

The Minutes of Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area Advisory Group Meeting – 28th September 2010

In attendance:

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| Annette Reeves | NCC Conservation Officer (Berwick) |
| Chris Burgess | NCC Conservation Team Manager (Chair) |
| Tim Kirton | NCC Regeneration (North) |
| Alison Cowe | Berwick Civic Society |
| Margaret Thomas | St Boisil's Resident's Association |
| Peter Watts | The Greenses |
| Margaret Shaw | Castlegate Area Resident's Association |
| Peter Rutherford | NCC Dev Management Manager (North) |

There were two presentations:

The first concerned an update on the Kings Arms Hotel application (rear extension options) by Chris White who reproduced a set of survey drawings, modelling options and various layouts/forms of development that had been explored with officers over the last 18 months (comments recorded separately and forwarded to the agent as part of the development management process).

The second by Marguerite Gracey conveyed the Barracks consultation and specifically the 3D model showing new build as part of enabling development to support mixed uses (comments conveyed to Marguerite are recorded at the end of the minutes).

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Bowlas; Philip Miller.
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 10th August and matters arising.**

The minutes were agreed. Matters arising;

9.1 – CB had reported that he was interviewing another candidate to back fill AR's post but the applicant proved unsuitable. The post has not been filled. Now that the THI had been confirmed he was hopeful the position could be advertised for 4 years and this would attract more suitable applicants.

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

THI – the Stage 2 bid has been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund. To date only verbal confirmation has been received. The news is embargoed until the HLF release their publicity material in line with other national/regional announcements and this is likely to be in 2-3 weeks. AR stressed it is confidential at the moment as we are awaiting the formal offer letter and HLF media release.

Area Partnership Schemes – Bridge Street; AR had carried out 6 follow up visits with owners to discuss potential grant aided work. These were all listed buildings identified in the survey as needing fabric uplift. Two owners (1 property) were working together to seek quotations for stonework repairs (ground floor) and roof/render/window repairs to first floor to achieve greater impact. Hopefully, these will be the first applications.

Castlegate; AR had followed up 4 enquiries from purely residential properties but these were unlikely to be eligible/priority for grant as most concerned general maintenance or demolition (chimneys) and rebuilding with modern materials rather than restoring architectural features or conservation repairs. However, 4 other enquiries were more promising (2 listed buildings and 2 priority buildings) that were eligible for grant and AR would be pursuing these further.

Changemakers – AR had successfully recruited a ‘young advocate’ as part of the Future Cultural Leaders programme and attended the residential training/development event at Otterburn Hall at the beginning of September. Elizabeth Russell is a Berwick planning student who would be employed by Changemakers (10 paid days over a 6 month period) to develop her project with AR involving young people (9-15 age group). ER/AR about to produce a project plan but are looking to concentrate on Bridge Street/THI area; using material already researched but looking to engage young people in how they see the future. ER will report project progress to a future CAAG.

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

AR received notification on the following buildings that had been rejected for statutory listing;

- St Andrew’s House, College Place, Berwick;
Not in original form following conversion from school to house; too significantly altered but of local interest
- Territorial Army Hall, Ravensdowne, Berwick;

Very plain and fails to achieve quality for a later dated building; level of alteration means loss of any distinguishing features

- ☒ 44 Castlegate;
Too altered and extensively renovated to meet criteria for listing
- ☒ Lowry's pavilion, Pier Road, Berwick;
Lowry connection alone is insufficient, intrinsic architectural qualities so low as to not be of listable quality.
- ☒ Former Enfield Manure Works, Sandstell Road.
Loss of context with demolition of other buildings; loss of equipment and industrial features
- ☒ 1-5 Parade School Mews, Berwick
Too altered to meet the national criteria for designation but of local interest and contribution to the street scene
- ☒ 5-11 Walkergate, Berwick
Although likely to have pre-1840 origins, too altered to be of special interest in a national context
- ☒ House and chapel wall, 8 College Place, Berwick
Its external integrity compromised by alteration and addition; internal alterations and fittings are later replacements; is well proportioned building that is of local rather than national interest
- ☒ The Cobbled Yard Public House, 40 Walkergate
Internal alterations significantly changed original layout of the pub; loss of original fittings; bar, seating and period features

The following had all been statutorily listed Grade II:

- ☒ 33 Palace Street Berwick – a good example of a little altered small C18 town house; simply detailed but good quality ashlar and range of C18 joinery and plasterwork
- ☒ 4 College Place – an un-extended house pre-dating 1840 with a good range of period features, well composed, architecturally polite front elevation that is little altered; unaltered interior plan form, original staircase and much joinery
- ☒ Classical Statue, Well Close Square – 1892 memorial statue to Dr Philip Whiteside Maclagan is by a well respected sculptor of national renown and is of intrinsic sculptural quality
- ☒ Club House, Bank Hill – an attractive intact club boathouse and rare example of a small purpose built boathouse for a competitive rowing team

PM was unable to attend the meeting as he is recuperating at home for the next 8 weeks but had conveyed the Building Study Group were continuing to research buildings in Bridge Street.

5. Design Guides – progress AC.

AC continuing to work on abstracting what is in the Character Appraisals following discussions with CB/AR. Although there is a lot of material and references in the documents, what is missing is the follow up advice on what to do/how to repair and approach design detail. The references are falling into the following three categories:

- Masonry – stone/render/brick
- Windows and doors
- Roofs – chimneys/eaves/water tables etc.,

AR considered this to be more about “technical specifications” on materials/methods and provision of advice on how to repair features/historic fabric. There was other technical material available that could be tailored to the Berwick situation (SPAB technical pamphlets; Georgian Group guides; EH publications).

AC to continue to research further. AR to supply Berwick’s Article 4 Direction concerning windows and doors. PM previously offered assistance particularly as currently house bound. AC to discuss with PM and take forward.

CB conveyed that funding *could* be available from NCC for interpretation/printing of leaflets and eventual guidance notes.

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

- ☒ **Barracks** – stakeholder event held 16th September which was well received; good feedback and enthusiasm for the project.
- ☒ **Movement** – group had met with the public realm group to discuss overlaps but neither had met with the Barracks group. All three working groups looking at the design/function and appearance of the parade ground and needed to discuss this jointly. MS expressed CARA’s concern at the factual inaccuracies perpetuated through the movement group surrounding the Station parking/interchange. The Gateway Station group meeting soon to discuss this issue but PW to convey/correct other colleagues on the Movement group.
- ☒ **Public Realm** –CAAG consultation response well received by the consultants who had revised some issues and methods of presenting for the public consultation weekend on the 2nd October. Still presenting options and ideas and so important for individual groups and CAAG members to feed responses through this next consultation phase.

7. CAAG website.

CB will finish off website for the next meeting.

8. Current Planning Applications.

- Kings Arms Hotel presentation received (comments conveyed separately). Other applications raised:
- Tweedmouth Mill Strand redevelopment scheme (previously refused and dismissed on appeal); did not come back to CAAG as not changed from previous submission; committee 7th October; recommended for refusal
- 34 Dock Road; no current application to consider
- Tweedmouth Goods Yard; appeal dismissed
- Governor's Garden; no changes to approved scheme, conditions being discharged
- Main St Tweedmouth, car park – pre-app rumoured to have accepted 3 storey development. PR/AR not aware of pre-app but PR confirmed an applicant is entitled to levels of paid advice that is set out in pre-app service guidance; that professional advice is carried through the development management process concerning the principle of development. Committee can overturn officer recommendation.

9. Any Other Business.

- TK – The bridge lighting contract complete, tested and working correctly. Switch on will be 27th November but also briefly when the Tornado crosses on the 22nd October.
- AC – Conveyed that government looking to merge all the PPGs and PPSs? Also new road riverside walk being improved. Town Council and NCC highways working together to clear overgrown areas and improve path. MS conveyed that this was a community driven initiative through Berwick in Bloom who was also working with the Town Council to achieve improvements.
- CB – Was looking likely that English Heritage/Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Burials Commission would be merging under re-organisation and changes proposed to public bodies.
- PR – Consultant team appointed through HCA grant for a Spittal Masterplan looking at sites around Spittal Point; under the Eastern Arc Area Action Plan. Would be future consultation/engagement with CAAG and individual groups as part of this work.

10. Date of next meeting.

2nd November 2010 (venue to be confirmed).

Barracks presentation.

Marguerite Gracey presented a shortened version of 'Place First's' preferred option for the future of the Barracks. A 3D model had been commissioned to show the scale of facilities required to make the whole scheme commercially viable. The consultants had undertaken a lot of market research and fully costed analysis to arrive at this option. The conservation management plan produced/commissioned by English Heritage had also been referenced as part of the assessment.

PW conveyed the background (as a member of the Barrack's working group). The consultants had considered around 15 options that were whittled down to about 9 and evidenced with other research to the option being presented and consulted on at the stakeholder event.

MG confirmed the range of uses being explored was as follows:

- Varsity hotel (60 rooms) expressed as a new build within the grounds
- Design study workshops (ground floor of the Barracks)
- Archives; using mob store and purpose built facility/extension
- Physic garden in the enclosed space adjacent
- Holiday lets/retirement apartments (within the Barracks)

At this stage not sure if the KSOB/Burrell museum would be included within the building or whether other options being looked at would seek to re-locate these facilities.

MG stressed these were still options/ideas but the stakeholder event had produced a lot of positive feedback and momentum for taking things forward. The next steps were to talk to potential operators and for the consultants to conclude their report and recommendations. Other models and examples referenced by the consultants (can circulate to CAAG members) was the Kilkenny example of studios/workshops within a similar type of building.

CB – would have concern about the scale and mass of any new building as the Barracks and views into the site from the walls were particularly important.

EH had been consulted separately as had PR/AR from a conservation and development management perspective. Some form of 'enabling development' was shown to be needed and EH guidance existed to ensure this was the 'minimum

necessary' to secure the heritage asset and its long term future. This work/analysis is ongoing and the form/scale/design of enabling development would be subject to the planning consultation process and input from CAAG. EH input and involvement as landowner and strategic conservation body critical to this process.

Marguerite was thanked for presenting the model.

Any comments or information that could be relevant should be forwarded to Marguerite. AC to send Civic Society comments on the Eastern Arc Area Action Plan (in relation to the Barracks) to MG. Planning Strategy had been at the Stakeholder event and was aware of the various working groups and other strategies that were being prepared.