

PRICELESS

# Holme Lacy – Straight Mile East West Corridor (3 km / 2 miles)

- + Opportunities to upgrade to a healthy transport corridor
- + Potential for attractive heritage architecture and landscape views along route
- + Links up to existing off-road circular walking and cycling routes
- Busy fast moving traffic including HGVs with noise and air pollution
- High movement, low place ratio
- Lack of safe pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and crossings
- Not an enabling or pleasant environment for more vulnerable users such as children, older adults or Disabled people.



# Place

Hereford  
Civic Society

The City's built environment forum

## Active Transport measures NOW

## A call to action from Chairman David Fowler

Hereford Inspiration Study: Holme Lacy – Straight Mile

Spring 2020 **Bos**

## Amazing places to find post Corona

New pre-war housing designs built in Hereford

## Housing Design Report

Worrying times for Local Plan

## Planning Matters

HCLT news updates

## Hereford Now

William Grange

Wednesday 22nd July 2020 (assumes C-19 travel restrictions have been lifted)

### Summer Outing Berkeley Castle & Dr Edward Jenner's House & Museum

Leominster Bridge Street car park leave at 8.45am  
Hereford Merton Meadow car park leave at 9.10am,

**Berkeley Castle** arrive 11 am - coffee/ tea homemade cake  
Guided tour of the castle (takes around 75 minutes).

Medieval kitchens, imposing Great Hall, elegant State Apartments, magnificent furniture, rare paintings by Dutch and English masters, Elizabethan tapestries and more. Eight acres of terraced gardens and Butterfly House  
Lunch (not included in price) The Yurt restaurant serves snacks and light lunches or bring you own picnic.

**Dr Edward Jenner's House & Museum.** 30 minute introductory talk - a visionary country doctor who pioneered smallpox vaccination and the science of immunology.  
**St. Mary's church**, notable for its medieval wall paintings, detached 17C tower.  
Return ETA Hereford 6.00pm and Leominster 6.20pm.

Cost: £38.00pp Non-members welcome (same price)

**Booking:**

e-mail: David Fowler david693fowler@btinternet.com  
post: The Stable Cottage, Kingsthorpe, Herefordshire HR2 8AJ

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the city's built environment forum

## PREFACE

You might well be reading this through our website rather than in hard copy. This awful virus comes at a time when we are reviewing the best way to communicate with our members and the wider public. Currently, though perhaps environmentally a tad unfriendly, we believe PLACE is a real object, a moment in time, in which our and other views are expressed. Many of us are overwhelmed with often transitory information continuing playing across our screens. But we do embrace the web – monthly member updates on events, and a web site that is an archive on Hereford, together with pointers to other sources. This quarter the hard copy run is reduced so that we can stay true to our advertisers and because this issue has connections with the Annual Lecture, unfortunately postponed, when print copies will be available. If the web site is new to you – you now have the opportunity of many back numbers. Nearly 50 inspiring articles by David Whitehead of Amazing Places for a start! Committee members will also be holding hard copies from the middle of April, our usual publication date. Surely we must try to retain as much of our previous existences as we possibly can?

John Ruskin wrote 'Our duty is to preserve what the past has had to say for itself, and to say for ourselves what shall be true for the future. Kevin McCloud expands 'Doing both these things well and clearly, however, is a mark of a civilised culture and we have come to recognise that those cities in which the historical fabric is conserved and celebrated alongside confident, contemporary architecture are places that score most highly for liveability. Making sense of this past, after all,

helps us understand where we are and where we're going.'

These two distinguished commentators on the built environment encapsulate what Hereford Civic Society stands for; a forum where we address these issues head on. In this issue of Place we especially look at recent housing design reports of which there is a plethora, which are reviewed on pages 4 and 5, and much more – please keep in touch and express your opinions.

John Bothamley – Editor

### Contributors

**John Bothamley** – Former chairman of HCS, and developer

**James Copeland** – Cyclist and Design Consultant

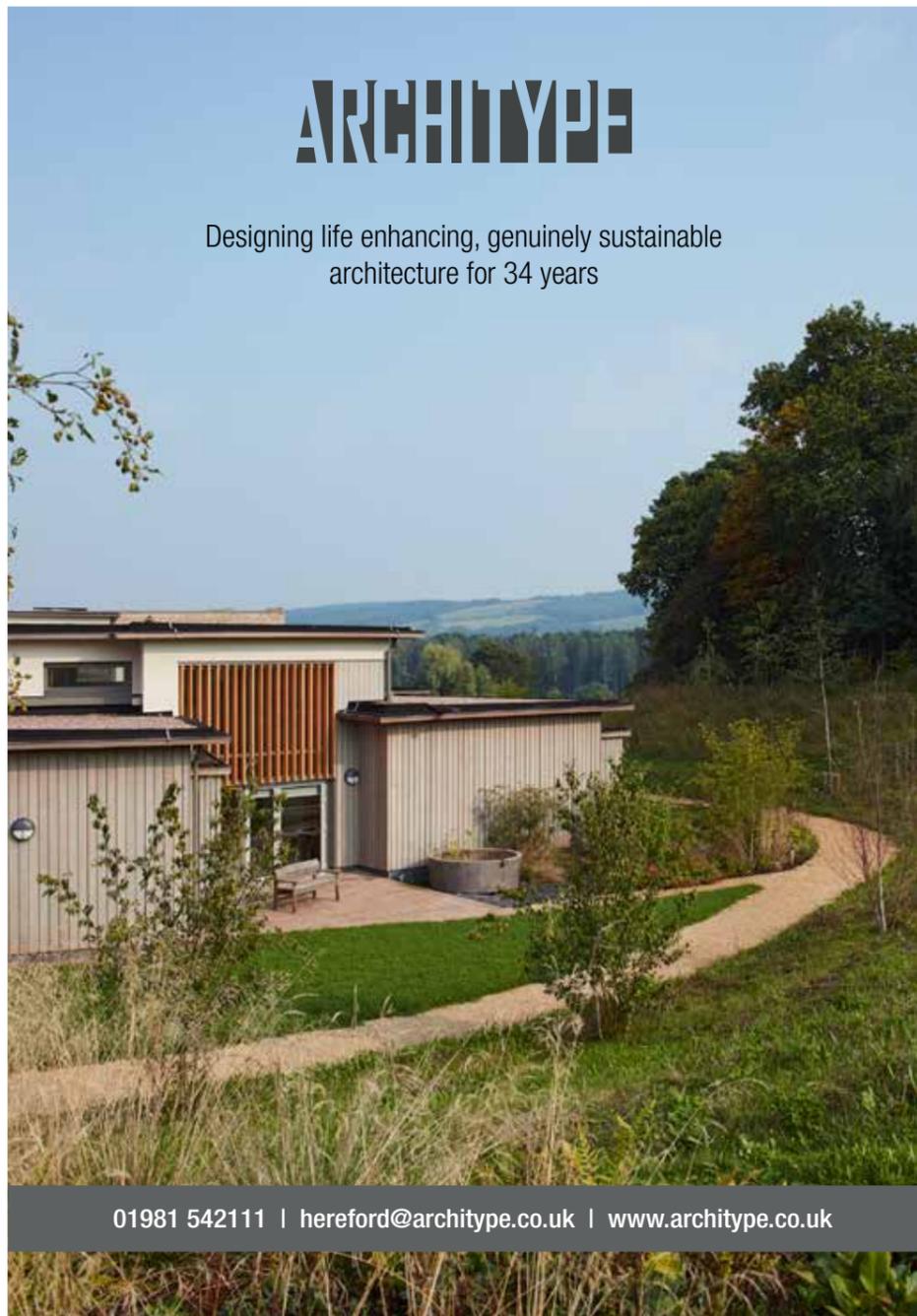
**David Fowler** – Accountant

**Andy Johnson** – Herefordshire Community Land Trust

**David Whitehead** – Hereford historian and author

**Design & Layout** – Gary Nozedar

**Front Page:** Holme Lacy Road Inspiration from HCS



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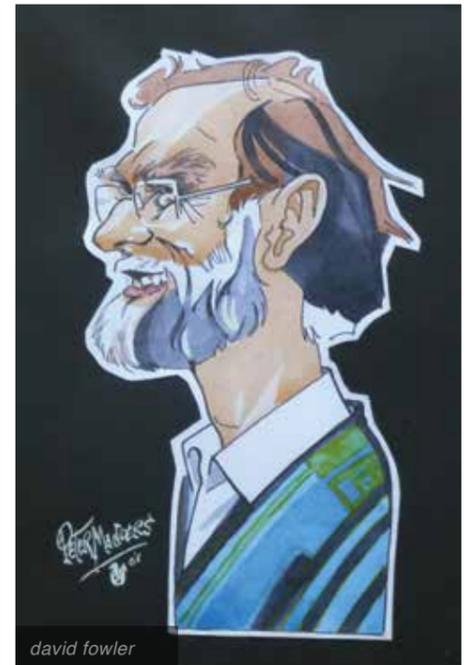
## DAVID FOWLER

### Chairman HCS

HCS wants to see early action on Active Transport measures.

Public Consultation on alternative transport options to those forming part of the Hereford Transport Package and South Wye Transport Package ended on 31st March 2020. New green field housing developments will lead to additional journeys to the city centre and other suburbs for school, work and recreation. If we are to reduce dependence on the motor car, improved provision has to be made for cycling and walking and patronage of public transport must increase. The green credentials of the current Council Administration should mean that they support the active transport measures included in the Hereford and South Wye Transport packages as well as other proposals - Holme Lacy Road Phase II and St. Owen Street Cycle contra-flow which the previous administration consulted on.

We have one road crossing the Wye and we hear a lot about that! There are three pedestrian and cycle crossings (four including the Old Bridge). What is required are clearly defined pedestrian and cycle routes or shared spaces that fan out on both sides of the river from each crossing to provide safe connections from home to work, shopping, school and recreation. Public Transport - electric buses maybe the answer, but perhaps current arrangements with bus operators first need to change? Current fares/ service frequencies don't encourage patronage, cross town journeys involving a change of bus are too expensive. Should existing routes serve additional city centre destinations? City bus station/ Old Market/ The Courtyard/ railway station transport hub/ new medical centre/ County Hospital/ Maylords for High Town and Broad Street for the Cathedral? Or introduce a frequent inner city service running clockwise stopping at each of the above, free transfer from other bus/rail services? Light Rail, like new roads take time to construct. In contrast, Active Transport measures are relatively low tech delivering benefits incrementally as



construction progresses.

Keep the comments coming in, and continue the lobbying of councillors and letters to the Hereford Times. Keeping our visions in the public eye is the only way we'll get the best adopted. Both those for and against the west river crossing appear to be in favour of the Active Transport Measures contained in the Hereford and South Wye Transport packages. So let's do it. David Fowler

## NEWS & COMMENT

### Modular construction

Some of us built pre-fabricated homes decades ago but the latest idea is a call from Julie James, Welsh minister, for factory-made 'modular' housing to be used to speed up the number of high-quality social and affordable homes being built across Wales. A strategy to kick-start the modern methods of construction (MMC) industry. MMC includes various construction methods from new materials and technologies, to off-site manufacturing, which either replace or complement traditional methods of construction. Just another acronym?



### Transform the Yard

During the summer the Courtyard Capital Expansion Project will set the stage for the transformation of the much loved venue to improve customer experience and provide improved facilities for their outreach programmes.

### Coventry

The Twentieth Century Society has outlined its concerns about plans to redevelop the grade II listed former Civic Centre in Coventry saying 'The way Coventry was rebuilt after the devastation of the blitz during World War II was completely visionary and a defining period in the city's history and yet, apart from the cathedral, little is being done to protect this important period of architecture. Coventry will be the UK City of Culture in 2021, just beating Hereford, has designated a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) covering the city centre and has been awarded further funding through the Historic High Streets scheme managed by Historic England, however, all available money has been ring fenced for pre-1939 buildings. The

## NEWS & COMMENT

council has been without an in-house conservation officer for the past two years.

### Beryl Bikes

There's no getting away from the statistics - the Beryl Bikes hire scheme in Hereford has been a huge success. Launched in August of last year, with an initial 75 bikes, in the first six months some 45,000 miles were ridden, 1,150 rides a week, 164 rides a day. Since then, the number of bikes has more than doubled to 186 and more bays are being added to the current 39 all the time. Schemes are well established in London and Bournemouth, recently launched in Watford and being rolled out in Norwich and New York, so it's great to see Hereford flying the flag in such company.



Aside from a few acts of vandalism at the start of the Hereford scheme, the bikes now seem well integrated into the life of the City, with 23% of riders stating they would have otherwise gone by car. With such demand, it begs the question

as to how much longer we will have to wait for well designed infrastructure in the City, and no doubt many more would ride if they felt they could do it without using the City's badly maintained and gridlocked roads. A criticism of the Beryl scheme is the issue of 'untidy' parking and it's true that bikes parked both in and out the designated bays can be pushed over rather too easily, leaving a potential hazard for pedestrians. We asked Beryl for a comment on this and they said many factors were taken into consideration when planning bay locations. They held walks with organisations like Vision Links and consulted with the RNC. They didn't directly address our concern about being pushed over, and it's hard to see a solution without introducing street furniture/clutter, but, for now, if anyone is troubled by inconsiderate parking or other issues, please contact Pedicargo in Hereford [www.herefordpedicabs.com](http://www.herefordpedicabs.com) and it will be quickly dealt with. JC

### Edgar Street

Plans to smarten up the stadiums into a £14m redevelopment are to be put to a cabinet meeting in early April with the initial costs of £1.7m to cover just the planning and developing a fully costed design which will include an accommodation block with around 103 en-suite units for student or key workers. This appears to be expensive at c12% of the total build cost for consultants, HCS would like to know about the tendering process for the design.

## HEREFORD NOW

### William Grange, Friars' Street.

How easy it is to be critical when assessing the design quality of new buildings. I like to start considering the bits that inspire me and then try to justify those which I don't understand. This is a block of 54 similar retirement flats made to look a piece in it's own right from outside on which it succeeds; but not so well done when considering the very long, straight, internal corridor. The usual conflict between developer numbers and decent design. A design review panel could have provided grounded support for improvement.

Externally the bricks don't quite say Herefordshire - local reference is high on my list of essentials, and the large rendered panels are too commercial. What is uncomfortable is the juxtaposition of the William Grange drive way and the entrance road to the Museum Storage next door; a fence with hard surfaces on both sides? At the planning stage this was queried by HCS and clearly the complexities of two parties negotiating a much prettier option was just too much. JB



### Hereford Times

HCS congratulates the Hereford Times on their move to Rotherwas, having moved several times since their set up in 1832 the Editor - John Wilson - has a long history to follow as he, and his small team, endeavour to present to us all what really is happening in Hereford and the wider county. Not an easy job.

### Folkestone visit by DF

Our chairman visited the innovative Urban Room in Folkestone formally a Tourist Information Office, positioned in a centrally located town centre car park. More details - next quarter.



### Not more legislation

Politicians seem to like creating more confusion and complexity if they can enact some piece of new legislation in their name. If a purchaser has a problem with the purchase of a new house there is a complicated legal process for seeking redress. But this is not enough for Housing Secretary, Robert Jenrick, who wants to establish a New Homes Ombudsman to protect home buyers from 'shoddy work'. 'It's completely unacceptable that so many people struggle to get answers when they find issues with their dream new home' he said.

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# HOUSING DESIGN

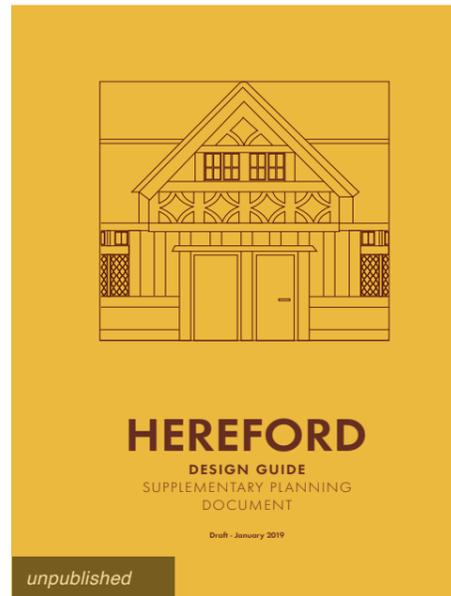
This quarter we consider the vexed question of housing design and the creation of new places. It is a complicated business with developers saying they provide what the public wants and aesthetes wanting to see much better design. There has been a plethora of reports recently and HCS thought we should review them. It is a sad fact to say most of what we have read has all been written before. In our turn we have spent much of the last ten years pontificating about schemes and projects that we would like to see; but we are only a society, a forum for people interested in our built environment, who have no power to actual effect change. Equally the authors of all these reports should not be too harshly criticised. Criticism should be squarely levelled at our democratic system that has largely failed to change the processes we employ to create new places.

We provide links when we have reported in editions of PLACE, all easily found on our web site, [www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk) All reports easily found via Google. Somewhat disappointingly there is no one report we can highlight as being

the perfect blueprint for the future; although we were much inspired by the reasoning and aims of the Farrell Report. Too much emphasis by politicians wanting to leave something behind, even if it is only a beautifully presented report. John Bothamley

## Hereford Design Guide

Commissioned by the previous HC administration the draft report circulated in the spring of 2019 received a lot of negative publicity. Not least it was more a rambling description of beautiful Hereford together with the author's, Allies and Morrison, ideas for how we should remodel some areas of the City. Not the purpose of a design guide. One has only to look at Cornwall's Design Guide to see what could be achieved. It has remained unpublished. What a waste of time by the volunteer members (including HCS) of the Steering Group of the Hereford Area Plan.



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## A Housing Design Audit for England

This well researched report under taken by Prof. Camona and his team from UCL was launched at the Place Alliance Big Meet 10 on 21 January 2020. Visiting over 140 new build housing developments, including Bullingham Lane and Holmer in Hereford, the report is not positive. The headlines:-

**A small improvement** in housing design quality nationally since the last audits that were conducted between 2004 and 2007, **but new housing design is overwhelmingly 'mediocre' or 'poor'**.

Because the improvement is from a low base, today the design of new housing developments are still overwhelmingly 'mediocre' or 'poor' (three quarters of the audited projects).

**Many schemes (one in five) should have been refused planning permission** outright.

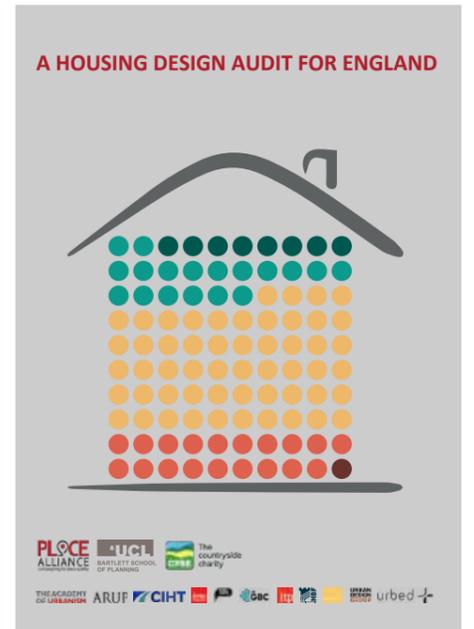
The design of many others should have been improved before relevant permissions were granted.

**The potential exists for good design everywhere** with a wide distribution of 'good' and 'poor' scores across the country shows that it is clearly possible to deliver high quality housing environments (and substandard ones) right across the country.

**Very patchy practice** regionally with the most improved region being the **West Midlands**, with the South East and Greater London (the best performing region) also showing very significant improvements.

**Resident satisfaction contrasts with community dissatisfaction**

Whilst new residents are generally



happy with their environments, this contrasts strongly with the views of local communities (as represented by their local councillors) who regret what they see as too much overdevelopment and a loss of local character. Both residents and communities see a negative impact from unduly car and roads dominated environments.

**Use of design codes and design review process** deliver enhanced design outcomes - fact. (p83)

## The Farrell Review

**Ed Vaisey MP commissioned this report in 2013 'Good design builds communities, creates quality of life, and makes places better for people to live, work and play in. I want to make sure we're doing all we can to recognise the importance of architecture and reap the benefits of good design.'**

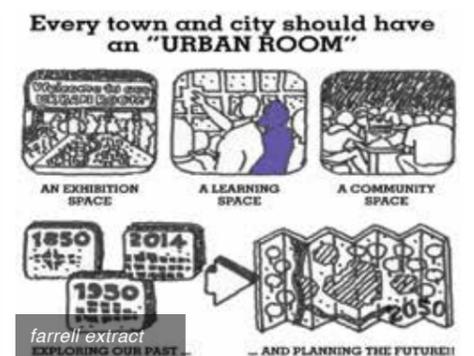
**This remains my strong view and I am very pleased to see that the principle of quality of life and community cohesion is well captured in the report. The built environment around us, and the architecture that comprises it, are things that no one can avoid, and upon which nearly all of us from every age and background have a view. I hope this report is the beginning of a dialogue within the industry about how we can build on our successes and recognise the critical importance of architecture and design in all aspects of our lives'.**

The Review suggested the acronym PLACE should be used, based on the core skills sets of Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Conservation and Engineering. There are five cross-cutting themes which run throughout the report.

Many well drawn arguments set the Farrell Report apart and perhaps should have been more widely embraced. It stimulated the formation of the Place Alliance (of which HCS is an active member) and raised the level of debate, yet again, and gave us the rebranded title of our magazine!

**On the five year anniversary of the publication of the report (2019) these main achievements include -**

- Architecture moving from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- The House of Lords establishing the first ever Select Committee on the Built Environment
- The Government recruiting a Chief Architect
- The Greater London Authority (GLA) and LB Croydon setting up PLACE Review panels



- Public Practice placing architects and urban designers into local authority planning departments
  - More than 15 Urban Rooms throughout the country, where anyone can go to find out about the past, present and future of their place (HCS actively working towards one in Hereford)
  - The Place Alliance being established as a movement campaigning for place quality
  - The London School of Architecture creating a new model for architectural education
  - The National Arts and Place Consortium promoting the role of the arts in the built environment
- HCS Full report on original report - PLACE Summer 2014

# HOUSING DESIGN

## West Midlands Design Charter

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) launched its design charter – apparently the first of its kind in the UK. The charter, developed through a series of workshops attended by the 12 authorities in the WMCA, defines what good design looks like and acts as a blueprint for anyone looking to gain planning permission in the region. Over a period of six months, the group whittled down ‘hundreds of pages’ of ideas into 12 core principles.

**Character** Developers must demonstrate an understanding of the local context and provide benefit to local communities. **Community and Mobility** Proposals should integrate into existing and planned transport networks while also promoting walking, cycling and public transport use. **Future Readiness** Developments need to make clear, specific commitments to carbon reduction and be adaptable to the changing requirement of communities. **Health and Well-being** Well-being and good mental health should be promoted through developments and access to nature, and spaces should be provided for physical activity. **Engagement and Stewardship** Key stakeholders should be able to influence design from an early stage, while public spaces should be designed to enhance civic pride. **Delivery** Ultimately, developers are expected to promote and deliver genuine social value throughout the development and construction process.



How likely is it that these principles will have a real impact on planning in the region? ‘I think there’s quite a lot of greenwashing out there. We’re not interested in greenwash – we’re interested in real, transformational change in this region that meets those agendas,’ said Louise Wyman, design lead at the WMCA and director of strategy and engagement at Homes England. The charter is not statutory and it is therefore up to each local authority to incorporate the six principles of the WMCA’s design charter into their planning policies.

## National Design Guide

The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The National Design Guide, illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government’s collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools. Especially important chapters highlighted below.

**Context** is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings. According to the guide, well-designed places take into account site features and surrounding context, using baseline studies as a starting point for design. They integrate into their surroundings and are responsive to local history, culture and heritage

**Movement** of people is an important consideration of good design. There should be a “clear pattern of streets” that are safe and accessible, functional efficiently for a range of users, prioritise other means of getting around over the car, promote activity and social interaction and incorporate “green infrastructure”

## And another report coming

Based on the National Design Code, the outcome of a design code consultation in early 2020 and the findings of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission a National Model Design Code will be published soon setting out detailed standards for key elements of successful design.

The code is expected to set a baseline for local planning authorities to take into account when determining planning applications. The Government expects local authorities to develop their own codes, based on the national model, to suit local needs and environments. Yet another beautiful report that will be full of lovely pictures, written by successful people, paid huge consultancy fees for the ‘ordinary people’ (quote from the Building Better, Building Beautiful Report) to live in. Enough of all this advice and loveliness. Let’s get some real policies in place to effect real change – community involvement but most of all action and delivered visions. This is why HCS is

promoting an **Urban Room** – see our **Winter 2019/20 edition of PLACE** – being a focus for the City from which can be developed a great future for the City. We don’t want any more reports. Post Corona there has to be a new political force that helps to speed democratic decision making – we know what to do let us make it happen. Let’s create our Urban Room as a focus for ‘drawing conclusions’ and putting a vision in place. Then developers and individuals can build the new environment with something near to what we all would probably like to see. Human scale places which make us feel good. Here’s to the future.

## Living with beauty: report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission

Led by aesthete, the late, Sir Roger Scruton a group of experts from across the design and consulting sector pontificate about the sort of beautiful place they believe we should inhabit. It is difficult to remain objective reading sentences like ‘impersonal structures that challenge the ordinary resident’s sense of belonging’.

‘We don’t have spare land to play with…… ordinary people…… need some kind of ‘gentle density’. The commissioners are all successful people but disproportionately selected from the privately educated sector Whilst stating their research was countrywide across 30 locations it can’t be ignored that only Newcastle and Manchester represent the entire north of the country in spite of being home to c20% of the population.

The commission had 3 primary aims:

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

The report is beautifully presented, designed for hard copy rather than web based access, and runs to nearly 200 pages. A lot of the content is yet another diatribe on creating real places inspired by communities, reducing car use etc. etc. It is largely valid stuff until

it veers into the impractical. Community involvement can’t happen until there are broad opportunities and guidelines – not every development can be inspired from the bottom up. It is keen to see the promised National Model Design Code from the Government, although somewhat sceptical. Then they want to see a stewardship Kite-mark; more administration, more delay; a Minister for Place and a chief Place-maker in all Local Authorities. It has all been said before. John Bothamley – Editor.

### Herefordshire architect comments

‘The ‘Living With Beauty’ document does not investigate the interior of buildings, and therefore does not properly analyse the effect of living within any given built environment on a person or family’s quality of life. It also cannot therefore properly investigate the relationship of buildings to their surroundings’.

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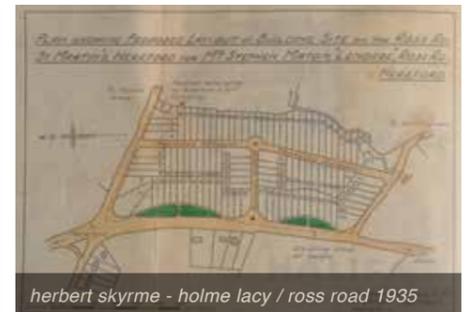
# AMAZING PLACES OF HEREFORD

## A Box of Delights

The editor said: 'Write something about housing'. This brought to mind an event many years ago when I bought a cardboard box (Lot 32), of miscellaneous papers relating to housing in Hereford dating from 1936-1952. I was attracted by the large number of 'blueprints' (mainly brown) of house designs for that period. There were also some notebooks and a couple of brochures. I imagined it was the random scrapings from a defunct builder's office. The c.50 drawings (elevations and plans) represent a cross-section of building styles, some radically modernist, others more traditional and in the Arts and Crafts manner. Most are quite modest houses, detached and semi-detached, providing three bedrooms. Details are given of floor area, usually around 1000 square feet. There is an immense variation in detail albeit a common feature, shared by the more modernist dwellings, is the inventive use of Crittall windows. On the other hand, the traditional houses retain multi-light sashes. It was always my intention to walk around the thirties suburbs of Hereford and locate built examples of the houses illustrated. My impression was that this handy set of designs might have formed a useful portfolio of detail, which a local builder might take with him when meeting potential clients. Since the 18th century builders had been purchasing plots, on designated development land and then selling them to individuals who within a restricted range could choose a style

with an opportunity to modify some of the detail. Within the collection there was a prospectus for 'The Ross Road and Holme Lacy Road Building Estate', which became the area bounded by the two main roads mentioned and Webtree Avenue and Dinedor Avenue. There is no date but from other evidence it is c.1935. The land belonged to Mr Stephen Maton of Ross Road and the lay-out plan is by Herbert Skyrme, architect, (1871-1944) for 105 houses. Skyrme may have been the architect for the houses on the estate. According to Brooks and Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire* (2012), Skyrme is 'the only interwar architect worth mentioning... a pupil of Kempson, he executed a number of pleasant buildings in a traditional style, but is perhaps best remembered for his excellent restoration of the Boothall, Hereford and Wellbrook Manor, Peterchurch. Perhaps my cache of drawings belonged to Skyrme who collaborated with Edward Bettington on the Pengrove Estate and built his own house there (No.59) in 1913. His house-style was rough-casting with Tudor-bethan details e.g. the Westfields Council Housing 1925-7. The City Council laid down a detailed specification for the Ross Road development. Two storey dwelling houses were to form the frontages of the main roads, with bungalows allowed within the core of the estate. No house was to cost less than £750 or £1200 for

a semi-detached pair. At the back of the brochure there are advertisements for potential builders e.g. T. Howard & Son, Commercial Road, Ernest Bevan, Whitecross Street plus W. Rowberry, electrical engineers and decorators and the monumental masons, T.A. King, offering 'garden ornaments of every description'. Lindsay Price of Widemarsh Street looked to furnish the completed houses. Inserted in the prospectus is an illustrated catalogue for Sharpe and Fisher Ltd of Pittville St., Cheltenham, purveyors of tiled fireplaces with posh-sounding names like Wyesham, Ivor and Cranmere – advertised by a relaxed pipe-smoking male, listening to a console radio. Among the other items in my collection is a carbon paper duplicating book used for ordering building materials by R.W. Powell, Building Contractor, Kings Acre, Hereford. With the exception of one or two items at the end of the book, these are all dated 1936. A large number of individual projects are mentioned – mostly on a small scale – but materials are generally bought from the West Midlands and South Wales e.g. an 'oriel window' from the Crittall branch office in Birmingham and bricks from Ebbw Vale. Work in and around Breinton is regularly mentioned, plus a small housing estate at Headbrook, Kington, which appears to cause the company quite a lot of heartache. A later notebook, with most of the entries dated 1952 also contains details of relatively minor alterations to work in progress. Among them there is a sketch of a scheme on two plots in Lichfield Avenue, off the Ledbury Road. The cost is worked-out on a four year development. Since most of the houses in Lichfield Avenue were built between 1938 and 1940, this must relate to a section of the street where



herbert skyrme - holme lacy / ross road 1935

it drops down to Sedgefield Road. The earlier part of Lichfield Avenue has a number of houses rather Edwardian in character, which are all very similar except for the design of the chunky front porch, which modulates into various forms as you go up the avenue from Ledbury Road.

The pièce de résistance among my miscellaneous purchases is a fully worked-up plan and elevations for a modernist house to be erected in Whitehorse Street, Hereford for W.A. Meredith Esq. The architect was H.D. Rye of Hereford and the plan is dated 1948. When I am no longer 'self-isolating' I can see some pleasant evenings coming up exploring more thoroughly Hereford's neglected pre-Second War suburbs. David Whitehead



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## Power Plant for Hereford

**Noriker Power Ltd have submitted an application (200967) for an electrical generation and storage facility on a two acre site at Old School Lane close to Wiggin Special Metals. The Planning Statement claims that, as old coal-fired stations close, this will help the UK reach its CO2 reduction targets and respond to National Grid concerns about the reliability of renewables. The Statement goes on to say this will avoid the need for expensive upgrades of Hereford's electricity distribution system as we move from fossil fuels to electricity to heat our homes and power our vehicles.**

The scheme comprises four battery containers (15m long and 4.5m high) and six 1MW generator sets and four 2MW CHP sets, all in noise attenuated containers. A 15m microwave telecoms mast (for remote operation by Western Power Distribution) and various other structures containing inverters, transformers, switchgear, controls, storage, welfare facilities and a substation form part of the application. The Statement cites Local Plan Core Strategy policy SD2 supporting development delivering renewable and low carbon energy and makes much of the opportunities for roof-mounted solar for the surrounding industrial buildings and the installation of EV charging

points supplied directly from an energy hub.

It sounds laudable but the truth is that, as the electricity generation would be from burning natural gas, this is a fossil fuel power plant and should be considered a short-term measure. Use of the batteries can be flexed to accept renewable electricity as this increases but there are, apparently, limitations to capacity of the local grid and Hereford North Primary sub-station which would have to be addressed before they can handle the fluctuations in wind and solar output. The proposal is not supported by a Carbon Life Cycle Analysis and we fear it may frustrate Herefordshire's Climate Change commitments.

## HCS response to Planning Applications

We appreciate receiving your comments and concerns during the consultation period. Our response to HC includes the following wording: "Comments submitted in respect of planning or listed building applications to Herefordshire Council will have been drafted by HCS case-workers to reflect the generality of view of the Society, and do not necessarily reflect the views of all members".

# PLANNING MATTERS

## Hereford CLT

Hereford Community Land Trust (HCLT) has been searching for a site in Hereford on which to build some exemplar affordable homes. Exemplar in that we will seek widespread involvement in the design process from local residents, local bodies and the Civic Society; homes will be built with concern for the environment not just in terms of materials used but also what we can do to improve conditions for local wildlife and the urban streetscape; in that we are concerned with running costs and not just build costs (we will be building to passivhaus standards); we want homes to be truly affordable for local people. The homes will set a high standard for others to match.

Some of the sites we have been investigating were small plots owned by Herefordshire Council, but these have now been caught up in the council's moratorium on disposing of any sites whilst it investigates restarting council house building. However we have now sought pre-planning advice on outline proposals on three other sites. To produce these proposals we have worked with three different architects who are members of HCLT, the sites ranging in size and providing 5, 11 and c.15 homes. Should pre-planning

advice be positive for any of these sites, then we will begin a wider consultation exercise to refine our initial ideas before submitting a full planning application, and the start of the process of raising the necessary capital.

We have, also, come across a further three sites that we will now start investigating; and try to convince the council that they own a number of 'awkward' sites that might well suit a community land trust way of developing a site rather than the historic route adopted by a council. Andy Johnson

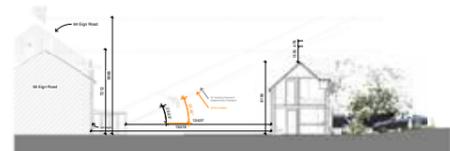
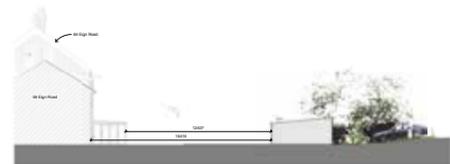
## Planning Applications

### 200331 7 Canal Street

This is another application for overdevelopment, or at the least, an application that need some serious design input. The site plan shows over dominance of the car in this central city location at the expense of amenity space. See Comment on back page.

### 200912 56 Eign Road

Diddy little one bed house, being back development but this is increasing density in the City which is what is needed?



### 200885 Underwoods site

This application for 420 student rooms is of great concern to HCS members and is a Trump like blinkered approach to property development. No reference to current thinking and with the planning committee now essentially disbanded

there is a huge risk this might be nodded through by planning staff afraid of an appeal by the developers. Objections can be viewed on the HC web site, including our own. 17 page Travel Plan makes no mention of NMITE, the author thinking all the students are car sharing to travel to colleges on Folly Lane. Storage for an inadequate number of bicycles (94) and parking for 61 cars when NMITE has a no car policy for students! No amenity space, reference to the unadopted Hereford Design Guide; the Design and Access statement (chapter 2.1) fails to show the new link road and refers as a 'Gateway Site'! (chapter 2.5) has incorrect image of the Rockfield site student accommodation. Reason enough for not accepting this as a valid application. You don't have to be a tree hugger to find this last century style approach to be totally inappropriate in Hereford. Please lobby your councillor NOW.

### Council folly

'Please note that due to Coronavirus and government lockdown we will not be in a position to post site notes therefore this applications has been put on hold, you can however continue to make comments online' What's wrong with the post and a request for a photo from the applicant showing the notice in place? JB



## Phosphates – an update

In the last issue of 'Place' we reported on Herefordshire Council's moratorium on planning applications on land in the River Lugg catchment area and the resulting devastating impact on local construction businesses, even before the Coronavirus shutdown. Little progress has been made in delivering a solution, despite vigorous lobbying by HCILG (Herefordshire Construction Industry Lobby Group).

The Planning Department have, after much pressing, issued an updated Position Statement, but it does very little to move things forward. Cabinet have agreed a £2m spend on a number of 'Integrated Wetlands' and other possible solutions to offset phosphate pollution, but with a rider that a £500 levy be put on every new house built, although the sources of pollution are not being asked to do anything or pay anything. The efficacy, legality or long term management of these wetlands on private property is all unclear. HCILG have met with both constituency MP's The Group also approached Cabinet Member Councillor Ellie Chowns (Green Party) for a meeting but, despite her portfolio covering Environment, Economy and Skills, she declined the invitation and made it clear it was a planning issue and she could not help. It is also relevant that the Core Strategy was adopted in October 2015 and the Framework requires that Local Plans are reviewed every five years ie by the end of this year. How will the current open-ended situation impact on Herefordshire Council's ability to review and update the Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy? Agriculture in Herefordshire is worth

£300m per annum to the local economy and is responsible for the majority of the phosphates entering the water courses (along with discharges from sewage treatment works). The construction industry in Herefordshire is worth £1.2bn per annum to the local economy (ie 4 times as much) and is not responsible for any of the phosphates entering the water courses, yet agriculture continues, unaffected by this moratorium, whilst construction is being shut down over something they have no control over whatsoever. It's a case of the the Nutrient Management Board\* fiddling whilst the local construction industry burns. We deserve better. \*The Nutrient Management Board comprises Herefordshire Council, Powys Council, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, the Environment Agency, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, CABA (WUF), National Farmers' Union and the County Land and Business Association. James Copeland



### 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).

### 5 King Street, Hereford HR4 9BW

Our 'black and white' office is situated just beyond Hereford Cathedral on the left hand side of King Street. Whether you are seller or a buyer, a landlord or a tenant, we are happy to offer advice so why not drop in for a chat? Our experienced staff will be pleased to advise you on sales and rental related matters. Alternatively we can visit and provide a market appraisal of your property, with a view to either selling or letting; our initial visit is without charge or obligation. So if you are thinking of making a move in 2020 contact us now – we look forward to hearing from you.

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01432 272280

## MEETINGS

### Thursday 16th January, 2020

Alex Coppock, RIBA, Director of the award winning local architects Communion provided examples of projects that illustrate his firm's approach and processes that transform spaces into inspiring places, delivering finished products that delight clients.

### Thursday 20th February, 2020

Robert Heath, Dip Arch, RIBA, ARIAS, FSA (Scot) recently arrived in Hereford after a long and successful career in Scotland restoring old stone buildings and structures. Before and after photographs and descriptions of the varied challenges he encountered and remedies adopted were shown. Conversations continued long after the talk's conclusion. David Fowler received a round of applause seeking support for our drive to get the Active Transport measures taken forward.

## OPINIONS

### Over development

Whilst we understand it is natural for any business to attempt to maximise profits it isn't acceptable when over-development occurs. Here it is the responsibility of planners to ensure that consents are only granted when proposals reflect the grain and character of an area.

The intensely developed Alban House (191555) in High Town is just a little



alban house

bit disrespectful of its neighbours with possibly one too many storeys to the east end? But it is well crafted and respects the scale of East Street to the south.

Whereas the proposal currently before planners to the west of Bishops' Meadow is clearly over development not reflecting the local residential nature, by covering most of the site with parking or turning areas and almost no amenity space.

The council must be urged to confirm design and development standards as soon as possible. The Hereford Design Guide (see p 4) hasn't been ratified; apparently a Special Planning Document will be written to set the standards for our new building works, which must include firm guidelines for density of developments. Bring it on asap. SV

### Council Offices

Herefordshire Council currently operates from three core sites for back office staff; Plough Lane, Elgar House and Nelson Centre. But the HC told us in 2009 that Plough Lane was to be the centre for everything, bought in 2009 as a long-term investment. But now, with the closing of Bath Street and getting staff to work from home there will be savings. 'As part of the decision, up to £855k has been agreed to reconfigure working space at Plough Lane' HC press release 24.2.20. BUT this was all reconfigured in 2009. Another million for what and, respectfully, all this under the guidance of the same executive. This must be called in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee. BW

### Compulsory Purchase Powers

Welsh ministers want to give local councils stronger compulsory purchase powers over vacant land and redundant buildings to increase the supply of housing. Minister for housing and local government Julie James said: "In towns and villages across Wales we see empty homes, former commercial properties and vacant land, which can often be a huge blight on local communities.

'This government is determined to do all

it can to help build the homes people want and help create jobs closer to people's homes. So the proposals we are making for the CPO process will help local councils deliver this vision by transforming empty houses and vacant land into the homes and places of work people need."

### David Hitchiner



Some HCS members are surprised by the lack of exposure we see of our Council's Leader, David Hitchiner. A man rocketed to power at such a difficult time, but with apparently sound principles. It was harkening to see him take on Bill Wiggin MP after Wiggin's unreasonable criticism over the speed of road repairs from the 'over claimed expenses' MP's confusion over revenue and capital expenditure. Later in March all Herefordshire residents received a 'Corona' letter from the Herefordshire Council's Chief Executive; should this not have come from our leader? Whilst we've never met you David – time we got to know you a bit more – do come to one of our meetings please. JB

### PR tosh

The Budget contains provision to consult on revising the terms of Public Works Loan Board lending to enable local authorities to "continue to invest in housing, infrastructure and frontline services". Specifically, the Budget promises to cut the Housing Revenue Account lending rate for investment in social housing by 1 per cent for authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. This, it argues, will "make an extra £1.15 billion of discounted loans available for local infrastructure projects". What does this really mean to us, as readers of the Press Release? It fails to link to detail, it fails to say it is only the equivalent of threepence/person. The new post corona future will, hopefully, move us to a better Capitalism Mk 2? JB

## Forthcoming Events

We're pressing on – running our forum on all things built environment.

Corona is interrupting us, who knows what will happen? We're hoping to run our summer trip and a full programme from September.

Whether reading on line or in this print run do please keep in touch with us.

David Fowler – Chairman -

[david693fowler@btinternet.com](mailto:david693fowler@btinternet.com)

01981 541058

### Berkeley Castle and Dr Jenner's House & Museum

#### Front page for full details

Our website

[www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk) has the latest information.

### 7th September – 1st November 2020

#### Homage to Local Heroes - Hereford Art Gallery

Local artist and HCS member Sue Edwards, in collaboration with Herefordshire Council's Museum Archives Department, an exhibition that celebrates the influence of Dame Laura Knight RA, David Cox RA and John Ward RA who have had on her own artistic career. All three artists lived and worked in Herefordshire and alongside examples of their work Susan will be exhibiting not only local landscapes but also portraits, interiors and figure studies inspired by the subjects and the techniques of her "local heroes".

**Civic Voice** is well establishing itself as the mouth piece for huge swathes of the population and already has some new dates:-

### 4th and 5th September 2020

Annual Conference, Blackpool with Griff Rhys Jones, CV President; Matthew Camona, Place Alliance chairman; Sue Manns, RTPi President and others.

Each speaker will be representing a different background and profession, from national policy makers to community groups, who are contributing to the national agenda on public participation in placemaking.

### 9th December 2020

Civic Voice AGM 2020 - London

HCS proud to be a member of Civic Voice.

## HCS Contact Details

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