to express CAAG concerns and seek reassurance the Berwick projects were still a priority within the strategic transport programme.
- **Public Realm Group** – technical sub group concentrating on detailed designs for the public realm components of the THI and Bridge Street Area Partnership Schemes.
- **Barracks Group** – difficulties with the procurement process looks to have been resolved; issue around not being able to specify *exactly* what is wanted even though this has arisen out of a facilitated consultation event; need to look at different uses for the Barracks building itself; can give background/conservation statement/previous brief but not any 'preferred options', this breaks the rules. EH involved as owner but the procurement process/legal issues are the problem. TK advised there is a legal case in Germany that is similar; the Barracks is subject to European procurement regulations. AC concerned the third sector is not fully

engaged; being informed of the process or consulted on the future of the Barracks. The 'hotel use' was still being pursued when existing hotel buildings (like the Kings Arms) were currently on the market. PW/AR reminded CAAG of the wider consultation event held in the William Elder Building in September 2010 (and a separate presentation to CAAG). This was the options work, soft market testing and consultation undertaken by Place First to inform a brief for the next stage. Technical officer meetings had been held since then to find the right model. PW offered to summarise separately the procurement process.

7. CAAG website (CB).

CB had updated the website. Civic Society information received. Domain name will be changed. CB requests items/news stories.

8. Current Planning Applications.

- Outline application just received for Coalyard site. Will come to next meeting of CAAG.
- Berwick Breakwater. Repairs have become more complex and extensive. Ongoing surveys and interventions have revealed a number of significant previously unidentified defects within the structure itself (voids) and at the base of the breakwater. This has impacted on timeframes and approved licences around the environmental sensitivities. NCC consultants have decided to demobilise all works at end of November, to recommence in April 2012 for a further 4 months. The works to be completed before winter are all diving operations and undercutting repairs; the repair of the 'blister' to southern (estuary) face; replacement blockwork and filling of voids on the southern side; lighthouse repairs. This meant remaining 'new' large repairs; larger reinforced concrete repairs and deck repairs from the Lighthouse to Crabwater Point would be completed in 2012. The site would be secured and public access restricted but works had not been abandoned. Consultants to put up notice boards to explain. New licences to be sought from Natural England, updated Crown Estate consent and assurance from Conservation Officer that 'like for like' repairs, albeit more extensive were acceptable.
- MT wanted to highlight importance of open space/landscape of a piece of land near the Goody Patchy (between properties in Dock Road). NCC owned land but adjacent property had option to buy. No planning applications currently in for Change of Use to garden land, or conservation area applications to fell trees. Concern this land had not been offered as part of enhancement of the Goody Patchy; it was more 'scrub' and that it would be developed.

- AC reported the Civic Society had met with the applicant for the agricultural shed at Castlehills House/Castle Terrace. Planning permission had been granted for a shed/house/office but they wished to enlarge the shed. Civic Society had no concern with overall scale and massing but was concerned with the detail. The materials specified were timber cladding and metal roof. The 'shiny' metal roof was the issue. CS been arguing for a 'green colour' roof and AC wanted CAAG views. Discussion centred on breaking up the mass of roof. AR advised that traditional materials weather over time with a rich patina and texture that ultimately blends in with the countryside; flat matt colours on modern materials do not perform the same way. Traditional materials unlikely due to cost, CAAG therefore to convey the use of colour (green) to break up the roof plane in this landscape context.

9. Any Other Business.

- i) AR – Had received (anonymously) a box of broken sections of marble from Lady Jerningham's statue. Recall the statue/listed building had been repaired as part of an earlier Berwick borough/heritage lottery fund project involving Longridge Towers school? PW to speak to MS, as responsibility likely to be with NCC but repairs may still be under contract. It would be a specialist work of repair.
- ii) MT - Highways maintenance works being carried out at various junctions in Tweedmouth; dropped kerbs and installation of white concrete kerbing in Main Street that is not in keeping with the Conservation Area or the Public Realm Strategy. CB very recently met with Highway Managers to discuss maintenance. Managers sensitive to the issue of repair in the historic environment; want to have a dialogue and discussed team training.
- iii) MT – Increase in large vehicles going over the Old Bridge. Movement Group aware of the overall issue. CB considers it an issue of directional signage but do not want to add 'clutter' within this area/junction that is part of the Bridge Street Area Partnership Scheme. TK to raise the issue with Movement Group.
- iv) AC – Pier Road applications submitted. When are these being presented to CAAG? AR reminded CAAG that listed building applications concerning matters of detail (not part of overall schemes within a conservation area context) do not come to CAAG for comment (as set out in the remit report). CB considers this should be discussed at a future meeting rather as an item of Any Other Business.
- v) AC – Doors Open Day had attracted over 2,000 visitors. Unfortunately, 44, Ravensdowne (new owners) had their door furniture stolen during the weekend (purportedly by the previous owners). Could this be enforced against? AR advised this was 'architectural theft' and not an enforcement matter even though the door furniture was a 'fixture' and part of the

- character of the building. Who was NCC to pursue or enforce against? as enforcement could only seek to 'restore' prior to the offence being committed or 'alleviate the affects of' and it would be the current owners that would be responsible/pursued. They needed to either report the matter to the police or approach the previous owners directly to point out the door furniture was part of their heritage asset. Either way it was theft.
- vi)** AC – Concerned by Planning North's move to Alnwick; could no longer access old planning files (from Civic Society recent experience of trying to locate Pier Road Maltings applications) and what about general public access? Did not feel this had been widely publicised. PW/AR confirmed that press notices had gone out (Berwick Advertiser) and on NCC website. AR advised there was an appointment system (notices on the door with times) and planning files could be accessed; but advance notice needed to be given.
- vii)** AC – National Planning Policy Framework changes – concern with how this affects the historic environment/treatment of heritage assets. Changes proposed around what is 'substantial' or 'moderate' harm; there is no provision to identify what is meant by 'harm to a heritage asset'. CB advised the damage is where it interrelates with other sections and policies. Consider that CAAG should convey a consultation response. This needs to be by the 17th October. Would need to convene a special meeting to discuss all the issues and submit comments by the deadline. Meeting arranged for 12th October, 9.30 in the Chandlery building. AR to send out invitation to all members of CAAG. AC/CB/AR to facilitate discussion on the draft NPPF.

10. Date of Next Meeting.

27th October 2011. 9.15 a.m. Chandlery Building.