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hereford civic society

the city's built environment forum

Autumn 2011

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Tree images kindly supplied by Archie Miles, tree photographer and expert, from Stoke Lacy.
01432 820588 www.archiemiles.co.uk

The Society usually meets on the last Wednesday of each month, the City's forum for discussion about the built environment.
see back page for further details

www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk

Preface.....

At the Society's AGM, on Wednesday 26th October 2011, a new chair and committee were voted in. For four years the Society has been led by Garry Thomas, bringing expert advice, especially on architectural and planning matters. Now I have taken over the chair, supported by ten committee members, who will each concentrate on a particular subject. (see back page for details) We want to build on the reputation of our Society; as a forum of mature debate about the built environment. Members, and visitors to our events, are passionately interested in the place where we live and work. Whilst there is much more in our lives than the physical environment, it is an ever present backdrop. Our members want that to be pleasing and comfortable; both by preserving the best of the old and enjoying the new and innovative.

Generally we do not have a Society position on matters of controversy. For example, some members are in favour of a second river crossing,

some opposed. However, on matters such as the proliferation of street signage or more trees – see informative article below - I guess we all agree that sense should prevail.

I hope that we can continue to stimulate debate and comment, by seeking out the background information from which we can come to logical conclusions. Our new team is interested in hearing from all with an opinion on how our City should develop – come to one of our lectures and meet the members – we're here to provide that forum from which ideas can spring.

Our invitation is open to all – and especially our politicians. Our Society has no political affiliation; but when political decisions impact on the future of our built environment, then it is difficult not to comment. I intend to lead the Society in a positive and constructive way – let's all enjoy the debate.

John Bothamley



More trees for Hereford : Mike Townsend OBE

Mike is a senior advisor at the Woodland Trust, a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Foresters and holds a Masters degree in Environment, Policy and Society. He has over thirty years experience of working with trees and woodland in urban and rural settings.

Woodlands have a significant and vital role in urban areas as they can:-

Help improve the Green Infrastructure and screen the built environment.

Assist in reducing flooding and capturing pollution.

Offer opportunities for recreation. Provide green routes to work and school.

Attract inward investment, increase property values, and reduce energy consumption.

Improve health, assist wildlife and the connection of people to nature.

Ameliorate the effect of climate changes and more extreme weather events.

Introduction

This article outlines the case for maintaining and increasing tree cover in Hereford City, and suggests generic opportunities for tree planting. Any increase in tree cover is intrinsically linked to development of green infrastructure within the city, and into the surrounding countryside and settlements. It is intended to act as a starting point and discussion document for the development of more specific and tailored plans. (A more detailed version is available on our website)

Particular issues addressed include;

- Climate change adaptation
- Air quality and health
- Flood attenuation
- Biodiversity
- Civic amenity

The case for tree cover in Hereford

Hereford city, in common with other urban settlements, faces a range of challenges in the coming decades; pressure for more housing and other development, an increase in road traffic, and the impacts of a changing climate. These bring an increased risk of flooding, especially surface water flooding, poor air quality, health problems associated with summer heat, reduced availability of green space, and erosion of civic amenity.

Climate change is a key policy driver in health, water management, energy, urban design and many other areas. Climate change is predicted to increase summer droughts, and lead to milder winter temperatures, and higher winter rainfall, especially in the west of the country. There is likely to be an increase in severe weather events including heat waves, higher intensity rainfall and storms.

Investment in adaptation technologies is needed to increase the resilience of urban and rural infrastructure. Adaptation means undertaking measures to reduce the impact of change on society. It is action to reduce risk or capture advantage.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in their 'Hallmarks of a sustainable city' go as far as to say that... "it would be difficult to overstate the vital role that green infrastructure can play in preparing towns and cities for climate change". Good evidence exists of both the need and the economic costs and benefits of urban tree cover. There are a number of ways in which trees can be seen to offer a particular, and cost effective, answer to urban adaptation.

Air quality, urban heat islands and health

Climate change projections, released in June 2009 show that by 2080 under a medium emissions scenarios the West Midlands can expect mean summer temperatures to be between 2°C and 6.1°C warmer than today. This temperature increase would have significant implications for city centres, where urban heat island effect will increase the temperature further, compared to the surrounding suburbs and rural areas. This is important in terms of how physically comfortable it is to live, and work in the city, but it also has an impact on air quality.

Hereford Air Quality Action Plan highlights the air quality issues affecting the city. Whilst these are common to many urban areas, the plan identifies specific risk areas e.g. the nitrous oxide levels along the A49 corridor, which the plan seeks to address

Expected increases in temperature and urban heat island effect, combined with pollution from traffic emissions, and other sources can be expected to exacerbate poor air quality, including increases in ground level ozone. Whilst most of the ground level ozone affecting Herefordshire emanates from the urban conurbations of the West Midlands, any ozone production within the city will add to the problems for the county.

The impact of trees on urban heat island effect is well-known. The combination of direct shade, and evaporative cooling offered by trees, make them a powerful way to reduce urban heat island effect and improve air quality. The layered canopy structure of trees provides a surface area, of between two and twelve times greater than the land areas they cover, able to remove pollutants. The greatest effects are with small groups of trees, located close to urban populations and sources of pollution.

It has been estimated that doubling the tree cover, in the West Midlands alone, would reduce mortality as a result of poor air quality from particulates by 140 people per year.

In addition to the impact of improved air quality, provision of high quality green space, and particularly trees can have a significant impact on physical and mental health, and thus a marked economic impact.

The Campaign for Greener healthcare, and the initiative to establish an NHS Forest, illustrates a growing consensus amongst health professionals, of the importance of trees to peoples' health and wellbeing. The campaign endorses the role of trees in improving air quality and health outcomes. The importance of that role will increase as the climate changes.

"Hereford is vulnerable to increased flood risk"



Water management – flooding

Flooding represents the most frequent severe weather event affecting Herefordshire.

Throughout the UK, winter is predicted to be wetter and summers drier. However there is also a predicted increase in the frequency of very heavy rainfall, including summer storms. Herefordshire has a marked winter maximum rainfall from October to December, with a secondary maxima occurring in July and August. In June and July 2007 several periods of extreme rainfall gave rise to widespread flooding in Herefordshire.

One of the outcomes of the Pitt review, following the 2007 floods, was the increased importance placed on surface water flooding. Surface water flooding is when rain water overwhelms the local drainage system; around two thirds of all the flooding in 2007 was as a result of surface water.

As part of Government plans in England, it has committed to managing surface water more sustainably, including improving the capacity for slow absorption, through the ground, and use of green space for storage of extreme downpours. Water will be increasingly managed on the surface, rather than relying on wholesale upgrade of the sewer system, which is recognised as both a costly and lengthy process.

Clearly surface water flooding is the result of a number of factors, but paramount amongst these is the loss of porous and absorbent surfaces in urban areas able to regulate the flow of surface waters. We know trees make a major contribution to regulating the rate at which rainfall reaches the ground, and contributes to run off. Research by the University of Manchester has shown that increasing tree cover in urban areas by 10 % reduces surface water run-off by almost 6 %. Perhaps more significant, that the total reduction in runoff, slowing the rate at which rainfall reaches the ground, increases the possibility of infiltration, and the ability of engineered drains to take away any excess water.

Hereford, as a designated growth area, is vulnerable to increased flood risk as a result of further housing, and other development. However, considered use of green infrastructure, and increased tree cover, might offer the opportunity for improved management of surface water, which could reduce overall flood risk.

Energy

'The UK low carbon transition plan' announced in August 2009, highlights the role of green space and trees in producing adapted buildings, through providing shade and shelter; contributing to reduction in building energy budgets. Deciduous trees, in particular, provide shading during hot summer months, reducing the need for air conditioning, whilst allowing solar gain to buildings during the winter, reducing the need for heating.

Biodiversity

The world is losing biodiversity at an accelerating rate due, largely, to a combination of habitat loss and climate change. Aside from any intrinsic value, biodiversity is important for helping to maintain the stability of natural systems, and in the supply of a range of 'ecosystem services'. These include flood attenuation, pollination of crop plants, soil conservation and climate regulation.

The Convention on Biological Diversity is an international agreement to which the UK is signatory. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan is the government's response to the convention, and finds local expression in Herefordshire's local biodiversity action plan (LBAP)

The LBAP calls for a range of measures to maintain, and increase, managed urban green space as part of the protecting, and improving the county's biodiversity. These include seeking opportunities to enhance biodiversity in all major developments, through provision of green space, and working with local communities to identify, and develop new, and existing managed green space.

The planning system should protect and maintain existing areas of conservation interest, but should also provide opportunities for developing wildlife and its habitats.

Tree planting and woodland creation, including by individuals, local communities and schools, can help to create new habitat to meet targets under the LBAP.

Civic Amenity and Economic benefits

The beauty of towns and cities arises from a mix of good architecture and design, and the landscape of public spaces. There is strong evidence from other areas of the UK, that improving green infrastructure and the urban environment, helps promote inward investment by creating a more attractive environment for businesses and their staff.

Trees are a vital element of providing structure and texture to the green infrastructure of Hereford, and yet this has been eroded in many places. Maintaining what we have, ensuring future generations of trees to replace those that are being lost, and imaginative creation of more places rich in trees, is central to making Hereford a place people want to live in, visit, and do business in.

Opportunities for increasing tree cover

The policy background outlined in appendix A provides the framework for developing increased tree cover. However real opportunities need to be identified and turned into positive action. Ensuring the continued maintenance of the existing tree stock should be regarded as the starting point for any expansion of tree cover. Many local authorities have seen an erosion of the legacy of Victorian tree planting, and a replacement of mature large crowned trees with smaller crowned more manageable tree species. In many cases, whilst tree numbers have remained static, or even grown, the total canopy cover, which is the functional measure of importance, has reduced.

Opportunities for increasing tree cover could include a range of public and private initiatives, supported by an overall communications campaign. Whilst leadership from local public bodies is important, on average around two thirds of urban trees are in private gardens, other private land and land with restricted public access, such as school grounds, churches and hospitals.

In addition to opportunities to retrofit existing spaces, planning powers should be used to ensure that new developments contribute to the overall green infrastructure of the city. This includes both on-site measures for green infrastructure, and tree planting, as well as planning gain through, for instance, section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Parks and other publicly owned open space

Consideration should be given to increase tree cover in existing publicly owned spaces, in particular within existing parks. Since such land falls within local authority control, and is largely unencumbered by services, this represents amongst the easiest opportunities for tree planting.



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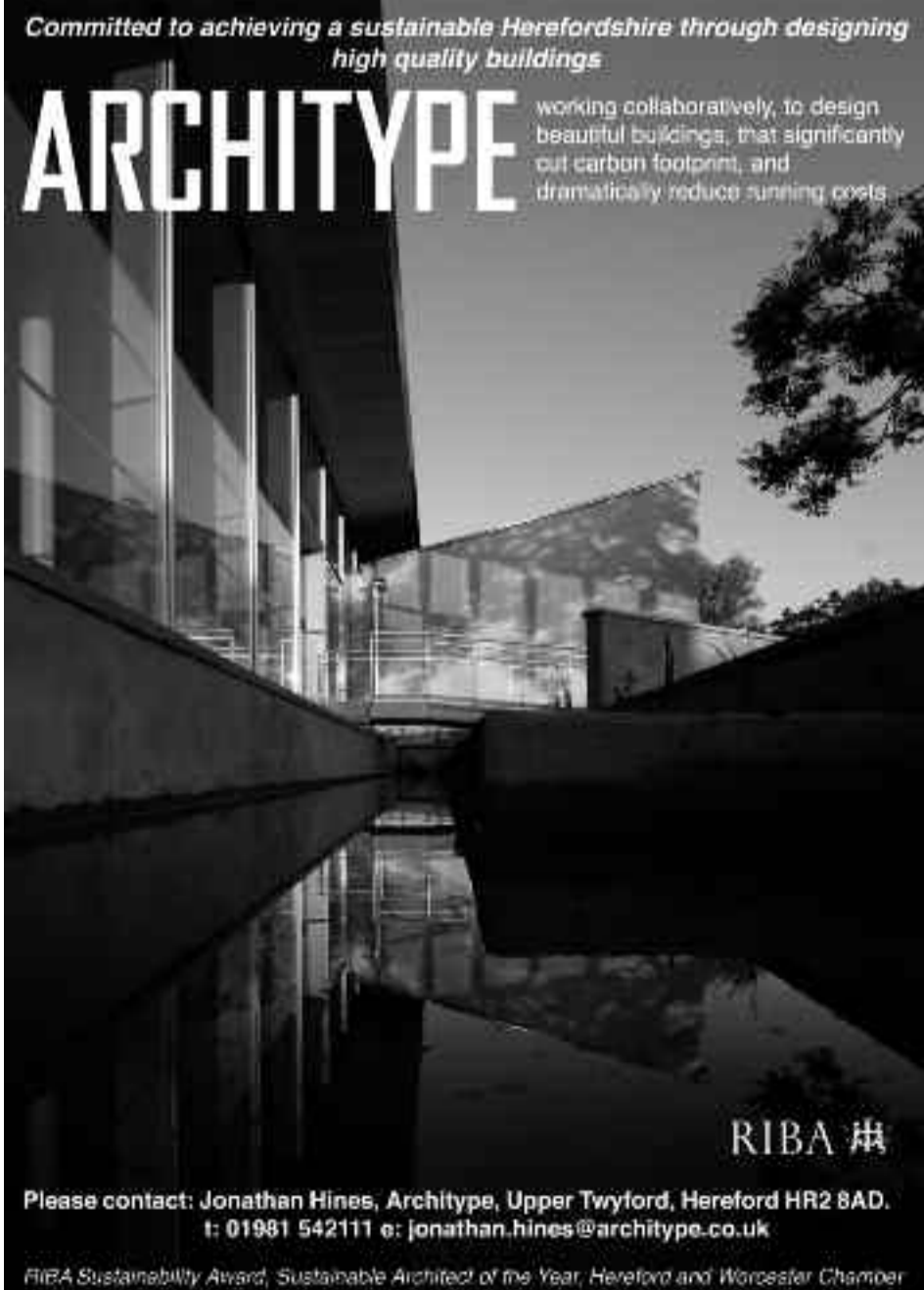
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RIBA Sustainability Award, Sustainable Architect of the Year, Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce Green Business of the Year, Sustainable School of the Year, Civic Trust Award

Highway trees, street trees and garden trees

Many highways are bordered by green verges, where the incorporation of trees is relatively straight forward and inexpensive. There are examples of recent highway planting, e.g. along the Holme Lacy Road, but further opportunities exist; for instance the junction of the A49 and A465 near Asda, Holmer Road, Old School Lane, and the A49 Ross Road. Where highway trees already exist there should be a planned programme to ensure that any removal, due to age or condition, is followed by replacement.

Street trees i.e. those in paved streets, add to visual amenity and provide a direct intervention in reducing the urban heat island effect, improving air quality and mitigating surface water flooding. Whilst the need to accommodate and protect services needs to be considered, there are no practical barriers to increasing the number of street trees in Hereford. The Mayor of London's street tree campaign provides an example of how this might be achieved.

In particular on wider streets, such as Commercial Road, pavement widths easily allow for trees to be accommodated. Modern arboriculture techniques allow for the inclusion of street trees alongside services. In areas of development and redevelopment green infrastructure, and tree planting, should be planned for alongside the grey infrastructure (services, roads etc.).

The need to use High Town for a range of purposes means there are limited opportunities for permanent tree planting. In this case purpose designed planters could be used. They can also be used as part of traffic calming systems or in narrower streets. A downside of the use of planters is the need for watering.

In addition to representing a significant proportion of the cities tree stock, maintaining and planting trees in private gardens provides an opportunity for people to contribute towards a city-wide campaign to increase tree cover. Given the proximity to houses and domestic services, and the concerns often raised by insurance companies, careful species selection is important.

It is also possible to retrofit areas with new trees, for instance in car parks and other hard surfaced areas – key contributors to surface water flooding. Targets for increased tree cover of this sort include large stores, and supermarkets with car parking, industrial units and industrial estates.

Schools

Many of the secondary and primary schools, within the city, have school grounds which could be used for tree planting. This includes both playing fields and school playgrounds. The increased shade and shelter afforded by trees can reduce the risk to children from sunburn, and may help to reduce school heating bills through reduced energy use.

Tree planting within school grounds can be undertaken with the involvement of children, and thus provide educational benefits. It can also contribute to objectives to achieve Eco-school status, and responds to the OFSTED target for opportunities for outdoor learning.

Existing funding, and support mechanisms for schools' tree planting, are already offered by a number of charitable organisations, including the Woodland Trust, and may also be supported by local businesses, and through parent organisations within the schools.

Funding

Forestry Commission grant support

Forestry Commission grant support may be available for planting woodland. The minimum size normally accepted is 0.25 ha. This makes it less applicable in most cases in towns and cities, where the individual trees and small groups of trees will fall below this minimum threshold. Nonetheless, some school grounds and areas within public open space may have sufficient area for grant support.

Lottery

The National Lottery can support community related tree planting projects aimed at improving the local environment

Planning gain

The planning system can be used to ensure that new development takes full account of the need to increase tree cover. Depending on the development, the Community Infrastructure Levy might contribute towards the costs of development of green infrastructure.

Corporate support

In addition to direct action by companies on ground they own, financial support from business, as part of their CSR budget, could contribute to the support of community projects.

Non-Governmental Organisations

A number of non-governmental organisations may contribute to tree planting, or organising community involvement. These include the Woodland Trust, The Wildlife Trusts, and Trees for Cities.

A number of charitable trusts award grants for community action for environmental improvements.

Individual support

Individuals and communities can provide direct support through the planting of trees in gardens, but also through raising money to match fund other sources, such as lottery funding. In particular, community woodland and community street tree planting projects often successfully raise funds directly from local communities.

What needs to be done?

If it is agreed that we need to care for and develop tree cover in Hereford, then a more detailed and comprehensive plan for action will need to be produced. This should include;

- A vision for what we want to achieve for Hereford
- A more complete inventory of tree canopy cover, condition and distribution.
- A plan for community and other stakeholder participation in identification of opportunities for tree planting, fundraising, and direct action to deliver the vision
- A budget and fundraising plan for how the vision might be delivered

Herefordshire Tree Forum

making the case for more trees in Hereford and the market towns of Herefordshire.

The cultural devaluing of trees over time is not unique to Hereford, but another reason why an urban tree strategy, to develop a rolling programme of planned planting, within the context of properly designed and connecting green infrastructure, is so necessary.

In order to help address these issues, Hereford Civic Society has joined with the Woodland Trust, other tree and ecology experts, voluntary and amenity organisations, local businesses in Herefordshire and the City Councils to set up a Herefordshire Tree Forum, with the object of finding ways to work together to restore trees and woodland to our city and market towns. The forum will officially launch in National Tree Week this November 24th – 4th December, inviting householders, community groups, businesses and Councils to celebrate this annual tree fest across the city by planting more trees.

Herefordshire Council's contractor, Amey, is planning to plant a hundred trees across the county. 2011 has been designated The Year of the Orchard, focussing on rural orchards.

Creating an inclusive forum, with charitable status, that all interested parties can sign up to, we consider is the most practical way to share and exchange information and advice. Having charitable status means it will be able to apply for funding for some projects – an essential element if the Forum is to sensibly address the cost implications of new planting and maintenance, - and attract business sponsorship. The proposed model for this forum is the London based Tree and Design Action Group (TDAG), www.tdag.org.uk/index.html Worth a look. There's a full introduction to the Forum on our web site. MB

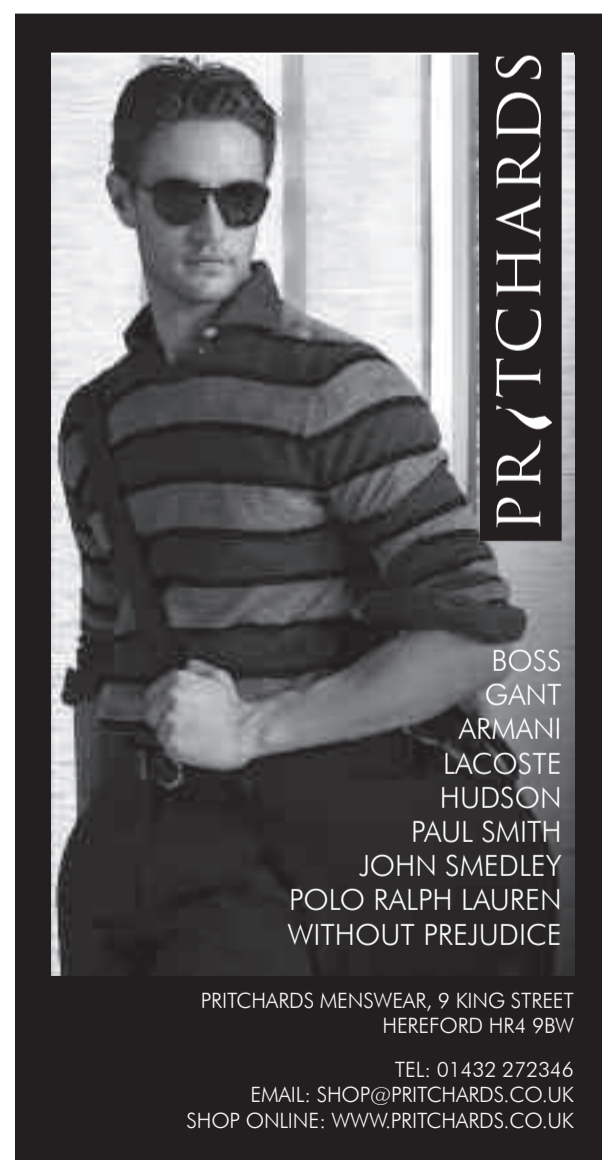
New Technology analyses tree cover

Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning System (GPS), Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) combined with the Web are powerful tools for understanding human settlement patterns past and present. The recent ubiquity and falling prices of these technologies are potentially empowering for citizens, their representatives and NGOs as they attempt to influence the future direction of their civic space.

At the HCS meeting on 14th December 2011, a project will be described which uses GPS and GIS to determine rates of change in the Hereford city's tree cover, trees at risk and the identification of new sites, to increase and strengthen the natural architecture of the city and its rural interface.

OPINION

Isn't it obvious trees are a good thing for us? But guess we tend to assume they'll always will be there, and looked after by "them". These articles have reminded me that proper programmes, and procedures, for their good health need to be in place. Might I suggest we all lobby those in positions of influence to pay attention to this often neglected area of our built environment. Trees are an intrinsic part of it. And best of luck to the new **Herefordshire Tree Forum** JB



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Planning Matters.....

Here we list recent planning applications and any action that our executive committee has taken. Our Society is concerned about the built environment and we peruse all new applications and assess against a schedule of criteria. When we feel applications justify a comment we submit a letter to the Planning Department. These letters are shown on our web site and are the opinions of the committee at the time of the letter.

<p>To view plans on the web go to www.ukplanning.com</p> <p>Click on 'select another council' (highlighted in blue)</p> <p>Click on Herefordshire Council</p> <p>Click on 'Search applications' (on the left hand side)</p> <p>Scroll down to 'Application Number' and enter the relevant six figures</p> <p>Criteria used when considering new planning applications</p> <p>Architectural / design merit</p> <p>Suitability of the scheme / design in relation to its context or surroundings</p>	<p>Layout of interior spaces and suitability of circulation routes</p> <p>Design relating to use and functionality</p> <p>How the character and structure of the scheme relate or convey its intended use</p> <p>Sustainability credentials (materials sourcing, water use, energy consumption, waste minimisation)</p> <p>Construction and detailing</p> <p>Civic contribution – social, cultural, environmental or economic benefit to the local community</p>
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With many small applications here is a listing of those of most interest.

111694
Livestock Market Stanhope Plc. Old cattle market project. Demolition of buildings; site clearance etc.etc. HCS reminded Council about the water trough bought by public subscription in 1886 (currently on temporary blocks o/s new Cattle Market)

111638
53 Barrs Court Road Berekdar. Old builder's yard. Three storey block of flats, HCS has written, this is not a positive proposal.

111662
26 Eign Gate Cheque Company. Change of use to Financial and Professional services.

110402
121 Edgar Street Mr. Ball. Change of use from photo studio to two flats.

111795 F and 111797 L
16-18 High Town and 12 East Street Omaha Nominees A&B Ltd. The Substantial C15 and C17 remains will be reused, with the addition of green oak where necessary, to repair the frontage of Alban House. The existing single storey extension will be demolished and replaced with a two storey extension for retail use.

12 East Street will be used for ancillary storage, refuse and cycle storage. Over 16 to 18 High Town, 3 x 1 bed and 3 x 2 bed flats are proposed. Barely visible from the ground, these will form an extra floor above the parapets. The four storey building at 16/17 will be rebuilt with a contemporary building of similar height, and the new arched opening into the Booth passage will have Forest of Dean grey sandstone cladding. The walls of the buildings use several materials including Hereford red sandstone

cladding; and grey granite projecting surrounds to new colour coated aluminium windows.

111947/ 948(C)
9 King Street Pritchard and Sons Ltd. Remove roof from single storey outbuilding; add 1st floor extension for retail use and reorganise interior. Not visible from King St.

112082
1 Staniers Way R.Leach. Convert industrial unit to drinks canning factory. Alteration to façade.

111989
53 The Atrium Maylord shopping centre. S.England. Amalgamation of some units; creation of new unit for the proposed Wilkinson hardware store and Food Court. On first floor extension of existing A3 use to provide covered food area.

112009
9 Gruniesen Street N.Smith. Change of use of commercial lower floor with residential upper floor to create one dwelling.

112100
Manhattan 10 St.Peter Street A.Catley. Change of use from Nightclub/bar, to café/retail with first floor to form office and store room.

112052/C
Merton Works. Canal St. B.Evans. Demolition of warehouse and annex building. Conversion of existing Edwardian house into dwellings. Building 3 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed terrace houses.

112337
Left Bank, Bridge St. Agent R Harrison. Change of use



from restaurant A3 to mixed use, restaurant, leisure, office.

112336
92-94 Belmont Rd. Agent M.Owen. Single link between two buildings. Change of use from restaurant to business use.

112323 (L)
87 East St. C.Hazell. Wall mounted projecting advert banner.

112218
Ledbury Court, Ledbury Rd. Herefordshire Mind. Demolition of dwelling and proposed building of adult residential health care unit.

112288 (L)
102 East St. R.Blyth-Currie. Conversion of former Conservative Club to 1 retail unit and 8 apartments

112 312
Rear of 94, Aylestone Hill. M.Miffin. 2 additional dwellings with garage to 4 previously approved dwellings.(102615)

111531/O
27 Tower Rd. Mr & Mrs White single detached dwelling

112474
40 Blackmarston Rd Hunderton Mr Andrews. Demolish garage, construct attached two bed dwelling

112506/O
87 Whitecross Rd Mr Parton demolish existing buildings and storage. 2 storey building of 6 x 2bed flats; carpark and garden area.

112518
10 Windsor St. Miss Bayliss. build detached 2 bed dwelling.

112563
129 Aylestone Hill, Mr. Gwilliam. proposed extension of extant planning permission (2008/1758) construction of 3 detached dwellings.

ESG gets detailed approval

On 12th October 2111 the planning committee approved the reserved matters for the redevelopment of the cattle market.

Fourteen of our elected representatives talked well about their concerns, but none seemed to grasp that if they approved this finale, it would be the biggest insult to us all. There is not a seamless integration with the centre. What about the public realm, ESG as approved, is a private estate? What about the road surface materials – (Para 6.43 – materials to be agreed) so not necessarily matching Widemarsh Street? What about the seamless crossings, there are still pedestrian cattle pens? A valiant amendment was proposed – that the restaurant pavilions, being a gateway to the development, be changed to commercial. This was rejected. This is a standard developer driven retail project, that fails to attempt to integrate with the existing city, fails to match the grandiose schemes we were tempted by, will create gridlock on our roads and damage many existing businesses.

KC

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Dr D's Diagnosis.....

What housing crisis?



We face a "housing crisis." By now you'll have heard claims like these so many times you may have begun to believe them. But please suspend judgment - just for a few more paragraphs.

If by a housing crisis we mean the homeless - the bottom of the pile - then the answer is absolutely not. Last year in

England 42,390 people were accepted by local councils as statutorily homeless; which means the council accepts it has an obligation to house them, invariably because children are involved. It has fallen sharply, every year, since 2003, falling even during the recession, down from 57,510 in 2008.

To justify the "housing crisis" we're often told how many people are on council housing waiting lists, and we're invited to be horrified that about 1.75m households were on the list on 1st April 2010. Should we be worried by it? Well, maybe not.

First, government statisticians point out that the list began to grow rapidly - it had been stable at about a million for several years - in the immediate aftermath of the introduction of "open" waiting lists (you could apply to be on any council's list, wherever you lived) and choice-based letting, which means lots more advertising of vacancies stimulates demand. So reason there to be wary, that the increase represents any kind of "crisis."

Second, council house waiting lists include anybody, who hasn't got an ASBO, and who fancies a council house, for whatever reason. Applications are graded by priority. To understand whether 1.75m was really a large problem or not you'd need to know how many fell into the highest priority groups. Hunt high and low and you won't find these figures on any national database. Suspiciously minded people who guess the whole "housing crisis" war-cry is just a house builders'

excuse to get lots of government help will find this revealing.

As their argument crumbles, the house builders and the government shift the basis of their complaint. Largely because there isn't a housing crisis, as these figures seem to show, we are next told that the "housing crisis" is in fact one of "affordability." The claim is that people can't afford to buy their first house. Of course the obvious answer is that since we've established that they aren't homeless - and they clearly aren't poor, since genuinely poor people don't aspire to buy houses - then so what? It only matters because people tell themselves life isn't complete without a mortgage - which is obviously rubbish. Anyone who suspects they may not have a secure well-paid 9-5 job for 35 years would do well to avoid mortgages - and since in the new economy that will be most of us, we shouldn't be too concerned that some people can't afford them.

Governments find saying this hard, even if it's true, and the "affordable housing" claim has now developed a life of its own, and become an argument for building more houses. Something can become unaffordable either because demand exceeds supply, or because the supply of money to spend on something exceeds the supply of things to spend it on. The government and house builders claim housing is "unaffordable" for the first reason; when, in fact, they became unaffordable for the second. House prices rose steeply because people could borrow more, because of lax lending controls by government. Mortgage lending rose from £160bn in 2001 to between £288bn and £362bn in the years to 2007. Proof that too much borrowing was going on came, dramatically, in 2008. The rest is history.

If you really want house prices to go down, limit lending even further. But, of course, nobody really wants house prices to go down - certainly not the house owning parents of the young people who can't "afford" a new house, and least of all the house builders who grumble on about "affordable" housing.

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"the "affordable housing" claim has now developed a life of its own"

Cathedral Close



The new works to Cathedral Close are completed; but what have we got for our plus £5 million, of which our own Councils contributed several hundred thousand? What is the point of an extravagant ten foot fence with gateways but no gates? The Heritage Lottery Advertisement in the Hereford Times of 29th September refers to "defining the separation between the secular and the sacred"! There is no precedent around other local cathedrals. Walking down Broad Street we no longer have a clear view of Whitfield Partners' Chain Library; it's blurred by the fence.

This regency gothic collaboration brings nothing new and modern, apart from the night club blue lights within the columns at night. Why? Why was Elgar, leaning against his bike, moved twenty yards to the east? Why two lone columns at the south end of Church Street? To mark the entrance, would be the answer, but why in such a ham fisted way? Above, sits the surveillance camera, its wiring conduits pinned on the brickwork of an elegant listed building. Entrance to the Cathedral School is through elegant wrought iron gates behind which sit, awkwardly, modern bollards.

We asked the Dean how the money was spent, understanding there were extensive drainage and archaeological works, but he declined to tell us. The Close needed improvement but what we have is a symbolic barrier. The idea and traditions of the Church appeal to even non believers, but this work makes it look as though the establishment wishes to repel boarders.

We believe there is much controversy over the works – please comment on our web site



Hereford Now

Herefordshire College of Technology

Visited by the Society last year, our local tech. college exudes confidence and scores well against other new educational establishments. We found a well organised layout, and inspiring facilities. Outside, the Corten steel façades mimic the same colour of our local red sandstone found in the gabion walling.

But why a bumpy meadow? Meadows should remain in the countryside. Why fixed sunscreens? Shouldn't we be harnessing the sun's energy?

But we like it, the restaurant and hairdressing saloons, open to the public, at the front of the site, and a confident air well detailed by Stuldos Rich Architects.



News.....

Cattle Market Report

A crit by an architect

On my way out of the City I was looking forward to seeing something a bit special. Hereford has a very long reputation as a trading centre, and with technological advances I was expecting a new high tech. market. What a disappointment, it is just a huge shed; and pared down to the minimum. There is nothing wrong with the economical use of building materials, but they can be put together with care and good detailing. Even the lavatories have a line of domestic wash hand basins, the café is 60's style, and there is nothing special or unexpected. Even the signage is cheap with an old fashioned typeface.

What a lost opportunity. Just a little imagination and the huge investment could have been so much better. I blame the client, Herefordshire Council. If we accept that it was necessary to relocate, surely we need more than a one day/week facility for the trading of livestock. Couldn't this have been a centre for our famous cattle, a place to think agriculture; it could even have been a department of Holme Lacey College. KC



A crit by a farmer

Well it's certainly much easier to reverse a large sheep trailer here, acres of concrete! The pens have gates on all sides and need a bit of learning, but it's all much the same as the old one; and, again, acres of galvanised. Presumably the weighing machine is high tech., but I couldn't see the weight of my chunky fat lambs clearly displayed – that is a backward step.

I suppose I was hoping for a first floor caff looking out over the pens, that wouldn't have been too difficult, according to my building friend, and would have kept everyone up to date. Surely we could have a few more outlets selling stuff farmers need, I still had to make a visit into the City centre, but I enjoyed driving through the chicanes in Widemarsh Street, complete with trailer, just before the 10.30 a.m. closure. JL



Heritage Open Day

In September, along with several other cities, Hereford corralled a number of our museums to provide a few hours of free entry to see exhibits and interiors usually available for public view. This is not the point of Heritage Open Day. Quoting from the HOD website "Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public" "It is a once-a-year chance to discover hidden architectural treasures" Here's hoping that the two new bodies - Hereford City Tourism and Visit Herefordshire - will grasp this opportunity next year.

Local Development Framework Update

Another excellent day on 9th July, organised by Paige Mitchell, essentially to keep Herefordians up to date on the development of the LDF. Progress by the Council is hard to find, what with the new administration cancelling meetings. It's due to be lodged in February 2012. All attendees were keen to see the inclusion of proper sustainable policies.

New Bridge !

In 18 months time Herefordshire should have a new river crossing; the first new bridge to span the Wye in 42 years.

In December 2007, Sustrans topped the bill of a public phone poll (sponsored by ITV) for the £50-million prize for funding sustainable public building projects, pipping The Eden Project to the post.

Sustrans' Connect2 project is a hugely ambitious undertaking, which will eventually create a 1000-mile

national cycle network, one-third of it traffic-free. Included in a programme of 79 nationwide projects, our section includes a new single-masted suspension bridge crossing the Wye at Outfall Works Road, close to the existing rail bridge to the south-east of the city. The new bridge lies on the east-west NCN46, which will ultimately connect Droitwich with Newport. Some of the main beneficiaries will be workers on the new Rotherwas Enterprise Zone and Industrial Estate.

New report from MPC Associates

"The ratio of Hereford's Supermarkets, Superstores and Hypermarket selling area to population now hits the highest saturation levels in Europe" Full details from www.mpcassociates.com Perhaps this is a new planning policy. Build the shops first, then the houses, then the highway infrastructure.

Would 'Invisible' pylon merge with the landscape?

With 128 square miles of the Wye Valley designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty, Herefordshire would seem to be the ideal launching pad for an elegant design. The winning design is from Danish Engineers Bystrup; architect Rasmus Jessing. It was one of six short-listed schemes in the recent RIBA design competition, to find a replacement for the 84-year-old galvanised lattice steel pylon design of Sir William Blomfield.

The Cooks of Country Markets

The Making Local Food Work Project is a £10 million Big Lottery Fund supported programme to promote

community enterprise as a solution to local food needs.

Cooks of Country Markets Ltd is a co-operative social enterprise, whose members sell their home-produced baked goods at hundreds of outlets. In Herefordshire there are five markets: Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye.

CCM aims to make Country Markets products available through a wider range of retail outlets. The hope is that the opportunity to sell into retail outlets will not only appeal to current producers, but also to keen cooks looking for sales opportunities.

To find out more about the project, go to www.cooksofcountrymarkets.co.uk.

Draft National Planning Policy

At the end of July the Government published its long awaited review of national planning policy, and it is radical reform. Not only have over one thousand pages of existing guidance been reduced to 52 but important and controversial changes have been made.

There has been much controversy in the media and consultation ends as we publish this Autumn edition. To summarise the proposals:-

1. The default answer to development is to be "yes"
2. Planning policy is to be "pro growth"
3. Local and neighbourhood plans can provide for more but not less development
4. The focus of new housing is no longer to be on re-using urban land and local authorities have to provide 5 years of land plus an extra 20%
5. Town centres should be the preferred location for retail development but the policy has been weakened for offices
6. There is to be strong protection for designated sites, such as Green Belts and AONBs, but not for the local environment
7. Good quality design and the importance of the historic environment are stressed but against the backdrop of planning for growth

A Future for Herefordshire: strategy for growth

A most stimulating meeting was held at the Hereford Sixth Form College, on Friday 14th October. Speakers included Ray Stone Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce, Jesse Norman MP, Councillor Mark Hubbard of Its our County and local business leaders. It was a lively and well attended debate with many viewpoints.

Our Civic Society should follow this up with a meeting to envisage what sort of built environment is required?

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Recent Meetings

27th July 2011 – **Summer Walk** – led by Peter Gwatkin

Our treasurer was no boring accountant on this walk! Anecdotes and stories coloured his presentation, prompted by some members of the City Guides! From the Greyfriars carpark we walked over the new bridge, surveyed the site of the new proposals for two blocks of flats for the Campions site, about which most members have reservations, and along the south bank of the Wye to the old bridge.

Around here there had been wharves and jetties from which our local cider was sent downstream, and in the seventeenth century, stone for the rebuilding of the collapsed west front of the cathedral, was brought up on barges from the quarry at Caplor.

We clambered over the steps on the tow path being part of the flood defences, a most ham fisted bit of layout with reconstituted stone in two colours and red brick, and excessive balustrading. What a shame this expensive scheme had not been designed by an architect, rather than an engineer. The adjacent Watershed being an excellent example of a pragmatic design, providing a new use for an old store. And many other special buildings and features too many to record – how lucky we are to live in Hereford.

Our Listed Station

At a well-attended meeting at All Saints on 8th September, organised by local rail pressure group Rail for Hereford, it was agreed that Hereford's Grade II listed railway station is an under-appreciated city asset. Ideas (which RfH has undertaken to pass to freeholder Network Rail and its tenant Arriva Trains Wales) include bringing the 4,000 sq. ft. first floor space into public use - perhaps with funding from the Railway Heritage Trust - and architecturally improving the appearance of the building's main entrance. The other main concern expressed was the poorly signposted pedestrian link between the station and the city centre.

New governing team

At the AGM on 26th October 2011 the following members were elected to run the society:

John Bothamley – chair - to lead the team
 Hubert Porte – vice chair – street scene
 Peter Gwatkin – treasurer - tourism
 Andree Poppleston – planning matters
 Andy Simmonds - integrated transport
 Ben Nash – countryside
 Ginny Garman – governance
 Jean Ellis - membership
 Julie Orton-Davies – enterprise zone
 Mo Burns – trees - cycling
 Phyllis Lewis – events and LDF
 Rob Hattersley – communications

If you have a passion for buildings come and join our team, HCS, THE forum for discussion about the built environment. The new team has yet to meet formally, but there is to be a move towards a more inclusive association, where visitors and friends are welcome at all events. We want to make consideration of our built environment a more talked about subject – it is where we all spend our time! Come and join our forum. JB

NEXT ISSUE – MAIN FEATURE

Hereford's Enterprise Zone

A SWOT analysis on how we should focus on this exciting (?) prospect. Historical analysis, views, comment from property experts.

"Hereford City Tourism"

Hereford City Tourism brings together those directly involved with all aspects of tourism in Hereford. These include venues, attractions, organisations and individuals who are representative of tourism in the city. The group is working together to promote Hereford City as an excellent place to visit.

By working in close collaboration, Hereford City Tourism is greater than the sum of its individual members. Together the group is raising the profile of the city, using a cooperative approach to marketing and publicity, sharing information and combining resources. Moreover, each member organisation sees others as partners and not rivals. The outcome is aimed directly at enhancing the experience of all those who visit Hereford.



hereford civic society
 the city's built environment forum

28th September 2011 – **Herefordshire's Year in the Orchard** – James Bisset

In 1664 "Herefordshire has become in a manner an entire orchard". And in 1811 Thomas Andrew Knight, a Herefordian, published the first comprehensive book on apples, beautifully printed in full colour, blemishes and all. This prompted James, 200 years later, to mark the event, by applying for funding to provide, free, bundles of apple trees, for community planting. Our great Big Society responded poorly and he still has some left – email James on jbisset@herefordshire.gov.uk for details. An opportunity not to be missed.

The good news is that Herefordshire still has many orchards, (over 5,000 hectares) and has lost far less than most counties over the last 70 years (down from 9,000 in 1936); all due to the popularity of cider and apple juice, and only 10% of Herefordshire apples are dessert ones! An inspiring talk, beautiful slides, from a consumer of local perry!

Forth coming events

Wednesday 23rd November 2011

'High Comfort, low energy building & refurbishment'

A talk by Andrew Simmonds, Partner Simmonds.Mills, Architects

The importance of insulation in saving energy costs, refurbishment of existing buildings, local energy generation and more from the writer of our Summer HCS NEWS feature Watershed, Wye Street, Hereford HR2 7RB

Wednesday 14th December 2011

'Hereford City, A landscape History'

Illustrated talk by David Lovelace

Fascinating GPS and photographic technology as applied to the landscape evolution of the city from pre medieval times + and planning for its desirable future.

Watershed, Wye Street, Hereford HR2 7RB

Wednesday 25th January 2012

'Brian Hatton and the changing Landscape'.

Illustrated lecture by Robin Thorndyke

Beautiful images of the same scenes that the Hereford artist, killed in WW1, painted 100 years ago. Many on the route of the proposed second river crossing.

Watershed, Wye Street, Hereford HR2 7RB

Wednesday 29th February 2012

"Plans to take forward Herefordshire Tourism"

Sir Ben Gill

Herefordshire's tourism czar, former chief of the NFU, on his drive to up Herefordshire's profile as a tourist destination. Logos, TICs and much more.

Venue to be agreed – see our Winter NEWS

Due out mid January or our website

www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk

Meetings open at 6.30 p.m. for conversation and discussion and presentations start at 7.30 p.m.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in the letters, reviews, news and features in this issue are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of members of Herefordshire Civic Society.



I am interested in joining **Herefordshire Civic Society**.

Please send membership information, subscription rates and an application form to:-

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Return to: Andree Poppleston, 33 Breinton Avenue, Hereford HR4 OJZ

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