

PRICELESS

# Place

## Hereford

Civic Society

The City's built  
environment forum

## Urban Room and Design Review Panel

The time is right to establish both

Winter 2019/20

## Phosphates in the Lugg

Worrying times for Local Plan

## Hereford's libraries

From 1779 to 2020

## Planning Matters

Moratorium on consents

## Hereford Now

Alban House

Vicki Tomlinson, Director of Development at Connexus,  
will present on:

### **The Provision of Social Housing – from Thatcher to Today**

With many councils now considering building their own properties to rent, Vicki Tomlinson will follow the changing face of social housing. From introduction of the Right to Buy in 1980, the Council stock transfers of the 1990's, the housing association mergers of the 2000's through to the current day where councils have begun to build again. Whether social housing is now actually affordable and how it can best be administered will be explained by this experienced provider.

**The Green Dragon, Broad Street, Hereford  
HR4 9BG  
7.30pm  
16th April 2020**



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the city's built environment forum

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## PREFACE

**Well here we are eight months into a new administration at Herefordshire Council and HCS members are wondering what the future of our built environment will look like with the new people? We said we would hold them to account with their somewhat extreme ideas – abandoning the bypass and a hundred electric buses etc. So eight months on - where have they got to?**

Bogged down in process it would appear. Democracy demands open scrutiny but when the elected local government request a review from the officers of the Council they expect just that. Whilst it is difficult to be precise it appears the review of the new road building was little more than a scoping document! Then the Scrutiny committee, chaired by the opposition Conservative Party, suggested that work on the stalled schemes should proceed whilst the review was taking place. John Harrington, cabinet member in charge of infrastructure, took note but insisted on a full review which is now scheduled to start in the new year with a result not until June/July 2020.

HCS members are divided over the merits of the bypass but respect that the election resulted in a coalition with anti-bypass views. Cllr. Harrington has reasonably asked for a full review but should this really take over a year before we get a final result?

The merits of the new road schemes will be decided based upon the changing style of towns, the reduction in retail facilities and climate change policies etc. Part of the review will be examination of the use of electric buses, removing traffic lights and the business case for an eastern river crossing. Let's have a decision as soon as possible please. The new cycle routes and

improvements to Holme Lacy Road, partly based on ideas from HCS's consultants, are also held up by this review. Why does so much government have such complicated processes? Or are the officers dragging their feet having worked for years on the western by-pass?



Positive development in the City centre will only start once we have a decision and a broad vision of what Hereford will look like in 2040. To this end our centre pages represent our bid for the creation of an Urban Room in Hereford. It will be a place to discuss the future look of Hereford with a built environment positively surrounding our ancient cathedral buildings.

Do take a look, it will be somewhere for the Councils to consult us, somewhere to discuss dreams, and develop pragmatic developments that will enhance our City.

John Bothamley

## NEWS & COMMENT

### Future Homes Standard

The government has extended the consultation on the Future Homes Standard. Originally set to close on 10 January, it will now close on 7 February 2020. The consultation sets the government's plans for the Future Homes Standard, including proposed options to increase the energy-efficiency requirements for new homes in 2020. The consultation can be found on the UK Government website.

### NMiTE

The Christmas party on 19 December saw the publication of the Progress Report 2018/19 detailing much background work before the official intake of 50 plus students in September 2020. Now with a new five year lease on Gardner Hall, (formerly part of the Blind College, now owned by Herefordshire Council) the nascent university is spoilt for choice on accommodation. The former Robert Owen school is being refurbished for them, ideas are promoted for use of the former Peacocks store and there is funding for the development of three new buildings in Skylon Park – the Enterprise Zone. The retained consultant for selecting architects, Faodail Consulting, writes 'NMiTE is very cognisant of making sure we give every opportunity to local suppliers..... none of us would like to create a situation where we overlooked local capability'.



### Barn conversions

A 230 per cent increase in conversions of barns and farm buildings into homes, without the need for planning permission, is taking a severe toll on the vital infrastructure and local services in rural towns and villages. Latest figures show the number of agricultural-to-residential conversions in England has risen from 226 in 2015/16 to 743 in 2017/18 – mostly in rural areas – under the permitted development rights that allow developers to bypass the planning system.

The Local Government Association (LGA) said rural areas in particular are not being provided with the

local services or infrastructure, and in some places affordable housing, that would normally be required in any development going through the planning system. Some of the places seeing a high number of agricultural-to-residential conversions in the past year include Devon (122), Kent (71), Worcestershire (56), Herefordshire (39) and Staffordshire (29).

But HCS highlights the same strain on the Council with developers of less than ten houses avoiding the obligation for a social housing percentage, and Section 106 contributions for infrastructure.

### Gloucester's city plan

Gloucester City Council has launched a consultation on its city plan, which identifies 22 potential sites for development. Locations have been sourced from the ongoing and targeted 'call for sites', land on the brownfield register and a review of internal land assets, the council explained. Hereford was ahead of Gloucester but the Hereford Area Plan now seems to be side-lined in favour of a Special Planning Document. Gloucester's plan seeks to support healthier communities and therefore limits opportunities for hot food takeaways, and encourages more active travel, tree planting and reductions in air pollution. Whilst many would support restricting hot food takeaways, if there is a demand, surely our new right wing government will object as this is a restriction on free enterprise?!

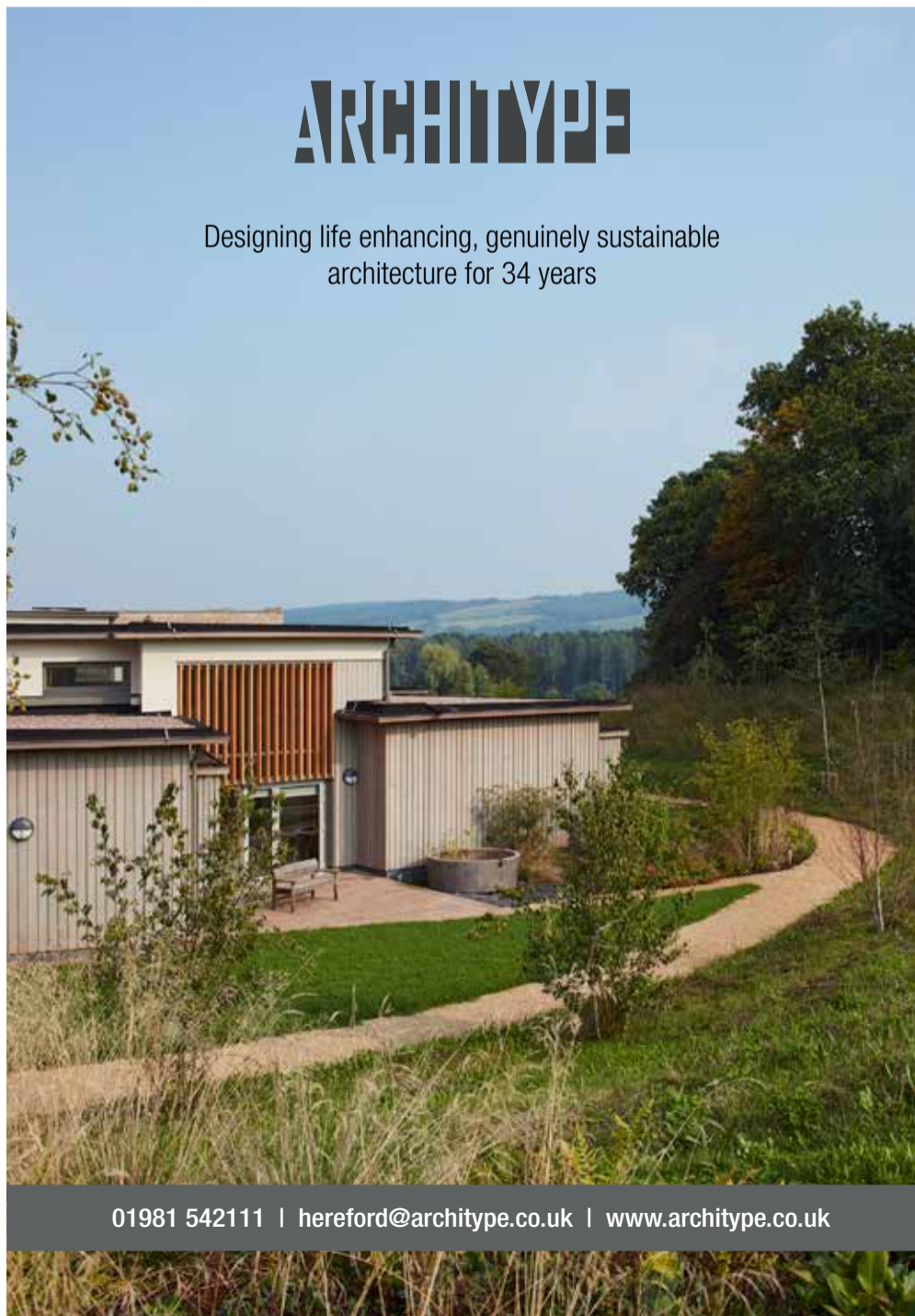
### Transport for New Homes

The first award by this young organisation is highlighting good practice across housing developments. 'The housing we build today will determine our travel patterns for decades to come, impacting on climate change, air pollution, public health and social cohesion. All too often we see new housing built around car use, but in Bath Riverside and Royal Arsenal Riverside real attention has been paid to walking, cycling and public transport, giving residents real travel choices and a good quality of life. All



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### Contributors

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

**James Copeland** – Cyclist and Design Consultant

**David Fowler** – Accountant

**Deborah Johnson** – Architect

**Jeremy Milln** – Conservation archaeologist and former chairman of HCS

**Stanley Vincent** – Planning Visionary

**David Whitehead** – Hereford historian and author

**Design & Layout** – Gary Nozedar

**Front Page:**

*Consultation in Sheffield Urban Room 2018*

## NEWS & COMMENT



new developments should be located so that people have a choice as to how they travel, and provide good walking, cycling and public transport access to daily activities.' Lynda Addison, award judge

### Upward extensions worry

New rights to allow two-storey upwards extensions on family homes, without planning permission, will 'compound the problem' of low quality housing created under previous extensions to permitted development rights, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has stressed. Describing the policy to date as a "disaster", Richard Blyth, the RTPI's head of policy, said the new proposal would also undermine the government's simultaneous efforts to involve communities in improving housing design in their area, and that

it undermines the drive to create good quality, affordable housing across England. 'it is very difficult to see how this concern for better design and public involvement is compatible with a relaxation in rules on 'building up' and the consequent inability of neighbours to have a formal route to object.'

### Nottingham

Bolder than Hereford it is hoping to become the UK's first carbon neutral city by 2028; with a raft of measures designed to increase the number of people travelling by public transport and cycling and boosting green energy use. In the last two years cyclist numbers have increased by 50% and the number of electric vehicles doubled. 'The Council is 'sticking solar panels on anything that doesn't move'.

### Community lead housing

Oxford City Council is offering land to a community-led housing project in a bid to tackle the local housing crisis. The proposal will see the council provide a long-term lease to a community group so they can build new homes on a small unused garage site in Littlemore. The site comprises seven unused garages and a forecourt. The homes will be for social rent and managed as a cooperative by residents of the development. If it is successful, Oxford would look to supply more unused garage sites to local groups to convert into community-led housing projects. The council has supported local architects Transition by Design and Oxfordshire Community Land Trust to bid for £40,000 from the government's Community Housing Fund to develop the scheme. The project could see three

or more one or two-bedroom homes built on the site, with tenants selected from the council's housing waiting list and asked to confirm that they would be happy living in housing that had a cooperative element.

### Stirling Prize

Goldsmith Street in Norwich, the 105 home council housing development which won this year's prize for architecture, was undoubtedly a timely victor. The project, with homes set out in a traditional terraced pattern adheres to many of the principles contained in the government's design guide. The Government's Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission is also due to report in the Spring. Design is being pushed up the agenda according to the then Housing Minister, but not when you consider our following paragraph on permitted development!



## HEREFORD NOW

### Alban House

At last, after nearly ten years, the High Town fire damaged buildings have been largely rebuilt. From the doldrums of the recession to the upcoming popularity of city centre dwelling this building has fully grasped the moment. Hook Mason are to be congratulated on steadfastly working on this collection of buildings, mainly listed, and negotiating with English Heritage on what could be saved and what needed full on replacement. To make this an attractive project for developers they have created 18 flats on a small footprint. The adjacent Booth Hall Pub and Hotel, also fire damaged, will hopefully be brought back into use soon, currently for sale. Architecturally the retained 'old bit' has

a Georgian façade with rather heavy pilasters that look as though they could do with further support at ground level. (See drawing page 7). The stripped back modern shop front just doesn't do it for me. The new frontage to the east has a 50's feel and helps to maintain the eclectic run of properties along the south side of High Town. But is it just a little over-bearing on Booth Hall? Matching development value and respect for existing neighbours is always a compromise, but with the penthouses set back from the front elevation to High Town this can be forgiven. No longer propped up with scaffolding, for nigh on ten years, this is a great start for the new decade. JB



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# URBAN ROOM

## A bid to establish an Urban Room

With the start of a new decade, a new Council and a somewhat anxiously anticipated new national government, it seems like the right time to press for the creation of an Urban Room.

### What is a Civic or Urban Room?

- A Place where new ideas for our City are displayed and discussed
- A Place for citizens to talk and debate matters about our City
- A Place with information on the past, the present and the future built environment

### Why do we need one?

Our environment is what makes us thrive. Attractive places stimulate inhabitants, happy people get more done and enjoy life more. The Farrell Review published March 2014 [www.farrellreview.co.uk](http://www.farrellreview.co.uk) proposed that all towns should have one; a lot have been set up.

### Where would it be in Hereford?

Ideally in a central position, easily accessible for all and with convenient opening times. An open area within a busy public building where visitors and residents could access information. Suggested locations are shown on page 5, it could be adjacent to, or with the tourist services and historical information could be linked to the library.

### How would it operate?

As an independent operation with Local Authority Officers providing information – maps and proposals. HCS has successfully worked with Herefordshire Council on pre-consultation projects encouraging more straightforward

consultations. A source for information exchange and consultations; a forum for Hereford's developing built environment.

### The physical space

If we consider an area of just 600 square feet there could be room for

- display boards, leaflet racks, post it note comments board
- a computer linked to the Council Web site for access to current planning applications
- display boards with the current major planning issues (whether a new cycle route or new homes in the City centre)
- table and chairs for timed meetings with Councillors or planning officers
- a relief map (digitally created that could show possible new buildings)

### Modus operandi

HCS volunteers could attend at pre-prescribed times. Cost prevents much



urban room - sheffield



urban room - cheltenham

personnel involvement but if sited adjacent to other services there could be adequate oversight. Small meetings could take place, by arrangement, to discuss applications.

### What is special about this proposal?

Urban Rooms around the country are an eclectic group (many in the Urban Room Network) all very different to each other. Some are community interest companies, one is becoming a developer in its own right, one run by a university. Some have grown out of lobby groups battling for better facilities, many are in dispute with their local authorities. At HCS we don't understand why the community cannot work with, and together with, our officers and councillors to create a vision for a better Hereford. This ought to be a joint initiative - Herefordshire Council, Hereford City Council, planning officers and Hereford Civic Society.

## Civic Voice

Civic Voice believes that communities should have a say throughout the planning process that would create an "Accessible, Balanced and Collaborative (ABC) planning system" to ensure that conversations are had with everyone – not just those who are already engaged.

Joan Humble, chair of Civic Voice, cited research by Grosvenor Britain & Ireland, published in July 2019, which found that the public lacks trust in the planning system. It suggested that just 2 per cent of the public trust developers and only 7 per cent have faith in local authorities

when it comes to planning for large-scale development.

"We can either ignore this research and carry on as we are and continue to face the same challenges in building the homes the nation needs, or we can accept that the system is not working for local people and do something about it," said Humble.

Civic Voice would like to see

- the introduction of a preapplication community consultation stage and a limited community right of appeal into the planning system.
- a strengthening of statements of community involvement so they are set out in accessible English, and explain how the local authority and developers will be expected to meaningfully engage with local communities on planning.
- the introduction of an 'Office for Public Participation' to oversee standards and consistency in public consultations.

Ian Harvey, director of Civic Voice, added: "We have a planning system that may not be completely broken, but it certainly needs rebalancing and fixing to work better for communities. Doing so will ensure we build a modern planning system with communities at the heart. With these changes, we believe we can build the homes that we need and ensure that everyone in England can say, 'we care about where we live'."

## Support for the concept

Anstey Burnett, Senior Communications Manager, Design Council writes: 'The Design Council has long been advocating for a 'whole-place' and inclusive approach to how we plan our housing, communities, towns and cities. That's why being part of the inaugural Festival of Place in July 2019 was a refreshing experience for us. As the name suggests, the focus was on 'place'; not on housing, infrastructure, transport, sustainability or any other element in isolation, but on creating a forum where all of these factors can come together to inform the thinking about how we plan and build the homes

and communities of the future. My talk at the festival was on the importance of inclusive design:-

1. A people-first approach
- Moving the planning and development process away from consultations to conversations with real people and communities, starting early on, to find out what they really need.**
2. Diversity at the core
3. Health, wellbeing and the environment
4. Education and legislation
5. Empowerment and longevity'

## Whatever happened to the Hereford Area Plan Hereford Design Guide?

Hundreds of hours of volunteer and officer time was spent on the necessary steps to develop the HAP now destined to be swallowed into a Special Planning Guidance document. The Hereford Design Guide, not enthusiastically approved of by HCS, was not published in the Spring of 2019 as expected. Both these visionary projects could be developed through an Urban Room setting. Updates could be physically posted, as well as being on the Council website, updating all on the latest progress. A weekly news item could be emailed to all, possibly using a volunteer from HCS working with Herefordshire Council.



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# DESIGN REVIEW PANELS

## Encouragement to set one up

In April 2011, the 'Commission for Architecture and Built Environment' (CABE) and 'The Design Council' joined together to support good design, in architecture, space and place making to be at the heart of social and economic renewal. The Design Review process is a fundamental part of this, acting to review applications against the criteria of the National Planning Policy Framework and good architectural practice.

At a national level, for significant developments and major infrastructure projects, the Design Council and CABE appraise schemes and give feedback. At a regional level, there are 8 bodies across England forming 'The Design Review Panel', Herefordshire is within the West Midlands Design Review Panel area [www.designreviewpanel.co.uk/west-midlands-design-review-panel](http://www.designreviewpanel.co.uk/west-midlands-design-review-panel) At Local level, design review panels have the opportunity to highlight issues that are particular to the area, and work with the provisions of the planning system to ensure that high standards are met. The South West Review Panel is a great example, being of a similar rural population to Herefordshire. It has two or three dates per month when applicants can book a one and a half hour session for design review and advice, with written feedback supplied to the applicant 14 days following the session. The panel consists of technologists, architects, urban designers, surveyors, planners, ecologists, arboriculturalists, engineers, conservation and heritage experts. The value of a Design Review Panel is fundamentally held in the knowledge and experience of those taking part, the impartiality in which they act and

the range of people willing to engage in the process. As a recently qualified architect, I have a direct involvement and interest in designing places that fit well into their environment and meet the requirements of their users. Fundamental to this is good design that sees beyond planning policy to enrich those who use the spaces. I believe that this can be best achieved by engaging with others in an inclusive design process.

Deborah Johnson RIB  
Associate Hook Mason Ltd.

At Hook Mason we can see the value of a design panel to review and lend support to design proposals. From conversations we understand ourselves not to be alone in this sentiment. We would like to promote the idea of Herefordshire professionals becoming Design Review Panel members from which a local, Herefordshire Design Review Panel could be formed. This would then be promoted as a resource to strengthen the quality of design schemes and add weight to planning applications.

Deborah Johnson RIBA

## The National Design Guide

Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places forms part of the revised suite of Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) that is currently being issued by the The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places, by outlining and illustrating the government's priorities for them in the form of ten characteristics. These relate to: Context, Identity, Built form, Movement, Nature, Public spaces, Uses, Homes & buildings, Resources and Lifespan.

The guide also illustrates how well-designed places can be achieved in practice using a range of good practice examples. Its focus is on good design in the planning system, and is primarily for local authority planning officers, councillors, applicants, their design teams, people in local communities and their representatives. It has been designed with clear explanations,

definitions, good practice examples and illustrations.

'It gives those bringing forward new proposals more certainty about what is expected and acceptable to help make the planning and delivery process smoother. It also provides a starting point for local authorities and communities to prepare their own tailored design guides that focus on what makes their local area special and distinctive.'

Jane Dann, Tibbalds,  
authors of report

## The National Design Guide Part 1 Para 1

Places affect us all – they are where we live, work and spend our leisure time. Well-designed places influence the quality of our experience as we spend time in them and move around them. We enjoy them, as occupants or users but also as passers-by and visitors. They can lift our spirits by making us feel at home, giving us a buzz of excitement or creating a sense of delight. They have been shown to affect our health and well-being, our feelings of safety, security, inclusion and belonging, and our sense of community cohesion.

## New Design Guidance

Inaugural National Design Guide for England published October 2019 National Model Design Code to be published early 2020 for consultation. Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) on Design has been updated. 'Effective Community Engagement' has been added to the Design PPG. Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission due to report -delayed by the election.

## CALL TO ACTION

Let's create an Urban Room - where?

Let's inspire a Design Review Panel?



broad st library

Respectfully, Hereford is not good at delivering projects in a joined up way. Now, as the new coalition deliberates on the major issues of road building and modal shift in movement patterns, is clearly the right time to put these modest steps in place.

- **An Urban Room** – Where? In the library, NMiTE, the One-stop-shop or the Town Hall?
- **A Design Review Panel** providing oversight on all major new projects.



town hall - lobby

Thoughts and ideas should be sent to our chairman, David Fowler, who will convene a meeting before the end of February with all interested parties to see these ideas realised.

- by email [david693fowler@btinternet.com](mailto:david693fowler@btinternet.com)
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# AMAZING PLACES OF HEREFORD

## The Story of Hereford’s Libraries

The Enlightenment dawned for an élite group of Herefordians in 1779 when a London bookseller, John Allen, opened a shop in High Town. He was not the first bookseller or printer to trade in Hereford but he was the first to establish a Circulating Library at No. 2 High Town – next door-but-one to Widemarsh Street. He printed a catalogue, which could be purchased for sixpence and promised to have available for loan books on ‘history, antiquities, voyages, travels, lives, memoirs, poetry, plays, novels, divinity, physics, surgery, anatomy, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, trade, natural history gardening, husbandry etc’. The subscription was 12s a year or 4s a quarter and subscribers could borrow two books at a time and exchange them three times a week. A revised catalogue was issued in 1787, by which time the library had accumulated upwards of 2000 books.

The price of the subscription suggests that Allen’s library was used principally by the well-to-do of Hereford and these from the surrounding countryside. Although we learn from the government espionage records that the most dangerous revolutionary in Britain, the Jacobin, Citizen John Thewall (as he liked to be called), hiding in Breconshire, made occasional visits to Hereford in the 1790s to meet fellow travellers and to borrow books from John Allen. But, in general, as Jane Austen shows, it was women who developed a great appetite for library books, and especially for up-to-date creative literature. The alternative was to seek access to private libraries, kept by clerics or members of the gentry. In this period, Sir John Cotterell of Garnons and the earl of Oxford at Eywood, near Kington, both had extensive libraries. Very soon the Hereford Journal, printed next door to Allen’s at No. 1 High Town was advertising new books, which could be obtained from the proprietor of the paper, Mr. Pugh. Like Amazon today, Pugh’s ability to secure books

quickly from London, probably within a few days, no doubt undermined his neighbour’s circulating library. In the first decade of the 19th century, Allen’s Circulating Library passed to John Allen junior who had served in the local militia during the Napoleonic Wars, he was a radical utilitarian and a supporter of parliamentary reform. In 1815 together with a group of enlightened citizens he helped to found the Hereford Permanent Library and collected an impressive list of about 150 subscribers. Unfortunately, in 1822 a group of conservative members of the governing committee began censoring the collection, burning material that were either ‘immoral’ or had an ‘irreligious tendency’. This upset the free-thinking young Allen, especially when the forbidden list began to include classics such as Gibbon’s Decline and Fall and contemporary works such as Joseph Hume’s Essays – the work of a liberal politician, invited by Allen to speak in Hereford. Allen, as a free thinker, saw a public library as an engine for social



broad street library

and political reform and his enthusiasm for such causes found him arraigned in 1822 at the assizes for placing a libellous pamphlet in the new library. Although found guilty, a derisory fine indicated the Court’s support for him, but, following the procedure of the time, he was presented with a bill for £400 to pay for the expensive proceedings. He fled to London but not before offering his collection of political tracts to the Permanent Library, from whence they can still be found in the City Reference Library. Allen eventually returned to Hereford in 1828 but after a nervous breakdown was placed in the new Hereford Mental Asylum, where he died the following year. The Hereford Permanent Subscription Library eventually found premises in St John Street and by c.1840 had around 7000 books for loan which, included ‘books by modern English authors (on) history, biography, travel and fiction’. The subscription was £1.10s per annum. By this date there were other specialist libraries in Church Street (The Mechanics Institution); Commercial Street (for the working classes, set-up by the Revd John Venn) and the Library of the Hereford Philosophical, Antiquarian and Literary Society, found upstairs on the corner of High Street and Broad Street. The new liberal paper, the Hereford Times had launched a campaign in 1833 to establish a free-library but this had

languished by the time Parliament passed an act in 1855, urging municipal corporations to raise money on the rates for this purpose. It was Henry Graves Bull, President of the Permanent Subscription Library, and a leading light in the recently formed Woolhope Naturalists Field Club who persuaded the Liverpool shipping magnate, Sir James Rankin, to give £4000 to establish a free-library, museum and clubroom (for Woolhope activities) in Broad Street on the site of a wine and spirit shop. Rankin also recommended as architect, Frederick Kempson, who had recently designed his country house at Much Dewchurch, called Bryngwyn. Kempson (1838-1923) was an active member of the Woolhope Club, son of a vicar of Stoke Lacy who had spent his early career articled to the diocesan architects of Llandaff, the precocious and multi-talented J.P. Seddon and John Pritchard, two of the most celebrated architects of the period. Also from Cardiff Kempson brought Robert Clarke, a sculptor, whose father William had worked with William Burges on the fabulous carvings at Cardiff Castle. Similar extraordinary carving was produced for the façade of the new Hereford Free Library of 1873. David Whitehead

A fuller and referenced account of the development of Hereford’s libraries, written by Jean O’ Donnell and Paul Latcham, can be found in A Herefordshire Miscellany (Woolhope Club, 2000), edited by David Whitehead and John Eisel.



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## ThinkStation

Community groups, industry experts and other stakeholders involved and interested in rail are being given the chance to influence future railway station design as part of ThinkStation – a series of 11 pioneering workshops launched on 22 November 2019 by the Design Council.. ThinkStation builds on their recent work with Network Rail to help develop their Principles of Good Design. By ensuring that a strong design culture is embedded across Network Rail, these design principles play a vital role in supporting the organisation to be a more customer-focused, service-driven

organisation that puts passengers first. Each ThinkStation workshop will focus on one specific design principle and how this can be embedded to create a railway station of the future.



paddington station

# PLANNING MATTERS

## The River Lugg and phosphates

In October 2019, Herefordshire Council issued a 'Position Statement' about current development in the River Lugg catchment area. This came as a complete surprise and shock as the intentions and implications became clear. In short, the Council has imposed a moratorium on any planning applications in the River Lugg catchment area which would require a connection to the mains sewer, the reason being that the river cannot take any further phosphate load. The area affected is most of the northern half of Herefordshire and includes Leominster, Bromyard and Kington.

Part of the Statement said; 'Herefordshire Council as the 'competent authority' under the Habitats Regulations are legally required to assess the potential impacts of projects and plans, including planning applications, on internationally important sites which include the River Wye SAC (Special Area of Conservation). The River Lugg, which is a tributary of the River Wye and forms part of the designated site covering predominantly the north of the Herefordshire, is currently failing its conservation targets of phosphate levels as a result of water pollution from both 'point' source; in particular sewage outlets and 'diffuse' source; agricultural run-off.

The council as the competent authority under the Habitats Regulations must carry out an 'Appropriate Assessment' on any relevant planning application that falls within the Lugg and Wye catchment areas and must be able to determine, with scientific certainty, that there would be no 'Likely Significant Effect' on the designated site, from the project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, in order for the planning application to be granted.

In making this assessment, the council has a legal requirement to consult Natural England and to have regard to their advice. The approach taken by Herefordshire Council and Natural England, as the statutory consultee, has to date, been that there is a route for development to be able to proceed in the River Lugg catchment, even when it may add to the existing phosphate levels in the river, as any increases would be mitigated by the River Wye's Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). The NMP is a partnership project developed to reduce phosphate levels in the Wye catchment, including the River Lugg, to below the target level by 2027 in line with the Water Framework Directive. The NMP is managed by the Nutrient Management Board (NMB), comprising of Herefordshire Council, Powys Council, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, the Environment Agency, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, CABA (WUF), National Farmers' Union

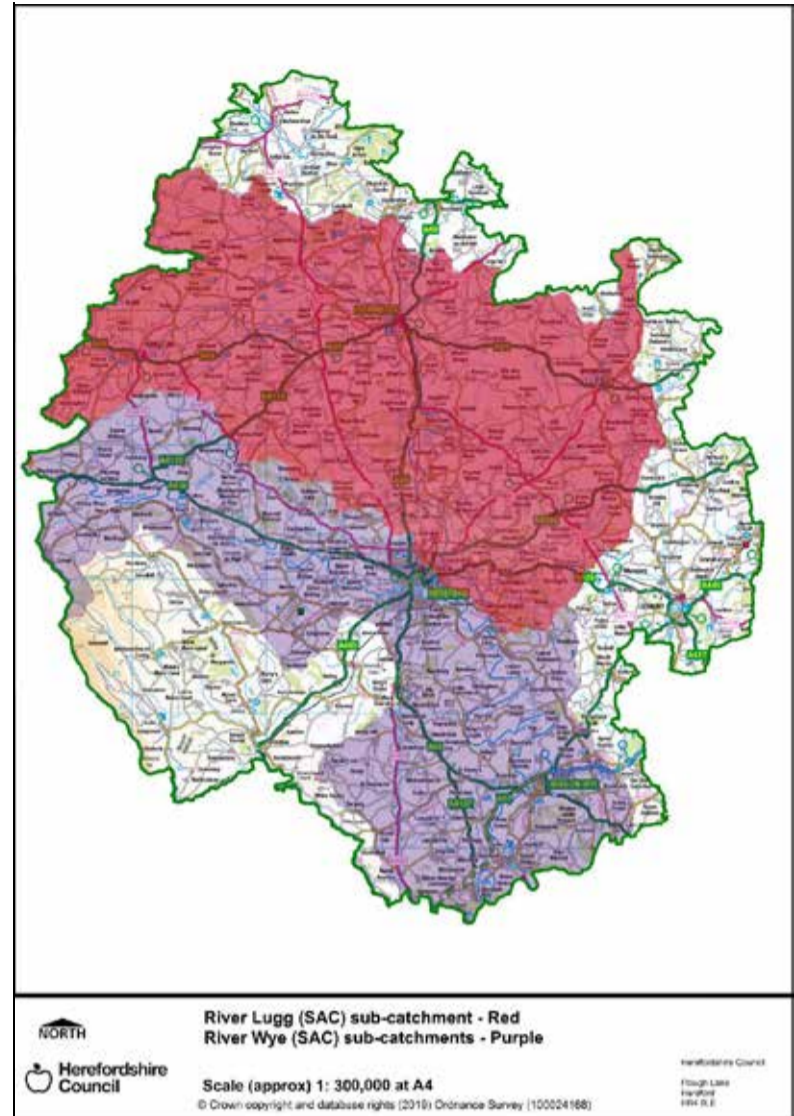
and the County Land and Business Association.'

Herefordshire Council has sought their own legal advice on how to proceed and are in talks with Natural England and other partners to find an effective solution as soon as possible. This includes discussions with the NMB; although the Council say they have received legal advice on this stance, they refuse to release it. The agricultural sector has been well represented in both past and ongoing discussions, but it appears that the development and construction sector (particularly small and medium sized Herefordshire businesses) are not. This is particularly galling, given that the council's position could put at risk in excess of 3,000 local jobs and over £200 million annual turnover (source: HCILG).

In an attempt to have a voice and to understand and be involved in the process, local construction industry professionals have set up the Herefordshire Construction Industry Lobby Group (HCILG) and are engaged in dialogue with the Council. Attempts to gain a seat on the NMP are in progress, but wheels seemingly turn slowly in such situations.

Worryingly, the HCILG is now hearing that existing approvals and condition discharge applications are being refused, which is contrary to the advice initially given by the Council and is causing huge consternation. Independent advice has also confirmed that the River Wye will also reach peak phosphate levels very shortly, at which point development within the whole county will effectively have to stop. The impact of this on local business and livelihoods is clearly untenable. The HCILG want to demonstrate that their industry cares deeply about Herefordshire and its environment and that continuing to build good houses is very important for Herefordshire - they want to be seen as part of the solution, rather than viewed as the source of the problem.

As far back as 2006, the Council were told by Government not to wait for the issue of River Basin Management Plans, but to act straight away and plan



future development so that it did not result in further pressure on the water environment and compromise Water Framework Directive objectives. Here we are, 14 years later, seemingly no further forward and with an undefined timescale for a solution.

Whilst the Council state that the aims of the existing Core Strategy and its

housing targets remain their adopted position, it is hard to see how this can be when the majority of the County is, or is about to be, a no-build zone. Surely the forthcoming review of the Core Strategy must include a fundamental rethink of housing targets and the end of unsustainable mass house building for Herefordshire. James Copeland

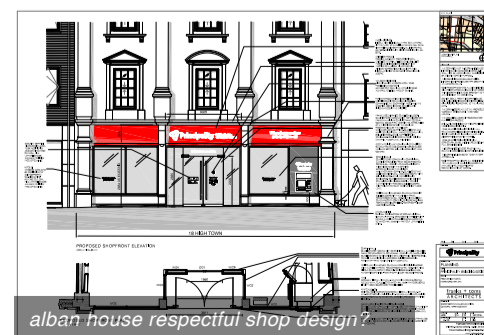
## Planning Applications

HCS continues to comment on applications for the City both positively and negatively. Inappropriate shop fronts often feature and whilst contemporary glazed doors etc. can often be incorporated size, proportion and colour are pertinent. (See comment on Alban House page 3).

### 193042 Grafton Lane

One outstanding application due for a decision in February 2020 is for 300 houses of which 105 are listed as affordable. What is of particular concern is that this site lays south of the railway line which was always considered to

be the limit of housing development for Hereford. With the suspension of works on the Southern Relief Road this can currently not be considered to be a new 'boundary'.



### 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 17th October, 2019  
Green Dragon Hotel at the Green Dragon

Julian Vaughan, MD spoke enthusiastically of the aspirations he and his fellow local investors have to restore The Green Dragon to its former glory. The refurbishment has concentrated on restoration and conservation of the building's historic charm, to rid it of its down at heel coach party image and to re-gain its former role where Herefordians gather to socialise and entertain.

Annual General Meeting

A positive meeting that included the election of committee members to oversee activities for the coming year. The Society remains in good financial health. David Fowler takes over as chairman and will continue to fulfil the Treasurer role. Christine Bucknell, Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes and Will Frecknall join the committee for the first time. Jeremy Milln, Ben Nash, Alan Bucknell and Barbara Ferris were re-elected. Mo Burns, John Faulkner, Kim Cooper and John Bothamley (although remaining as editor of PLACE) did not seek re-election and were thanked for their many years of devoted work for the Society, working on sub committees, meeting with council staff and councillors and contributing hugely to our success. Mo hands over magazine distribution to Will.

Tuesday 19th November, 2019

David Harper, retired courtroom steward provided an insiders' tour of the Courtrooms at the Shire Hall, the oldest court room in the country and still in regular use.

Thursday 21st November, 2019

Marsha O'Mahoney, local historian, recalled many conversations with River Wye people now published in her intriguing book River Voices: The stories of swimmers, walkers, anglers, ferry women and men, canoeists, bailiffs and poachers.

Friday 22nd November, 2019  
General Election Hustings

A crowd of c100 members and guests applauded the presentations of Hereford and South Herefordshire candidates when they laid out their stalls. It was largely good humoured and great to see democracy at work at the local level – rather more balanced and well behaved than Westminster.

Thursday 12th December, 2019

Elly Deacon-Smith and Matt Hayes of Arbor Architects spoke passionately about meeting the challenge of carbon descent: leading by example and the opportunities for genuinely sustainable housing in Herefordshire. Much inspired discussion followed on a well-attended General Election night!

OPINIONS

Not joined up

'Plans to expand Marlbrook Primary School at Green Croft, have taken a big step forward as the council approved the capital funding to enable the project to move from the design stage to construction' December 2019 Press Release. This project hugely expands the size of this successful primary school to accommodate nigh on 800

pupils. How can a Council, that has placed a moratorium on road building works, make a decision like this which will greatly increase traffic movements to this poorly accessed school? At the same time drawing pupils from small local schools which will, inevitably, have to close due to reduced numbers. Where is the joined up thinking? SV

Shoeboxes

'The Government has said that it will be 'changing the rules' around permitted development rights for new housing to improve standards. Meanwhile residents of some rooms in the proposed office to residential scheme in Watford, won on appeal under Permitted Development Rights, will be living in small spaces with no fresh air and no window. It has come to a new low when planners must wave through developments that are probably unsuitable for pets. There is something rotten about a country where the poorest are penalised the most. The people who do the dirty jobs we depend upon who clean bottoms in care homes and wash the dishes in hospital kitchens – they all deserve better.' Graeme Bell, past president Planning Officers Society.



marlbrook school proposals

Forthcoming Events

7.00pm for 7.30 Kindle Centre by ASDA, Belmont, Hereford HR2 7JE

Thursday 16th January, 2020

Alex Coppock, RIBA, Director of the award winning local architects Communion Architects will talk about transforming and inspiring places: fusing the best of old and new to make buildings to enjoy and endure.

Thursday 20th February, 2020

Robert Heath, RIBA, conservation architect and expert on the use of lime explains Stonework: Failures and Remedies. Bob writes 'With many crumbling ancient stone buildings in Hereford, our city wall and the ruins of Blackfriars monastery this is a subject that needs much attention.'

Thursday 19th March, 2020

Nic Howes presents the Hereford Yazor Brooks Restoration Project The Yazor, Widemarsh and Eign Brooks are successive sections of the Wye's largest tributary through Hereford City. An illustrated talk explaining the context and history of the Project and its work and outcomes.

Thursday 16th April, 2020

Annual Lecture at the Green Dragon

Vicki Tomlinson, Director of Development at Connexus, will deliver: The Provision of Social Housing – from Thatcher to Today See front page for details.

2pm.Sunday 17th May, 2020

Yazor and Eign Brooks Walk led by Nic Howes (follow up to the talk on 19th March, a joint event with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust).

An historical and botanical exploration of Hereford's little known tributaries. Meet 2.00pm for 2.15 start. Bakers Lane and Three Elms Road junction, opposite Whitecross School (nearest postcode HR4 ORN). Conclude with a garden picnic tea where the Eign Brook meets the Wye off Hampton Park Road close to Brookfield Vets (walk takes approx. two hours)

Thursday 21st May 2020

Mark Pearce, Managing Director, Skylon Park - Hereford Enterprise Zone Reinventing Rotherwas from a vast wartime munitions factory to a crucible for cutting edge science, development, service and manufacture.

HCS Contact Details

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