

FREE

# Place Hereford Civic Society

The City's built environment forum

## Monolith proposal all wrong

Comment on planning app.

Winter 2018/19

### Blueprint for Transport Development

The urgent need to move forward without the car

### No 3 St John Street

Medieval Hereford

### Planning Matters

Despair with Planners

### Hereford Now

NMiTE Container

#### POLITICAL HUSTINGS ABOUT HEREFORD'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Candidates' visions for Hereford in 15 year's time

Chaired by John Bothamley, CBE

*Taking place at* Herefordshire & Ludlow College,  
Hereford campus, Folly Lane, Hereford

*on* Thursday 11 April 2019  
*Arrivals from* 6.45pm, for a 7pm start, and a 8.30pm close

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## PREFACE

Whilst no longer chairman of our illustrious society I have been retained as editor of this incisive journal; expect to read even deeper investigative journalism. I will continue illustrating inspiring ways to create a positive built environment from around the world. This quarter we are working up to our Hustings meeting in April when all the political parties can have their say about how they intend to further develop Hereford.

Our new chairman, Jeremy Milln, with

a career spanning much involvement in historical buildings, and perceptive ideas of how modern developments should integrate, writes his first column about his plans for our Society. Transport and housing issues feature and our worries over the proposed student accommodation are documented on page 7; more about the Hustings in the supplement. Best wishes for the New Year.

John Bothamley

## NEWS & COMMENT

### Worcester micro homes

Worcester City Council has granted approval for the 'UK's first' iKozie micro-home community. The 16 single-person iKozie homes will be built on a former brownfield site on Cecil Road in the city centre. Of those homes, five will be affordable homes to be allocated to individuals on the city council's housing list. The remainder will be for private rent. Two will be designed for disabled people.

Designed by Eastabrook Architects, they believe that the homes, at just 17.25 sq.metres, could be a template for similar housing solutions across the country. The iKozie features a bedroom, shower room, living area and full kitchen including all appliances. The home was inspired by yacht interiors and first-class airline suites.

### Blueschool House

Solar panels are to be installed, which is positive news, but only now because there is a 50% grant available; but it all comes out of our taxes from somewhere so the actual pay back period is 12 years. NB: PR department – the press release used an old picture of the building with the special white downpipes!

### Creative Cities Network

We reported last quarter that a group of interested parties were considering making an application for Hereford City to join the UNESCO Creative City Network. However, on assessment of the capacity and funds required to submit a bid, it was decided it was not a viable project at this time.

## PLUS CA CHANGE



**On election at the Society's AGM on 18th October 2018, I spoke about the importance to society of cherishing that of the past which we value and designing new buildings well so they will be valued in the future. We know instinctively what we like about Hereford's built environment: the Cathedral and Castle Green of course, High Town, Church Street, the grand houses of Broomy and Aylestone Hills, the humbler terraces of St James and Bartonsham or the charming Venn's and Coningsby closes. On the other hand there are plenty of dislikes: the new City Link Road, Blueschool House and a number of the new large and ill-sited retail and apartment blocks.**

I also spoke about the Society's role as an independent champion for conservation. Our friends at Historic England share the view that we need to become much better at looking after our cherished older buildings and if necessary converting them to new uses. We welcome new buildings where they make a positive contribution by virtue of their ingenuity, originality, distinctiveness, energy efficiency, beauty, historic reference and fitness for purpose. In advising on good design, which we can do with the advantage of local knowledge and independence, the Society is ultimately motivated by the civic interest. What chiefly concerns us are the qualities of new building which make decent places for all of us now and for centuries to come. Looking at the standard of some recent developments, it is easy to feel cynical. Many will say 'it's all about short-term yields' or, 'the Council has to cut costs', or 'it's not part of the current political agenda'. While these oft-repeated mantra may be true, what is also

true is that it is now more important than ever for new build to be carbon-neutral, adaptable, durable, functionally competent and aesthetically pleasing. To meet these laudable aims we need a clear sense of direction and purpose, an overarching plan for Hereford's future driven by the wider civic interest, robust adherence to the NPPF and to neighbourhood plans, an agreed set of standards to work to, and a joined-up approach to implementing change. Otherwise we will get more of the same. 2019 promises to be an interesting year for HCS. We will hold a political hustings on 11th April ahead of the local elections on 2nd May. Then there is the County's Local Plan which is due for review. We will continue to comment on planning applications affecting the City. The Special Planning Document, urged by Historic England's Urban Panel when it visited in October 2017, should set standards for massing, form, detailing, materials, energy efficiency, connectivity, historic context and proportion. We are disappointed that the draft was not available on the promised date before Christmas. John Bothamley will continue to represent us on the Hereford Area Plan group, a document long overdue and we will continue to argue for an overarching City Master-plan in an effort to join up the thinking across sectors: housing, commerce, conservation and transport. This is essential to ensure Hereford's planning becomes better integrated, contemporary, properly paced and spatially aware. Let us learn from our mistakes without apportioning blame for them; move on and seek to adopt the examples of others' success, adapting them intelligently for our own City.

Jeremy Milln

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### Contributors

**John Bothamley** – Former chairman of HCS, chair of charitable grant making trust

**John Faulkner** – Chartered Civil Engineer, former chairman of HCS

**David Fowler** – Accountant

**Jeremy Milln** – Conservation archaeologist and Chairman of HCS

**Stanley Vincent** – Planning visionary

**David Whitehead** – Hereford historian and author

**Design & Layout** – Gary Nozedar and Jessica Benjamin

**Front Cover**

*Proposed student accommodation in Station Approach*

## NEWS & COMMENT

### Sustrans' Design Guide

Will Haynes, Infrastructure director for Sustrans writes

"Our starting point for new standards was to create a design guide for the National Cycle Network. This would have stated absolute requirements for width, surface type, alignment, and so on. But it soon became apparent that the diversity of users and the breadth of types of route meant that this would end up defining a lowest common denominator.

Instead we have created a set of design principles. These principles define the characteristics of the network and facilitate a positive user experience. This is not to say that the design standards for the network are not important. Indeed, the first principle is that new and improved sections of the network should be designed in accordance with current best practice design guidance.

The other principles include ensuring that the path is wide enough to accommodate all users, that the surface is smooth enough for people using mobility aids, that the route is attractive

and interesting, that the signing enables people to use the path without getting lost, that routes are accessible to all legitimate users, and that all users are able to cross roads safely. The intention is to encourage the designer to think about the user experience they are seeking to facilitate, and design accordingly".

HCS endorses this approach as cycling becomes much more the "go to" way of moving around.

### Great Place

A Herefordshire Cultural Partnership project is exploring new ways of working, new tools and new ideas that will strengthen the arts, heritage and creative scene across Herefordshire. In May 2019 they will host their second 'Pride of Place' culture conference in Herefordshire and will explore how young people can have a voice in arts and heritage and promote career pathways into the creative industries. Great Place is looking for enthusiastic and experienced freelancers to work on the specific parts of the Great Place project in Herefordshire. They have a range of opportunities from event planning to development. For details

call Lauren Rogers on 01432 344039 for an informal discussion about what's available or visit [www.theshire.co.uk](http://www.theshire.co.uk)

### Chaos reigns

NMiTE has an inspiring new style university that it wants to establish. The Art College (HCA) needs to expand. Herefordshire Council (HC) will be pleased to see the economic benefits that could result. NMiTE and HCA want HC to underwrite potential shortfalls on rental income from student accommodation. NMiTE has recently changed their requirements for students to stay in their university accommodation. HC has no overall plan for the station approach/transport hub area but want to develop the restricted "Rockfield" car park as student accommodation for both NMiTE and HCA to share. But the site is restricted by the route of a major sewer. HC hand the project to Keepmoat Redevelopment, their development "partners", who have in the meantime been taken over by Cityheart as developers and Engie as contractors all with mega arrangement fees. The result: a very poor piece of architecture on the wrong site. The Essex Arms site on the Link Road, thought to be a preferred site by NMiTE, is growing weeds; and is in the "urban village" of the old, and yet to be realised, ESG plan. Like everyone else the developers are waiting for plans for the transport interchange,

so it is rather difficult to plan logical access to and from their dreadful looking building. HCA believe it can be improved by adorning the Aylestone Hill side with student art. With the Design Special Planning Document (SPD), funded jointly by NMiTE and HC, still in preparation the Planning Committee should delay any consideration of the planning application for this building until the SPD is available as it is usual for Planning Inspectors to take account of developing plans. Meanwhile HCA say their very livelihood is at stake unless they increase student numbers and have accommodation by September 2020; but how can an art institute take over such an awful building in the wrong place? It seems that all parties do not understand that it is imperative for Hereford to create a decent, joined up place for all to enjoy living in. Horrid blocks will not inspire potential students and their parents to come to Hereford, any more than the present concrete desert of the over-wide City Link Road, and, as yet, no easy route from the station into the City. Maybe the minutes of the "monthly" meetings of the Joint University Delivery Board, (NMiTE and HC) could shine some light on these issues; but meetings have not occurred for months. Some real joined up thinking is badly needed.



## HEREFORD NOW

### NMiTE container at Shire Hall

Most HCS members are fans of the new university but to dump this container in front of one of our most respected buildings is not on. There is a retrospective planning application (184337) outstanding for 'Proposed change of use of land for the periodic siting of a mobile unit throughout the year until September 2020'. There is enough flouting of planning regulations

in Hereford without our new university joining the clan.

Our picture also shows that strips of the high quality coloured asphalt have been taken up to lay service cables and replaced with standard black. But the culprit is not NMiTE – it's lack of Council supervision of the utility contractors - almost a criminal offence?



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NMiTE at Shire Hall

# HOUSING

## Foundation for Integrated Transport (FIT)

The FIT relaunched their July 2018 report in Oxford on 10th October 2018 at a full day conference, two HCS members attended. It was a meeting that highlighted what we already know – that developers are allowed to build without proper regard to transport matters. Dr Nicolas Falk of the Urbed Trust spoke about the need to develop around stations, how different England is from Europe and the need for a more collaborative way of living. Prof. Tom Holbrook spoke how he is inputting into plans for the new Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Corridor.

The authors visited more than twenty new housing developments across the country and three in the Netherlands. Profiles of each were compiled including planning history, bus and rail aspirations and traffic forecasts. Consideration of access to employment centres and congestion on the local road networks were all recorded. Findings were summarised under six themes.

**Car-based living.** Almost all developments were advertised as being easily accessible by car, many adjacent to out of town developments, almost a US-style idea of planning. With the five year land supply targets being of such importance sites are invariably selected for deliverability with transport designs considered later and under-funded. "Traffic created by building in the wrong place". The way forward is clarification of vision and requirements at policy level. "A more measured approach to the right location for new homes is needed. It is counter-productive to couple new homes with new roads"

**Homes not properly connected for pedestrians, cyclists or buses.** Here there is concern that there has been

planning in isolation with developers only going as far as the red line on their plans. Especially with development on isolated fields it is not easy for local authorities to link these with a logical network of routes, never mind who funds the work. The way forward is to improve the way we select sites; smaller sites adjacent to existing urban areas that can be linked into main roads rather than being slaves to the five year housing land supply to " earmark" large deliverable sites.

**Public transport opportunities missed.** Often residents were found to be forced to use their cars. It is hard to attract bus ridership if estates are designed for the car. Without bus routes being considered at the start of the design process the authors found situations with roads unsuitable for buses and routes that only touched the periphery of developments. Lack of services out of peak times was a matter little referred to. Only one new station was found, at Cranbrook in Devon proving popular into Exeter. In the Netherlands public transport is central to new urban extensions. New homes located around rapid transport systems

were hardly ever seen apart from near Cambridge. The way forward is to plan with transport systems at the start and new stations in central locations. Pontrilas is our obvious choice in Herefordshire which HCS promoted as a suitable location in PLACE (Summer 2015)

**The importance of mixed land use.**

Only Poundbury demonstrated the idea of a proper mixed use community, where different functions are not found in different parcels of land separated by major roads and carparks. Current news suggests that house prices are rising in small market towns - Brits like the small market town atmosphere.

**Urban quarters** were cited as possibly the best way forward, especially using small and large brownfield sites, linking into existing transport networks and creating new centres as referred. Residents in regenerated and more highly dense urban areas seemed to more readily take to innovative cycling routes and using public transport.

**Insights from the Netherlands.** It is all down to planning the movement of people at the start; transport nodes, community facilities integral to the housing and including offices and light industrial uses. Out of town supermarkets have been heavily discouraged to maintain town centre viability.

It is pretty obvious stuff that our planners and politicians have allowed to happen – not just in Hereford – poorly planned public transport and out of town developments destroying town centres. In Herefordshire we have some super market towns and a City hanging in there, but are we planning properly for our housing growth and transport needs?

John Bothamley



## Walsall

Walsall Council has appointed design consultancy, Arcadis, to develop a masterplan for the town centre. The masterplan will include proposals to make the town more sustainable and resilient over the next 15 to 20 years. It will build on the evidence base that supports the soon-to-be adopted Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan. Simon Marks, Arcadis city executive for the West Midlands region, said: "In developing the regeneration masterplan, we'll be focusing on improvements to the shopping area, leisure, culture, public realm, transport links and housing, whilst still ensuring we protect and enhance the historic character of the town and its green space. The new masterplan will help to rejuvenate not only the town centre, but also deliver ongoing investment into the region." If Walsall can surely Hereford can, this is just what is needed.



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## BB, BB

The 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' Commission was launched in October 2018 to develop practical measures to:

- promote better design and style of homes, villages, towns and high streets, to reflect what communities want, building on the knowledge and tradition of what they know works for their area

- explore how new settlements can be developed with greater community consent
- make the planning system work in support of better design and style, not against it.

All worthy aims but do we want another quango? On first reading we thought the name was a joke.



# Hereford's Future: Blueprint for Transport Development

PLACE regularly returns to the challenge Hereford faces in its lack of a clear, forward-thinking and over-arching vision. It was a message reinforced by Historic England when its Urban Panel reported on its visit to the City in October 2017. Hereford needs a Masterplan to underpin and knit the detail of its area, transport, housing and other plans. It needs it so as to guard against 1970s style car-centric blunders like the new city link road and to ensure that decisions are made absolutely in the interest of Hereford and all its people.

To achieve this it is sometimes necessary to revisit first principles; principles which apply to the creation of truly sustainable cities everywhere. The New York-based Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) defines such cities as where:

- there is a high concentration of people living in an environment that is pleasant and provides good social infrastructure through good physical infrastructure
- people are put before cars, and residents, workers and visitors young and old, can safely walk or cycle to their daily activities
- jobs and services are a bus ride away, and the time and money spent driving can be used productively elsewhere.

These are the kinds of cities that are attractive to us today – cities with less congestion, less pollution, fewer accidents, and healthier, safer, more productive communities. To achieve this the ITDP encourages cities to follow the eight Principles for Better Streets:

1. WALK: Develop neighbourhoods that promote walking
2. CYCLE: Prioritise non-motorised transport networks
3. CONNECT: Create dense networks of streets and paths
4. TRANSIT: Locate development near high-quality public transport
5. MIX: Plan for mixed use
6. DENSIFY: Optimize density and transit capacity

7. COMPACT: Create areas with short commutes
8. SHIFT: Increase mobility by regulating parking and road use

Urban growth is a choice we make. Cities can sprawl, with poorly planned car-oriented growth that segregates land uses and ghettoises people. Or we can decide to grow them with inclusive, compact, transit-oriented development (TOD), with opportunities to improve social equity, strengthen communities, save energy, cut infrastructure costs, and eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. Inclusive TODs are typified by pedestrian and cycle-friendly neighbourhoods, varied land uses and high-quality rapid transit connections to other parts of the city. They also feature affordable housing, diverse jobs and services, and older buildings and businesses retained for continuity. Many cities have already developed in this manner, with rapid transit corridors, high-quality pedestrian areas and a mix of people, jobs, and services. Inclusive TOD requires reform and in Hereford's case we need to:



leominster social housing

- strengthen and enlighten Hereford Council's leadership so that it functions in a more transparent, accountable and inclusive way, free of political bias and short-termism
- co-ordinate land-use, transport and housing policies to a City Masterplan
- prioritise the feasibility, design and implementation of effective rapid public transit (metro or electric bus) systems linking edge of city car parks and communities with the centre
- commit convincingly to deliver safe and joined up cycle routes everywhere.

Herefordshire Council's recent consultation on housing and employment site options for Hereford, which seems to endorse a process whereby developments may occur piecemeal and without any real reference to one another or the transport links between, illustrates this lack of an overall vision. Given a good Masterplan, a decent Design Guide and TOD-thinking Hereford could produce beautiful and useful places to live and work once more and healthy means to move between them.

Nicky Geeson  
and Jeremy Milln



bikes and brickwork



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## Local Plan and Section 106

The County's Local Plan is due for review in 2019 and this personal view highlights the bizarre situation developing in this County as the Herefordshire Council (HC) battles with dwindling resources. The Local Plan sets out the requirements for housing and resources into the 2030s. Currently it includes proposals to enhance every settlement with a suggested number of additional homes. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has further complicated this by giving developers the opportunity to gain planning consent if proposals are "sustainable".

In St. Weonards recent planning consents have exceeded the suggested number of new homes by 100% with two developments of c25 houses each. Section 106 obligations will secure some contribution from the developers for social housing and infrastructure improvements. But across the County there are many schemes for 10 or less houses which avoid this obligation. The costs associated with these developments over the next fifteen years is enormous; the need to provide school places, social services etc etc.

not forgetting the additional wear and tear on narrow lanes that were never built for heavy vehicles. Then there is the environmental cost of increased car use and pollution. Attempting to put a figure on these costs is complicated and yet there is a real need for our Forward Planning Team to address this matter.

With an obligation set by central government to build thousands of new homes it seems blindingly obvious that these need to be built on infill sites and around existing centres of population. Herefordshire cannot afford to fund new inhabitants who want all the support from the Local Authority, and the free idyllic views across our stunning countryside at no cost to themselves. I believe the HC should properly consider the innovative idea proposed by the HCS in PLACE Summer 2015, to create a much enlarged Ewyas Harold with a new station at Pontrilas and other nodes along our sparse railway network. When our councillors review the Local Plan surely they must consider the potentially huge cost of creating more rural, isolated dwellings.

Stanley Vincent.

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## AMAZING PLACES OF HEREFORD

### No 3 St John Street: a Desirable Piece of Medieval Hereford

The Canon's House in St John Street has recently been sold by the Cathedral's Dean and Chapter and this provided an opportunity to get access to one of the most interesting historic properties in the City. It also stimulated speculation upon the topographical development of this corner of the cathedral close.

John Speede's draft plan of the city of Hereford of 1606, kept at Merton College Oxford, reveals the cathedral at the centre of a walled enclosure, which had been erected, with much opposition from the citizens, in the late 14th century. At least five access points are shown on the map, which according to Dean Merewether in the 1840s were controlled by seven gates – he still had the keys! One of the gates was at the north end of St John Street or Milk Lane, as it was known in the Middle Ages. The Canon's House and the predecessor of Harley House, also originally a canonry, were both beyond the gate. According to the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments survey of Hereford the wall opposite No. 3 St John Street bounding Harley House, is medieval and has a square squint, reinforced with an iron bar. Something similar can be detected on the inside of the garden wall of No. 3 where it bounds the street. Maybe, being outside the precinct gate created a sense of insecurity in the 15th century.

Significantly, the medieval features inside 3 St John Street all post-date the creation of the precinct wall. There is an open hall, five bays in length, projecting into the garden from the street frontage. This is much restored, but has a

modified hammer-beam roof, which is said to date from the early 15th century. There is also an embellished door-case marooned in a ground-floor corridor of a similar date and, visible on the street frontage, are the striking double-range of late gothic windows, probably about 1500. Other notable features are even later. The northern extension of the house beyond its entrance was probably built in the 17th century and a wide staircase, which rises from the entrance hall, has newel posts of a similar date.

It has been suggested that early in the Middle Ages there were in the region of 40 canonical houses around the cathedral at Hereford but this declined dramatically in the 14th century and Bishop Orleton in 1321 painted a graphic picture of the cathedral precincts defaced by abandoned and ruinous houses. Various sources suggest that by the late 14th century there were only eight or nine resident canons and predatory citizens, encouraged by the crown, who took possession of the redundant properties, especially those that were some distance from the Cathedral e.g. in Church Street and St John Street. The reasons for the decline in the number of canons are complex: there



former canon's home

was chronic absenteeism amongst career churchmen; there was a serious famine between 1317 and 1321, and also Hereford was severely affected by the Black Death in 1349 and 1362. The exclusion of 3 St John Street outside the close wall suggests that its late medieval features could have been the result of secular intervention. No. 20 Church Street, also outside the close has a similar, but finer late medieval interior but is well documented. In 1428 it was said to be a 'former canonical house' and belonged to a citizen called David Leche, attached to it were a number of shops. The ownership of 20 Church Street remained in the hands of the Dean and Chapter, who supervised re-construction, and in more settled times it was re-occupied by churchmen, as was the case with No. 3 St John Street.

The recent book on The Houses of Hereford 1200-1700 by Nigel Baker, Pat Hughes and Richard K. Morriss (Oxbow, £25) mentions No.3 St John Street in passing but is more interested in the

so-called Cathedral Barn which stands at the corner of the street, with its main elevation looking towards the cathedral. This building started its life as an aisled structure built using timber with a felling date of between 1253 and 1388. It is one of the earliest secular structures in the city. Since it sits on the foundations of the precinct wall, it must have been moved to its present site in the mid-to late 17th century, when the close was given its present polite, planned and open arrangement. It seems the 13th century structure was not dismantled when it was moved to its present position. Hence, it is suggested that it could not have come any great distance and may have stood adjacent to No. 3 St John Street. Its removal may have enabled the owners of No. 3 to build a stable block, which runs parallel with the barn. Its 19th century successor is part of the package for sale and still contains stalls, which might persuade the new owners to give-up their car and take to a pony and trap for their local errands.

David Whitehead



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### City Walls update

The project has moved on modestly since PLACE reported in the summer. Firstly, at the City Walls Group's request, Historic England is reassessing the status of the walls which we feel were taken off the 'at risk' register prematurely. Secondly, we have reviewed fee proposals from three architect practices for the preparation of a specification and schedule of works to RIBA stage 4. These show the Project would need to allow c.£25,000 to get to the point where tenders for works of conservation and repair can be sought.

Fundraising has begun to meet these costs. Although grants from Historic England or Heritage Lottery look unlikely, Highways England moneys – at least for sections close to the A49 – look promising. A Stage 1 application for its Designated Funds, which are conscience moneys intended to relieve the adverse effects of trunk roads, is being submitted through the City Council. This is funding with a broad remit intended to address

issues of safety, air quality, integration and the environment where trunk roads impact communities.

In early 2016 cycle-ways along the A49 corridor, were designed by Kier, the infrastructure development company, for Highways England under this scheme. However this was put on hold pending deliberations on the active travel measures of the Council's Hereford Transport Package.

We feel it would make sense to develop a scheme for the City wall in tandem with such improvements to its accessibility by bike and foot. The extent to which Highways England can help, with interpretation and access, as well as conservation are areas in which we hope they will, is as yet uncertain. The Civic Society presses for a bold and forward-thinking approach to work on the walls which relates to a City Master-plan to ensure that future developments positively enhance the monument.

Jeremy Milln

## PLANNING MATTERS

### Student Accommodation at the Station 183841

**This objection is from a founder member of NMiTE wanting to see economic progress within the City but more importantly the creation of positive spaces and buildings for generations to come. This proposal follows the one for the new GP Centre when a derisory comment was made on the quality of design of Hereford's building. It is time that our Councillors understood the importance of creating a cohesive environment and understood positive juxtapositions.**

Herefordshire Council has a record of providing no overall vision for the City in design terms; this application proves there is no appreciation of the importance of siting and good design in providing a positive backdrop for all our lives.

Most importantly this application

- Ignores the advice of the Council's own conservation officer, and is an old fashioned 70's style block

- Provides no plans for the displaced carparking at the station
- Fails to relate to the proposed transport interchange because there is, as yet, no plans for it
- Does not take account of the developing Special Planning Document.

Therefore this application has to be refused. John Bothamley



### Our new Chairman, Jeremy Milln writes

**It is worth reminding ourselves sometimes what makes a good building. What is it about the applicant's offering that fails in so many areas? What is it about it that makes this the wrong location, of inappropriate scale, and of feeble design? What is it about it that is destined to fail socially and environmentally?** Full letter on Herefordshire Council's web site

3.2 We can see that the 183841 offering is from the stable of student residential blocks of the 1970s, long discontinued elsewhere. Lofty, unimaginatively designed blocks, inherently unadaptable to changing social or economic circumstances, often on busy intersections by which they are severed from communities, are elsewhere a thing of the past; indeed many of them – such as those at Edgbaston – are already the subject of demolition. So we are entitled to ask, why here in Hereford we are so slow to learn these lessons? How is it that here in Hereford we are seeing examples like this which – desperate for the short-term fix – demonstrate a lack of vision for the long-term?

5.5 A more contemporary approach,

one which would today be adopted in other historic cities, would be to take cues from the surroundings and historical context of the site. We supported the Conservation officer who wrote this in response to the 181583 combined health centre application: *There should be a clear architectural concept and that the building should promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. It has not been demonstrated that the character of the townscape has positively influenced the design. As such the proposals would not accord with policies 60 and 63/64 of the NPPF and policies LD1 and SS6 of the adopted Hereford Core Strategy.* The comment is no less applicable to the current 183841 application.

### Hereford Area Plan

#### Steering Group meetings 25th October 2018

Official minutes on HC website.

With only one elected member present HCS again highlights our concern that this will be an officer driven plan rather than one inspired by our elected representatives. There is to be lots of transport modelling following on from the Site Options consultation, but this steering group member doesn't understand how you can model traffic predictions without knowing which sites are to be selected for development, and when that might be likely.

An update on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and whether there should be regulation highlighted the complexities of the situation; not least how many HMOs are there, is there a real problem, how many in an area is "acceptable" etc. Work continues.

A timetable is to be produced for the remaining stages of the work, likely to be interrupted by the local elections in May; and there is to be consideration of a review of the conservation area. Meanwhile Allies and Morrison continue to work on the Design Special Planning Document with an interim report promised for December, HCS is included in the review of this work as it proceeds.

#### 13th December 2018

The promised Design Special Planning Document (SPD) interim report was not available but members were promised a copy before Christmas by email. Unfortunately this did not happen but a draft report was received by email on

4th January 2019. At over 100 pages it is described as a "draft" document which is not what I was expecting. Group members can make initial comment by the 13th January in order that the public consultation can still be undertaken from late January into March. Clearly this leaves little time for HAP members to have any real input into the report, especially as at 4th January there is no scheduled HAP meeting.

The document will describe preferred materials, massing limits and views to be maintained etc. but there will be no direction as to preferred locations for car parking etc.. These visions will be added, I think, by members of the HAP and there have been many proposals, not least by the Hereford BID and ourselves. Concern was expressed that there will be three public consultations in the Spring. JB

### Cyber Security Centre

Construction work will start on this new £9million project in the Enterprise Zone (EZ) in the spring –making the region a magnet for high-tech firms. Plans for this ambitious project cleared a critical hurdle after Herefordshire Council approved the launch of a new joint venture company with the University of Wolverhampton to build the centre at Skylon Park. Subject, of course, to planning consent which is fast track especially for the EZ.



#### Steven Thomas of Watkins Thomas

Steven Thomas first joined the company in 1987, and became Director of Watkins Thomas Ltd in 2012. Born in Hereford in 1964, Steve graduated with a BSc. in Estate Management in 1986; is a Fellow of the National Association of Estate Agents (FNAEA) and a Member of the Association of Residential Letting Agents (MARLA).

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### Studytel Penryn

A site in Cornwall that will be redeveloped to provide student accommodation, employment space and a café. The student accommodation will include a mix of self-contained studios and cluster apartments, with a shared kitchen and communal space for more than 500 students.

Gary Wilkinson from Studytel, the company behind the scheme, said: "We have spent 18 months working with the authority, Falmouth University, the University of Exeter and the local community to deliver a scheme that will provide many benefits to the local and wider economy."

Why has our student accommodation development not been progressed in this way?

## MEETINGS

18th October 2018

### AGM and update on HCS activities

David Fowler, our most reliable of treasurers, chaired the AGM which included the election of two new members, Barbara Ferris and Alan Bucknell, and the elevation to chairman of Jeremy Milln.

It's been quite a year with the usual regular meetings of illustrated lectures and a summer study outing. In particular our Upcycling Cycling meeting inspired us to draw up a Declaration of 17th May 18 highlighting what we believe should be included when considering the future of the City. Jess Read's presentation inspired us to commission her firm, Witteveen and Bos, to provide an Inspiration Study for the further improvements needed to Holme Lacy Road down to the Straight Mile. We were further inspired to challenge Herefordians, and especially candidates of the County elections next May, to come up with their ideas of how the City should be developed.

We agreed to hold a Hustings event in April 19 to hear the political parties commit to what they intend to do. The evening was rounded off by Jeremy Milln with a concise summary of the need to preserve, and respect, the past whilst still developing the future. He admitted this is not an easy task but that high standards of design must be demanded for our City centre. The revised NPPF confirms this and will help us all create that great City that we deserve and can achieve.

### Big Meet 9

The ninth major gathering of the Place Alliance will take place at UCL in London on Tuesday 2nd of April 2019. Entitled "Placemaking and Design Leadership" this organisation continues to promote the ideas of the Farrell Report of 2014. HCS is an enthusiastic member.

15th November 2018

### Two views on Housing

Local commercial agent Steve Thomas gave a spirited appraisal of the local housing market based on the market economy. James Murphy of the Hereford Community Land Trust (HCLT) spoke about the need to build communities, which would be partly supported by grants, and is a hugely creditable aim but with many hurdles to jump. HCLT ran two seminars in November hoping to encourage more support and members.

13th December 2018

### Hereford BID

Mike Truelove spoke fluently about all the initiatives the Hereford BID is accomplishing, promoting Hereford as the "happening city". Not just keeping it clean but stimulating street events, especially in the 5pm to 7pm quiet period, inspiring us all to stay on after shopping visits. The BID is an inspiration to us all – efficiently delivering their services.

### John writes to BBLP

At the Civic Society we are disappointed about further delays in the consultation process for the road improvements in Holme Lacy Road. The Inspiration Study that HCS funded in the summer, and delayed publication until October to be in line with Balfour Beatty Living Place's (BBLP) work, remains waiting to be discussed. I note that now this is due in mid February. I think I represent the views of many residents when I write that we are frustrated by a lack of time table for consultation and delivery. I appreciate the work has to fit in to the various funding streams; but I'm concerned that this work could be another St Owens Street receiving the attention of at least three major studies overseen by Jarvis, Amey and BBLP.

Any chance of a programme that we can all work to please?

JB

## OPINIONS

Stanley Vincent

Consent was surprisingly granted for Timpson's portacabin outside ASDA; this is an increase in retail space in an "edge of town" location. The planning officer's report stated "The proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on the vitality and viability of the town centre". Of course it will, customers will choose to stay out of the centre where they could potentially buy from other retail uses. Therefore it will have an adverse effect. Delegated decisions must work strictly to the guidance. Out of town retail has done for city centres, we must do all we can to main some vitality there.

Nick writes

Thanks for posting the latest issue of HCS's PLACE magazine on Hereford Voice. There's some really good stuff in there and lots of sensible architectural observations.

Regarding the Link Road why:

- has it taken HC almost 12 months to paint the cycle path lines?
- does the road remain un-named almost a year after its opening?
- are ALL the pedestrian-controlled crossings programmed to allow less than 10 seconds to cross wide carriageways?
- did the directional gantry alongside the rail bridge suddenly disappear?



## Forthcoming Events

All meetings at the Kindle Centre, by ASDA, Belmont, Hereford HR2 7JE  
7.00pm refreshments for a 7.30pm start

EXCEPT April see below.

Thursday 17th January 2019

### 100 years ago: A Cathedral School boy's diary of 1919

Illustrated talk by historian Dr Howard Tomlinson, formerly Headmaster of Hereford Cathedral School

Thursday 21st February 2019

### Life in an Early Modern Suburb

Rich and Poor in St. Martin's Parish  
Illustrated talk by historian and author David Whitehead

Thursday 21st March 2019

### Houses of Hereford

Illustrated talk by author Dr Nigel Baker, about his new book.

Thursday 11th April 2019

### Earlier time - 6.45 for 7pm

Courtesy of Herefordshire & Ludlow College, Folly Lane, Hereford. HR1 1LS

## HUSTINGS

What plans do our political candidates have for our built environment if they are elected in May 2019?

A lively structured Pecha Kucha meeting with all parties invited.

Each will be able to show five slides in a five minute presentation.

Then questions from YOU

## Join Us

If you want to influence the future of the City and enjoy lectures and discussions about the built environment, old and new, JOIN US - your membership fee covers printing and distribution of our magazine, meeting expenses, web site and publicity costs. It does not cover members' time - all of which is freely given.

**Subscription: Single £15 pa. / two memberships at the same address £25 pa.** Questions?

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## Join By Cash

Pay at one of our meetings.

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