

HULL CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2007



Hull Community Church

(Photo: JD Scotney, 2006)

In this issue: Programme, Auditor, January Newsletter, Gift Aid, Standing Orders, Mr J A Haslam, Development of the Marina Area, John Boyes (Part 2), Water Water Everywhere, Planning blight in a new form, The Boom, Planning & Buildings, Good Mark – Hull Community Church, The Green Flag Awards Ceremony, Readers' Letters, Officers and Committee.*

***Please note: first visit: Monday 24th September, first public meeting: Monday 8th October**

Programme 2007 – 2008

Non-members are welcome to join us for all our meetings and visits.

Visits

To give us an idea of the number of people attending other visits, please **book in advance** with our Honorary Secretary, Ken Baker, telephone (01482) 224767 or 594348, mobile: 07766 654955 or e-mail kbaker@goodwin-centre.org.

Additional event – Monday 24th September, 7 pm – Walk round Victoria Dock Village
Meet at the Winding House.

Sunday 30th September: City Tour by coach -
We regret to announce that this event has been postponed until spring 2008

Autumn & Winter Programme – Meetings

All meetings will be held on Mondays at 7.30 pm (unless otherwise stated) at the Quality Hotel Royal, Ferensway.

8th October – Wildlife in the City – Jon Capel, ecologist.

12th November – The St. Stephen's Square Project – The Project Manager, HBG.

10th December – William Wilberforce, a Campaigning Life - Local Studies Library Speaker

14th January – Hull's Old Town Public Houses – Paul Schofield

11th February – Street Furniture – Chris Mead

10th March – Gardens and Sculptures in the East Riding – Will Ainley*

14th April – **7.00 pm** AGM, followed by **A History of the Hull & Barnsley Railway** – Martin Barker*

* Please note: this is a change to the order of the programme advertised in the June Newsletter.

Visit - Mon. 21st April, 7.00 pm - Hedon Museum with a guided walk round Hedon
Meet at Hedon Museum. Walk led by Martin Craven and the Hedon Museum Society.

Situation vacant – Honorary Auditor

Hull Civic Society needs an Honorary Auditor to fill the gap left by the late Trevor Salton. If you have auditing experience and are willing to give up time to audit the society's accounts once a year, please contact the Hon. Secretary, Ken Baker, telephone 224767 or by email, giving brief details of previous experience. As both our annual receipts and payments are less than £100,000, we can prepare our accounts on a simple receipts and payments basis and the auditor does not need to have professional qualifications as an auditor. The Charity Commission does not like the auditor to be a member of the committee, whose accounts are being audited. It would be a great advantage if you are online, as the Treasurer could email Excel spreadsheets.

Editor

January Newsletter

Many thanks to all our contributors. Please submit all items for the January Newsletter by 24th November. All contributions which reflect the aims of the society are welcome, though it may be necessary to edit them or hold them over to later issues for reasons of space. Items may be sent to the Editor, John Scotney at: 126 Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RZ or (preferably) e-mailed to john.scotney@talk21.com.

Gift Aid

Hull Civic Society is a registered charity and needs to increase its income. The easiest way that this can be done is by participating in the Government's Gift Aid scheme. If members, paying Income Tax, completed a Gift Aid Declaration form and sent it to the treasurer, we could reclaim the Income Tax paid on the income needed to pay the subscription and/or donation after the end of the income tax year. If a Gift Aid Declaration form has been completed, we could reclaim £2.80 on a £10 subscription. A completed Gift Aid Declaration would give the treasurer the opportunity to also reclaim tax paid on subscriptions and donations during the previous six tax years if records of payments are adequate. This involves the treasurer with the responsibility of keeping good records as there is always the possibility of a visit from an Inland Revenue auditor.

If you pay Income Tax, please sign a Gift Aid Declaration form and send it to me at 16 Maple Grove, Garden Village, Hull HU8 8PL.

Walter Houlton, Acting Treasurer, 23rd July 2007.

Please update your standing order

Many of our members pay their subscription by standing order and this is appreciated by treasurers. Last year many subscriptions were credited at our bank in the first few days of the year. Some members had not updated their standing order and the then acting treasurer, Ian Loge, had to write to them asking that more should be paid. He reported to the committee that there had been a good response to his letters. At our 43rd AGM on 2nd April 2007, it was agreed that the yearly subscription be increased to £10 for ordinary members and £17 for joint membership. Many cheque books have a form near the end authorising the bank to amend a standing order. I would be very pleased if you would do this now and send it to the bank. It would save me the trouble of sending out a lot of letters in 2008!

Walter Houlton, Acting Treasurer.

Mr J.A. Haslam

Hull Civic Society has been badly let down by the Treasurer elected at the AGM in April. When Assistant Treasurer, he accepted a subscription from Mr J.A. Haslam but failed to record the address on his data base. As a result, Mr Haslam has not received Newsletters but has not written to inform us of this. Jeff Haslam was an architect in Hull but we think that he has moved somewhere down south. None of the committee members knows his address. If a member knows Jeff Haslam's present address, please let me know.

Walter Houlton, 16 Maple Grove, Garden Village, Hull HU8 8PL.

Tel. (01482) 375605. email walter@houlton1.karoo.co.uk

Development of the Marina Area

The availability of a waterfront is a tremendous asset to a town. Most towns in the UK that have any access to water have developed it, often considerably improving the town's attractiveness and interest. Examples that spring to mind are Manchester Bridgewater, Salford Quays, Gloucester Docks, Newcastle River Front etc etc.

Hull has a tremendous potential in this way, with the Marina only a stone's throw from the town centre. However, as we all know, the marina is isolated from the town by the main road. Some way of crossing or neutralising the effect of the road is desperately needed.

The best solution would be to put the road in a TUNNEL, and this has been referred to as though it were merely a question of time and organisation. We must face up to it. THIS WILL NEVER HAPPEN.

Apart from the horrendous cost there are tremendous physical problems, the main ones being the high water table level and the maintenance of traffic during the construction period. It is clear that to make any progress in this area the road should remain untouched, with suitable methods being devised for it to be crossed.



The suggested location for an extension of Princes Quay across Castle St. The Holiday Inn hotel is to the left and Princes Quay car park to the right. (Photo: JD Scotney, 2004)

A clear and obvious solution would be to extend the shopping area so that the shops go right over the road. The present main shopping level is high enough to go over the road without steps. In this way the road could be crossed on a wide front without it being obvious or obtrusive. On the south side of the road the hotel would need to be extended to give an access on the first floor and pedestrians could emerge, again on a wide front, to a ramp or stairs, well away from the road.

The scheme would benefit the hotel by making it part of the town. The wide pedestrian walkway would have to remain open until late, to counter the feeling of

remoteness which at present blights the marina area. The presence of the road could be further neutralised by building a roof garden over it for some distance to the east of the shopping area. The huge advantage of this scheme is that it could be built with little or no interference to the road. It could also be put into action relatively quickly.

The current proposals for development around the Staples area show that the principle for expenditure is already established, but this development, if proceeded with, would finally destroy any feasible solution to the road problem. It should be stopped immediately and changed to incorporate the scheme proposed above.

Jim Wilson.

John Boyes – a forgotten Hull-born explorer – Part 2

John Boyes was overjoyed when he heard the Crown was taking control of Kikuyuland; but he was arrested shortly afterwards for the crimes of waging war, personating Government and committing "dacoity"- loosely described as banditry. The hostility of the governing class to the commercial and hunting element was the underling reason for the charge, along with the uniformed men flying the Union Jack without official permission. He was to be tried in Nairobi; as he was marched through Kikuyu land, 200 of his loyal supporters accompanied him. During his trial, the judge ruled that Boyes had done his best for Britain in difficult circumstances, and he was acquitted.

New tribal wars swept the country due to the irritation of the local people with the arrogance and tactlessness of Government officials. Boyes went as an advisor and intelligence officer to a punitive expeditionary force sent out to restore the peace.

John eventually took some time out to visit England and write his first account of his adventures - John Boyes: King of the Wa-Kikuyu, written by himself. Published 1911.

When he returned to East Africa he was looking for money and adventure again. Part of the Belgian Congo (The Lado Enclave) had become a no man's land upon the death of King Leopold of Belgium in 1909, and it happened to hold the greatest concentration of elephants left in Africa. He wasn't an experienced hunter or tracker but he reckoned he could make his fortune, not only by hunting but also transporting ivory confiscated from poachers to the British Governor. There was beginning to be the start of big game hunting in Africa; he entertained ex President Theodore Roosevelt in 1910 at Koba on the Nile whilst he was hunting. He "asked Roosevelt to chuck all his political work and come out like the great white hunter he was and join them - to organise the hunting and pioneering business of Central Africa and perhaps make history." Boyes believed he was deeply moved by the offer; long afterwards Roosevelt told a friend no honour ever paid him had impressed him and tempted him like that he received from the poachers of the Lado Enclave.

He spent some years trading, hunting and making safaris all over East Africa and Abyssinia. He made regular visits back home to England to visit his mother and sisters, Charlotte and Christiana Magdalena - he took up photography during one of his visits - his second book "The Company of Adventurers", published in 1928, includes some of his pictures. He had a younger brother who joined him in Durban in 1903 for a trading expedition into German East Africa.

During his visit home in 1911, he lived at Kikuyu House, Withernsea and married Helen Frederica Boxall, the daughter of a captain at Trinity House. They returned to Kenya, and settled as coffee farmers and had two sons. One son died when young of a tropical disease, and the other became a racing driver. Although no longer a young man, John served in the First World War, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. A great niece is still living in Hull, who remembers stories of his visits to Hull, when he would take a house in Coltman Street, and drive to visit his mother in Dansom Lane in a car with his servants in the back.

He was a small and wiry man, of limited education, who made a huge impact on the development of East Africa. He spent most of his life in the wildest country, among savage and primitive people, achieved with no money and no support. When he died in Nairobi in 1951 he was mourned by Europeans and Africans alike.

Amy Osbourne

Water, Water, Everywhere!

The ground level in most of Hull is lower than the highest recorded tide level on the Humber, near Alexandra Dock. Only some land on the Sutton and Wawne terminal moraine is above the high-tide level. Good drainage is essential on low-lying land but it is such a long time since flood banks were built along the River Hull and the Humber that few people realise that most of Hull was once mudflats and saltmarsh. Nobody knows when the flood banks were erected; some people think it must have been during the Roman occupation.

In the 1960s, when Leo Schultz was leader of the Council, there were some effective open drains in Hull, which led into the River Hull when a clough opened at low tide. The clough closed when the tide rose so that the open drains were not flooded. This simple method of draining the City was very effective.

Unfortunately, the City Council formed the view that these attractive open drains were dangerous although I had never heard of anyone drowning in them. A Hull Corporation Act was given parliamentary approval in the 1960s and one of the sections authorised the City Council to fill in a number of open drains. These included the Sutton Drain (Foredyke Stream) and the Old Lambwath Stream (Summergangs Dyke) in East Hull and the Cottingham Drain west of the River Hull. When Leo Schultz regained control of the Council in 1970, plans to fill in these drains were put into effect. They

might not have done this had they known that a future Government would rule that the rain and foul sewage in Hull's combined sewers, which ran into the Humber at low tide, had to be treated at a sewage treatment works. The Cottingham Drain was led into the City's sewers at Orchard Park and the drain was filled in within the City. In East Hull, the Great Culvert was demolished so that the Foredyke Stream flowed into the Holderness Drain. Amazingly, no pipes were put down before the redundant drains were filled in with anything that the City Engineers Department wished to get rid of. The Foredyke Stream and the mediaeval Summergangs Dyke were mainly filled with big lumps of concrete and they continued to flow to some extent as you could stand on North Bridge and see water trickling out of the outfall at low tide. I believe this outfall has now been sealed. Small boys lamented the filling of the drains where they had caught tadpoles and tiddlers (sticklebacks).

The City Engineers Department must have run out of filling material as part of the Foredyke Stream in North Bransholme was left unfilled and they did not make a good job of filling it where it went under Sutton Road. A boy from Bransholme went swimming there and was drowned this, I suppose, proving that it was a dangerous drain.

The Council said that if any land was poorly drained as a result of a drain being filled, they would lay pipes to drain it into the sewers. The drainage of Reckitt's Recreation Ground was badly affected and the Council laid pipes to drain it into the sewers. The decision not to put pipes down was faulty as was the decision to run the Cottingham Drain into the sewers. It saved money but we paid for it on Friday 15th June 2007 when parts of Hull were flooded. In places, there was Water, Water, Everywhere.

Although people thought that such heavy rain in Hull only occurred about once in 15 years, there was four inches of rainfall in 24 hours nine days later on 25th June and the flooding was even worse. Hull's combined sewer system could not cope with the vast amount of rain pouring in. The water level in the sewers rose until it was above ground level in low-lying parts of the area. It was pouring in faster than it could be pumped into the Humber.

One area badly affected was Kingswood, which, like Victoria Dock, has separate drains for surface water and foul sewage. The surface water runs into a large lake near Roe Bank and the River Hull at the former sewage works serving North Bransholme. It could not be pumped into the river fast enough. Rain falling on North Bransholme was running downhill in the surface water drains and coming out of roadside gullies in low-lying parts of Kingswood.

The areas worst affected by the flooding were where the chalk aquifer is not far under the ground. It seems that the Wolds were saturated and groundwater was rising from the chalk aquifer where it could. All this extra water meant that Yorkshire Water's four powerful pumping stations were fighting a losing battle while the rain was falling. Even after the rain had stopped, the water was still rising in badly affected parts of west Hull.

Lessons need to be learned. Emergency teams should be alerted earlier. As soon as the water in the combined sewers rises above 1 metre AOD (Newlyn), they should be put on standby. More pumping capacity is needed to keep the water in the sewers down to 1 metre AOD. There is a danger that nothing will be done as flooding like this is supposed to happen about once every 15 years but flooding again after only nine days seems to disprove this.

Walter Houlton, 9th July 2007

Planning blight in a new form

We used to condemn planners, and the councils that employed them, for "planning blight", a situation in which owners ceased to maintain buildings that stood in the path of published road-building and widening schemes. Often the road scheme itself never materialised but until it was formally abandoned, the threat of demolition was enough to ensure that the buildings concerned suffered years of neglect. The most recent example in Hull was the effect of a proposed roundabout at the junction of Great Union Street, North Bridge, New Cleveland Street and Witham upon the historic (and listed) Annison's funeral premises with its unique first-floor stables. This blight was only removed in the late 1990s when the road scheme was abandoned.

In 2007, there is a new kind of planning blight, but the villains of the piece are not the planners or the city council, who have shown themselves very sympathetic and proactive in the cause of both conservation and regeneration in recent years. Instead it is the kind of developer who purchases a



The derelict Edwin Davis store, Bond St. (Photo: JD Scotney)

property, obtains planning permission for an attractive scheme, but does nothing thereafter. Buildings on the site may be made more or less weatherproof and safe, but the promised conversion or replacement remains on paper, often for years. In the meantime, the buildings themselves receive several generations of window-boarding and anti-vandal fencing, but are otherwise left to deteriorate. This is bad enough when prominent buildings, such as the old Co-op, or the Edwin Davis store next to it on Bond Street, disfigure the city's image. The matter becomes more serious for the city's architectural heritage when there is a listed building involved. Often a scheme is welcomed by conservationists like Hull Civic Society because it includes

sympathetic restoration and re-use of a disused church or school, buildings notoriously difficult to adapt to new uses.

Two examples come to mind immediately. The listed Lambert St Methodist Church closed in 1994 and was bought by a company, APS, which specialised in student accommodation. After one or two revisions a scheme by Gelder & Kitchen, which I described in the September 1997 Newsletter as "a masterpiece of sympathetic design" was approved by the Planning Committee. It has since changed hands and variations on the original scheme have been submitted, the latest in August this year, but nothing else has happened.

Another of Architecture Blundell St Botterill. It after the abandoned it. demolish it and developer who sympathetic the building into apartment block



example is the listed former School off Strand Close, built in 1878 as School, to the design of Wm suffered fire damage in about 2003 University of Lincoln had They were refused permission to we were very pleased when the bought the site submitted a very scheme in October 2004 to convert six luxury flats with a modern on either side. Three years later,

however, part of the roof is still open to the elements and no work has started, even on the modern blocks which would produce the capital for full restoration.

School of Architecture, Strand Close, in Nov 2006. It has changed very little since then. (Photo: JD Scotney,)

Naturally, the process of assembling the necessary capital and negotiating contracts with builders takes time, so there is always an interval, sometimes of several years, between the granting of planning permission and the commencement of work. Many developers have produced good schemes for derelict sites or disused listed buildings and have started the work quickly. One can be fairly certain that others will make good the promise implicit in their planning application in due course, because they have a good record in such matters.

One suspects, however, that the intention of a minority of developers is simply to hold property, made more valuable by planning permission, until it can be sold on at a profit to another developer, who will later resell it for further profit, and so on. This process is quite legal and there are few remedies, apart from the serving of an "Urgent Works Notice" by the city council, when a listed building's condition deteriorates to the point of becoming unsafe. Meanwhile these valuable examples of our historic heritage are neglected, but sold and re-sold from one blighter to another and the sympathetic restoration schemes only exist on paper.

John Scotney

The Boom

The Boom is the name given to the proposed residential, café and retail development, by a company called Pure Urban, on the eastern bank of the River Hull, north of Myton Bridge. It will be



River Hull, looking northwards from Myton Bridge. The site of the Boom is to the right and the Old Town end of the footbridge would be next to the "Red Wave" sculpture, just visible on the far left of this photograph on the opposite bank.

(Photo: JD Scotney, June 2006)

linked to the Old Town by a new pedestrian swing bridge opposite Scale Lane Staith and will be an important element in the regeneration of both sides of the River Hull and the Old Town. The quality of design in this key location is therefore of the greatest importance.

The outline application, approved in April this year, contained fairly detailed illustrations of an interesting and attractive design and careful positioning of the various buildings. We supported both the concept and the design.

The revised plans which we received for consultation in early August differ significantly from the original ones and are far inferior in design and layout. The following letter was therefore sent by Walter Houlton on behalf of the Society and Walter represented us at the monthly meeting of the Planning Committee, where members of the public are allowed to speak for up to three minutes.

Editor

FAO Graham Varley,
Planning Development Management,
Hull City Council,
Kingston House, Bond Street,
Hull HU1 3ER

August 2007

Dear Sir,

Application 29189D. Erection of Mixed Use Development of Residential, Offices, Restaurant, Bars, Take-away and Retail Uses, Public and Private Open Space and Car Parking. (Application for Approval of Reserved Matters – Phase 1). (Revised Design including increased height of building to 16 storeys). Land between Tower Street and the River Hull.

Thank you for your letter dated 6 August 2007 and the copy of the above revised application. The plans have now been viewed by some members of our committee. Committee members were very disappointed with the drawings. They are very poor compared with the illustrative plans of the outline planning application. I attach a photocopy of the River Hull elevation supplied with that application. Committee members were very enthusiastic about those; the buildings were attractive, there was adequate car parking under the buildings and there was adequate public and private open space.

We have serious reservations regarding the car parking. Some of the car parking is supposed to be in the hotel car park and some is supposed to be under Myton Bridge but parking under Myton Bridge would not be secure and the hotel might be under different management from the flats. There is very little car parking, which would be convenient for the flat dwellers. There are only 16 car parking spaces north of Building 4. These would be inadequate for the residents and visitors to the 101 apartments of the 14 storey Building 4 and customers, staff and delivery vans of the nearby shops. There are only 36 parking spaces under Buildings 2 and 3 and 4 parking places adjacent to Building 2. These 30 parking places would be inadequate for the residents of and visitors to the 238 residences in the 12 storey Buildings 2 and 3. There are 6 car parking places adjacent to Building

1. This would be inadequate for the residents and visitors to the 69 residences in the 16 storey Building 1.

Parking is needed for visitors to these residences and the retail establishments. As the carriageway of Tower Street is generally 7 metres wide, there would be space for about 25 parking spaces, for visitors with a maximum stay of two hours, to be marked out near the buildings and there would still be 4.5 metres width of carriageway left for traffic. If a 4.5 metres width of carriageway is not considered adequate for Tower Street, then these short-stay parking places for visitors should not be provided.

This inadequate provision of parking is contrary to paragraph 4.1 x of the East Bank and Blaydes Dock Supplementary Planning Document which states that the strategy and objectives for the East Bank include the provision of sufficient parking to meet the needs of the development and allow for visitors in a mix of undercroft, on street and courtyards.

There is insufficient car parking in the Old Town and this is adversely affecting small businesses there and some have left to go to locations with adequate parking. Insufficient car parking for the East Bank development could similarly adversely affect nearby businesses and influence decisions to relocate.

In our comments on the consultation draft City Centre Area Action Plan, we recommended that the stated restriction of providing only 0.75 parking spaces per new apartment, at the developer's discretion, should be seriously re-examined. We believe that there should be 1 parking space per new apartment and, if it states in the submission draft, when it is published, that the stated restriction of only 0.75 parking spaces per new apartment, at the developer's discretion should be the adopted standard, then we will formally object.

Residents should be given a conveniently sited dedicated parking space, which was numbered and nobody else should be allowed to use it. This would avoid the kind of situation as at Phoenix House and Pease Court in High Street, where a resident can go out in his car and find no parking space when he returns. These allocated parking spaces should be managed to ensure that there was no infringement of the rules.

There is not enough open greenspace with seating in the proposed development. The square with retail establishments around it has seating but no greenery. The private square above the car park under Buildings 2 and 3 has trees and other planting but little space for seats. It appears that the developer's main concern was to cram as much development as possible into the site and this has limited the space for car parking and public and private open space.

The design of the buildings is disappointing while those of the outline application's indicative drawings were attractive. Then the buildings progressively reduced in height from Myton Bridge to the listed former Trinity House buoy shed. In this revised application, this design concept appears to have been abandoned and Building 4, although only 7 storeys at the side near the River, is 14 storeys high at the Tower Street side. The drawings for Phase 2 of the East Bank development have not yet been submitted but with Building 4 being only two storeys lower than Building 1, the massing of the buildings would be deficient, especially when the drawings for Phase 2 up to the former buoy shed were added.

There are a number of things in this proposed Phase 1 development which do not conform to the design guidance in the East Bank and Blaydes Dock Strategic Development Area Final Draft Supplementary Planning Document June 2006. These are too numerous to be listed in this letter but I would like to draw your attention to paragraphs 6.64 and 6.65, Guidance: East Bank Building Heights and paragraphs 6.68 and 6.69, Guidance: Accommodating Parking. What is proposed in this Phase 1 scheme bears no resemblance to this design guidance.

In the information on the East Bank and Blaydes Dock Strategic Development Area on the City Council website, paragraph 1.16 states that although this SDP will not be formally adopted until the adoption of the CCAAP, it can be endorsed as guidance by the Council. It will be a material consideration. It offers appropriate guidance and context for the benefit of developers. This does not preclude alternative schemes provided they can be design justified (PC 10).

Hull Civic Society believes that this Planning application for a poor alternative scheme for Phase 1 cannot be design justified and should be refused.

As this planning application is a revision of an application submitted in May 2007, the comments in Chetwoods' Design and Access Statement will still apply. Section 5.0 Site Wide Sustainable Strategy makes interesting reading but there is no trace in the submitted revised drawings of some elements of this strategy being applied. For instance, it states: - (1.) that there will be on-site renewable energy generation to support landlord's energy supply and provide a statement/feature – a 'strip' of photo-voltaics providing rain screen cladding on a southerly façade of a block, (2.) that it will facilitate the provision of recharge points for electric cars, (3.) that minimum performance standards will be provided in each unit – installation of water conservation devices to reduce water consumption by 30%. There is no mention of a photo-voltaic strip anywhere in the drawings and recharge points for electric cars would be no use if there was no place nearby where an electric car could park for several hours while recharging. As for water conservation devices, it is not clear what this means. Possibly, it means pumps and storage tanks so that waste bathwater and washing up water can be stored and used for flushing toilets. There is no sign of the infrastructure necessary to do this anywhere in the drawings.

We consider the design of the buildings to be very disappointing and rather harsh and brutal. We therefore strongly object to this revised planning application on the numerous grounds mentioned above,

Yours sincerely,

Walter Houlton for K.N. Baker, Hon. Secretary.

Planning and Buildings

Old Town

In mid-August, the Planning Committee approved the application to build a second pedestrian swing bridge, incorporating a restaurant, across the River Hull from Scale Lane Staith (between the Red Wave sculpture and the Benefits Agency's Oriel House) across to the proposed site of The Boom, the development of flats, restaurants, cafes and shops on the eastern bank.

City Centre

The sight of steel girders being unloaded onto the site next to North Bridge made me wonder whether this was the start of the construction of Britannia Developments' block of flats, advertised on the site hoardings. In fact, they are for strengthening the bank of the River Hull, prior to actual building work.

It was announced in August that the Heritage Lottery Fund has confirmed the grant of £7.7 million pounds needed for the History Centre which is to be built on part of Mason St Car Park to house material from the City Archives (Lowgate), the Local Studies Library (Albion St) and the University Archives (Cottingham Rd) in one easily accessible building.

The flats in Dock St, which have a large amount of timber in their construction, have now risen to second floor level and are clearly visible above the hoardings. Plans were approved at the end of May to return 25-30 Albion St, one of Hull's most important Georgian terraces (1790s), to residential use after years of use as the Oasis nightclub. The scheme also includes demolition of the 1970s rear extension and new construction on the southern side of Baker St. Work started in late August. An application by a developer called Marblechip for 63 flats on the northern side of Baker St (next to the flats completed last year by Westbridge Homes), was withdrawn in August, but revised plans have been submitted.

Following the relocation of the Quakers to Bean St, their old listed Friends' Meeting House at the south-western corner of Percy St and Baker St is the subject of an application in July by DJB Property Developments for change of use and internal alterations to convert the Georgian building into a restaurant. Diagonally opposite, on the northern side of Baker St, the attractive houses premises, used for many years by Mark C Brown, rubber stamp manufacturers, are now up for sale.

No application has yet been submitted for change of use. Nearby, a company called Sterling Portfolio Management received permission in August to convert Dunedin House, the 1960s insurance office block at the corner of Percy St and Albion St (built for the Commercial Union) for retail use.



The former Church Institute
(Photo: JD Scotney)

Work seems to be progressing slowly next door on the conversion of the former Affinity public house into an “Owner Hotel” by Andy Woodcock, of Weth Estates. This developer does, however, have a good record of completing developments properly, so we hope that all is well. Built about 1846, it was the residence of James Alderson, the chief physician of the Infirmary, which then stood on the site now occupied by the Prospect Centre. The eminent Hull architect, H.F. Lockwood is thought to have designed it. It became the Church Institute in the later 19th century, became derelict in the 1970s and was rescued in the 1980s by conversion into The Institute public house. More recently, its name was changed to the Affinity bar.

The second phase of the Central Library’s interior work has started. The Children’s Library is being expanded and a new computer suite is being built into the space previously occupied by Hull Screen. The City Information has been moved upstairs but they no longer sell Hull Screen tickets. You can get these on the day of the performance at Hull Screen, George St, or in advance (and on the day) at the City Hall Box Office. Across the road, at the corner of Albion St and Prospect St, the old Wilkinson’s shop, empty for several years, has been taken by a company called “Home Bargains”.

The outline application for Quay West, the mixed retail, leisure and residential development between Princes Quay and Ferensway, was approved at the end of May.

Ferensway, Paragon Station and St Stephen’s

Things are moving fast. The new travel centre at Paragon Station came into use for rail tickets and reservations early in July, but the bus travel counters there await the imminent opening of the bus station on 16th September. Glazed wooden doors have appeared in the door openings under the new awning on the site of Paragon House. The Express Holiday Inn hotel has now shed its wrappings and the shopping mall and Tesco are due to open on 20th September.

An outline application for the residential phase of the St Stephen’s development between Colonial St and Spring St was submitted in August. At present work on Hull Truck Theatre is still proceeding on the foundations. The new Albemarle Music Centre, the base for Hull Education Department’s peripatetic music teachers (who go out to all the city’s schools) and the excellent Youth Orchestra and other youth music groups which they train, is well advanced.

North

In July, an application was submitted by Hull City Council to dismantle Scott Street Bridge and create a viewing platform overlooking the river. Hull College’s new Construction Skills Centre on the northern side of Freetown Way, next to the Registry Office, is almost complete and may be in use by the time you read this.

If approved, a smart new 5 and 6 storey block containing flats and offices will replace one of the older buildings backing on to the northern side of Freetown Way. The former Co-operative bakery in Caroline Place has been divided into a variety of uses including Falcon’s Meat store and a gym. It is interesting as an industrial building, but despite efforts to screen it with trees, the rear elevation is not particularly attractive, originally being visible only from neighbouring houses. I was pleased to see that the attractive houses to the east of the site are not affected.

Since the regrettable demolition of Government Buildings on Spring Bank in the early 1980s, most of the land between Stanley St and Derringham St has been vacant. An application in mid-August proposed a new building containing shops on the ground floor with 3 storeys of flats above. The design, with its mixture of ground floor masonry and upper floor red brickwork and a pitched

roof, is reasonably in keeping with the scale of the shops opposite and the site is long overdue for development on an urban scale, so I was surprised to see concerns voiced by Gateway Pathfinder, the body responsible for guiding Hull's housing strategy, that it might detract from the strategy of bringing more apartment developments into the city centre. It is, after all, only a short walk or bus ride from there into town and the character of the Spring Bank conservation area is largely one of shops with living accommodation above. There are not many alternative forms of development that would be suitable and in scale on this site.

Reid Park Properties, owners of the Swan Inn and the adjacent former National picture Theatre ruins (referred to in Tom Robinson's article in the June Newsletter) have demolished, unnecessarily, the rear extension of the Swan that contained the toilets and, worse still, the stairs to the upper storeys. It seems that they were able to do this, even in a conservation area, because the ground plan of the extension was less than the minimum requiring permission.

The listed former Lambert St Methodist Church, disused since 1994, was the subject of a new application in July by a Mr Arthurton for internal and external alterations in connection with conversion into flats. We hope that these will be carried out at last.

Work has started on the residential development at the former Grammar School (previously Marist College) site, with diggers clearing the former playing fields for the houses. Some work seems to be in progress at Hop Villa and Fern Villa, which face onto Cottingham Rd, though an application was only submitted in mid-August by YCS Ltd for change of use into 8 self contained flats plus management and letting office.

East

On Sunday 2nd September, part of the former Spiller's mill next to Chapman Street Bridge, one of the industrial landmarks of the River Hull and Cleveland St, was demolished using explosives. The section next to the river remains to be demolished.

For our comments on The Boom, please see page 8.



Spillers mill (Photo: JD Scotney)

West

The Hull Daily Mail reported in early August that Northern European Leisure (Yorkshire) Ltd had been fined £2,000 for failure to replace the domes which were an important feature of one of the city's earliest cinemas, opened in 1914. The Art Nouveau style, by H. Percival Binks, captures the frivolity of the early years of the 20th century before the First World War. It closed as a cinema in 1982 and was converted into the Tower nightclub. Drastic interior alterations were proposed by Luminar Leisure three years ago but the revised scheme approved by the planners retained the building's most important features. Work was completed early in 2005, except for the small cupolas which have not yet been rebuilt. The City Council allowed the new owners to open before completion of the domes so that they could raise revenue to complete the work, but the club closed again after a few months. Northern European Leisure stated that they would wait until trade picked up with the opening of St Stephen's. The Tower is an important part of Hull's social history.



The Tower (Photo JD Scotney)

Eric Lusby Properties' outline application to build dwellings on the site of the former Newington Hall was approved at the end of May. BRB (Residuary) Ltd, the remaining part of the British Rail Property Board, received permission in July to remove the disused Calvert Lane railway bridge and abutments and regrade the embankments.

John Scotney

Good Mark – Hull Community Church

Hull Civic Society has awarded a Good Mark to the Hull Community Church at the corner of Cottingham Road and Newland Avenue. To the casual passer-by it looks more like a sports hall than a traditional church and in fact sport is one of the many public activities that this church offers during the week to those who live in the neighbourhood. The Community Church, formed in 1980, was, from the beginning, involved in community work with two aims:

- To relieve poverty and engage the socially excluded by supporting: ex-offenders, drug users, women in prostitution, excluded young people, the unemployed, those on low incomes, older people, the disabled, pregnant women, parents/carers, children and local people.
- To be a community anchor, helping to bring about the social, economic and environmental regeneration of the local area.

The many community activities which are carried out in and from this building are a real expression of these aims, provided without any requirement for church affiliation. In addition the church provided practical help and use of its facilities to many people affected by this summer's floods.

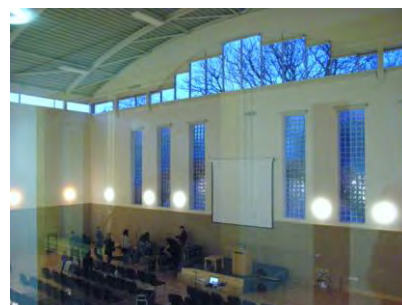
In 1992, the group purchased the German Lutheran Church (built 1968). After the Lutherans moved to the Scandinavian Church in Osborne St, the Community Church decided, in 2001, to build a new church better suited to their many activities. This came into use on 25th June 2006, though the official opening, attended by Christians of all denominations, was scheduled for 22nd September 2006. External funding came from 19 sources, including the European Regional Development Fund.

The large and rather austere multi-purpose hall, is used at different times for Sunday morning worship, 5-a side football (hence the floor-markings, strong wall-light covers and toughened glass windows!), music groups, youth activities for 11-15s or over-16s, blood donor sessions and other large gatherings, for which it can seat as many as 500 people. There is a mobile stage, sound system and projection equipment and a dividing partition. The reception desk in the main entrance off Newland Avenue is attended at all times and provides a friendly greeting to visitors. Next to it are a café, a kitchen and a 50-seat conference room. The first floor has a suite of 4 offices used by the church and community projects, a small meeting room, a well-equipped crèche, a pregnancy testing and advisory centre and a training suite with such modern facilities as TV/DVD/Video, a digital projector, an interactive whiteboard, wireless internet connection and laptops for IT training.

The premises have many environmentally friendly features, such as energy usage control, low energy lights which switch off when no-one is in the room, thicker insulation than the regulatory standard, natural ventilation, maximum use of natural light, water conservation by waterless urinals and short flush toilets, sun pipes and west-facing solar panels. The materials are of a high quality and durable, the interior light and spacious and the exterior is both modern-looking and of a scale that blends with its surroundings and is softened by retaining the trees and grass on the Cottingham Road frontage.

It struck me that the Community Church is addressing the social needs of the present age in the same way that Hull's three Methodist Missions, Queen's Hall (in the Old Town), King's Hall (in Fountain Rd) and Thornton Hall (in Great Thornton St) did a century ago, also based in well-equipped premises, designed by Gelder & Kitchen.

The Good Mark is awarded to the architects, Gelder & Kitchen, the builders, Hobson and Porter and the Hull Community Church, for a modern building of a high standard, well suited to improving the quality of life of the city which Hull Community Church aims to serve.



Photos: JD Scotney

John Scotney

THE GREEN FLAG AWARDS CEREMONY
THURSDAY 20TH JULY 2007, AT THE ROYAL ARMOURIES MUSEUM, LEEDS

I was invited to this Green Flag event as the newest members of the YHACS committee. I didn't know quite what to expect but soon found out that it was nothing to do with broken down vehicles, tanks or recovery trucks, but an aspirational environmental scheme managed by the Civic Trust to mark achievement and to serve as a national standard for parks and green spaces.

The event was well organized (it had to be considering the numbers), and the venue superb. The day was broken down into manageable and varied experiences. Firstly, group awards ceremony took only two hours in the morning. I soon got into 'conservation' with Rosliston Forestry Team from Derbyshire who, like the rest of the Armouries Hall, were here to receive their Green Flag. The ceremony was compèred by Fiona Armstrong – writer and broadcaster – who enthused and congratulated, whilst keeping things swiftly moving.

Lunch was served in the Saville Hall to the excited queues of awardees who circulated the Trade Stands, ordering products which would guarantee another flag next year. I spent some time chatting to Alberta Stevens and Kevin Trickett on the Civic Trust/Civic Societies stand and started to feel more at one.

The area around the Armouries is an impressive example of regeneration which has created a new part of the city whilst preserving something of the Industrial past.....BUT we are here to look at parks and gardens and raising standards of green spaces. So on to the buses, waiting alongside the Armouries jousting area, to be whisked off to the Pride of Leeds – Roundhay Park. Unfortunately, it rained for the two hours we were there. A Park's Manager from Liverpool commented on the intensity of the green of the trees and grass for this stage in the summer. Little wonder considering the amount of rain we have had. Roundhay's landscapes, lakes and monuments provide impressive views and challenging walks although I was disappointed that the features which I most wanted to enjoy were both closed. The Mansion House for alterations and the Lakeside Café just closed, I suppose, for lack of custom.

Meanwhile, back at the Armouries, preparations were under way for the reception and awards dinner. Everyone seemed to have 'scrubbed up well', including Katie Stewart and Mike Burke. These two were already engaging with the Civic Trust administrators from offices in London and Liverpool, who themselves deserved some sort of award for elegance and style. Our table was well placed for the address by Peter Bembridge and later the Yorkshire Silver Band and the African Drum Dancers. The meal was good and the company made up of very affable Leeds Civic Society members including Chair, Peter Baker, and the charming Alberta and Sarah from the Civic Trust, who kept Mike and I informed of developments back at HQ!!

There followed a mad dash to the station just in time for me to catch the last train back to Hull. Time to reflect on a great day of celebration, cognizant of the importance of outstanding green space management and the value of quality parks and gardens within communities.

As a first-timer to the Green Flag Awards I was suitably impressed by the numbers of passionate people and energetic authorities involved, and how much the awards meant to those professionally committed to green space management and maintenance. In Hull we have an excellent Parks and Gardens Department who, although not entered for this national awardwill get a big cheer from me at next year's awards. Watch this green space.

If you would like to find out more about Green Flag or becoming a Green Flag Judge, please contact the Green Flag Award Team on 0151 2316900 or email info@greenflagaward.org.uk.

Malcolm Sharman

Readers' Letters

I am a little surprised to see the Civic Society promoting the provision of more car parking in the city centre - this has I think been noted before, but I see that it now appears amongst the Society's 'Top Ten Environment Issues'.

Whilst acknowledging that everything needs to be done to support the Hull business and retail economy, I am disappointed that the Civic Society sees car parking as a way of doing this, especially when there is no mention of the enhancement of public transport which is surely better from an environmental point of view.

Of course I must declare an interest, but I really think that this is a rather one-sided and not particularly 'green' standpoint.

Yours sincerely

Peter Shipp
Chairman and Chief Executive, EYMS Group Limited

Good public transport is still one of Hull Civic Society's major concerns, and Mr Shipp is right to remind us of its importance. Our concentration on the issue of parking, especially in the evening, is partly a response to the genuine problems the City Council's parking policies and enforcement policies are creating for people whose professional or leisure travel needs cannot be met by public transport or environmentally friendly modes such as the bicycle. In recent years Hull's public transport has also become less of a high-profile issue, thanks to many improvements, such as better frequencies, more bus-priority measures, modern low-floor buses, direct trains to London and a new bus-rail interchange. The city has also become a better place for cycling.

Nevertheless, there are still improvements to be made and the Society needs to keep alternatives to the car among its Top Ten Issues!

Editor

Editor's note: Together with his article suggesting a way of overcoming the divisive effect of Castle Street, Jim Wilson has also raised two other points of interest in his email to the Society:

1. Every morning hundreds of thousands of pounds of tourist money goes through Hull on its way from the docks to York or wherever. It should be obvious that every effort should be made to try and persuade a few of the tourists to linger a little, firstly by making the view from the bus a little more attractive. That being said, I could never understand why Burnett House, opposite King Billy, remained for several decades in a state of total dereliction. Finally, a couple of years ago the building was refurbished to a high standard. Now, apparently, a tenant cannot be found for it and it has remained behind hoardings for more than a year. Why cannot it be tidied up and presented to the world?

2. There is an open air theatre in West Park. This was built, I would judge, more than a hundred years ago. The building is of massive construction but would be totally unacceptable by modern standards, consisting of barely more than a stage, with changing rooms and a toilet underneath, reached by a steep and narrow staircase. The "auditorium" has space, I would judge, for about 200 people and is surrounded by a belt of woodland. I have no idea when it was last used as a theatre.

The Hull Model Engineering Society, of which I am a member, built, about 25 years ago a railway track round the outside of the wooded strip, and used the theatre as a club house. This was with the blessing of the Council. About 5 years ago the theatre was set on fire and the internals severely damaged. The externals look much as before, but the building has been declared dangerous and has been sealed up. As you can imagine, it looks a wreck.

I now understand that the council has obtained a grant of £500,000 from the lottery for its restitution as a theatre. I have no information, but I believe that no-one has expressed a desire for an open air theatre.

Is this total lunacy?

Jim Wilson.

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The committee would welcome expressions of interest from members of the Society who would like to be considered for election to the committee. Please contact our Secretary, Ken Baker.

Membership Subscriptions

At the Society's AGM on 2nd April, it was decided to increase the annual subscriptions from £7 to £10 for an individual and £17 for a couple. Students pay £5, under 16s, £2

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