

# news

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## hereford civic society

the city's built environment forum

Autumn 2012

## New Elizabethan Architecture in Hereford

Colour supplement of our best buildings of the last 60 years

## A view from the inside

Alistair McHarg comments on the ESG saga

## Down from the Hills

Corinne Westacott on why Hereford?

## Local Transport Plan

Joan Simple struggles to understand

## Hereford Now

Hereford Sea Cadets Hall

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Libraries

Winter 2013

Church reordering

Spring 2013

The City's forum for discussion about the built environment.  
Check the back page for details and meetings in different locations.

[www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk)



# Preface.....



**W**hat a summer – let’s keep the momentum going – this quarter we publish Hereford’s view of the Best Building Projects of the Second Elizabethan era. We have picked six extra special ones, and another thirty-odd particularly accomplished projects.

You’ll recognise Thomas Heatherwick’s cauldron on our front cover, and its relevance to HCS? His dad, Hugh, is one of our members, but the justification to print is that Thomas (at the Hay Festival in June) referred to the influence his parents had on how he observes the world, and thinks laterally. This is what HCS does in Hereford – provides ideas and alternatives, to respectfully and hopefully open eyes to

what can be achieved with good design in our built environment. Our meeting in September, A Meeting of Architectural Minds, [see report on back page] was just that – and a plea for more forward planning. Our Hereford 2032 meeting will move this discussion forward.

We welcome three new contributors; Alistair McHaig, Joan Simple and Corinne Westacott – all thinkers with valid ideas. My proposals for the Racecourse (page 3) and exchanging the Amey model in favour of a John Lewis Partnership style company, (page 6) to keep the highway spend within Herefordshire might strike a positive note with our Cabinet members? And I have a pragmatic proposal for the old Rotherwas building (page 5) All three in blue panels.

John Bothamley chairman

## News

### Awards

A West Midlands building made it into this year’s RIBA Awards: Edward Cullinan’s £9-million BFI Film Store in Warwickshire. In the South-West, Courtyard designer Glen Howell’s Triangle eco-housing development in Swindon, inspired by Grand Designs’ presenter Kevin McCloud, was by far the most inspirational in terms of 21st century mass housing. A rule change this year means that all RIBA award winners are automatically short-listed for the prestigious Stirling Prize.

Two Herefordshire schools featured in the 2012 design awards scheme sponsored by the British Council for Schools Environments. Architype’s Staunton-on-Wye Primary School won a commendation, while Haverstock Associates’ Whitecross High School picked up the Test of Time award.

### Long and winding road

News that old-established diy trader Rockfield is to close after Christmas, means that the re-location of the Royal Mail Sorting Office’s 120-space vehicles park - plus 15 pending CPO legal hearings - are now the principal determinants for construction work to start on the east-west “Link Road”. A Royal Mail spokesperson would say only that it was “considering an offer which has been put to us by the local authority.”

It is surprising that a “suitable” site has not been found to relocate Rockfield within the city, presumably not suitable for ESG?

### More sense on City Centres

Peter Drummond, President of British Council of Shopping Centres, comments: “The Prime Minister’s appointment of Mary Portas was an important step but we strongly believe that Government now

needs to take more decisive action to encourage investment in town and city centres. High streets and shopping centres fulfil leisure and community needs as well as retailing ones so constant investment and refreshment is vital, but the private sector needs supportive policy to make it viable.”

“We have written to the Prime Minister following last week’s flurry of announcements on further planning reform to outline a number of wider issues that need addressing. Principally, Government must put further pressure on the implementation of a town centres first policy at local authority level. Secondly, a more widespread and effective use of tax increment financing to deliver hundreds of millions of pounds of local infrastructure must be urgently considered.”



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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

### Contributors

- John Bothamley** – chairman HCS, architect developer and chair of charitable grant making trust.
- Mo Burns** – tireless campaigner for sustainable solutions.
- John Faulkner** – retired Chartered Civil Engineer, Chairman of the Society 2003-2006
- Nick Jones** – journalist on architecture and environmental matters
- Alistair McHarg** – Hereford property manager
- Andree Poppleston** – researcher and architecture critic
- Joan Simple** – auditor and local activist
- Corinne Westacott** – former television producer and journalist
- David Whitehead** – Founder member of HCS, historian and author, secretary of the Woolhope Club

**FRONT PAGE IMAGE:** Olympic Cauldron by Thomas Heatherwick

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## Golden wonder

Not many public buildings notch up 100,000 visitors in their first six weeks of existence. But that was the measure of the curiosity which Worcester's emblematic new £60-million Hive university/city library and history centre (designed by the Stirling Prize winners Feilden Clegg Bradley Studio), engendered this summer following its Royal opening. This project and others will be reviewed in our Winter supplement [publication mid January 2013] and discussed at our "linked" January meeting

## Superfast broadband planning changes

Whilst HCS supports the fast-track roll-out of superfast broadband the September announcement by new culture secretary Maria Miller is of some concern.

Under the proposals, broadband street cabinets and other infrastructure would be installed without the need for prior approval from the local council. In addition, overhead broadband lines could be installed in any area without the need for planning consent. However ministers will encourage providers to engage with the local community on the siting of overhead lines, as a matter of good practice.

Ministers also intend to make it easier for companies to lay broadband cables in streets and to install cabinets and cables under private land. Watch your step!

## Herefordshire Tree Forum

Hereford now has a Tree Fund, specifically set up to encourage and support the planting of more trees across Hereford and its suburbs. The Fund has been created in memory of Peter Williamson - 5 limes were planted in Peter's memory last November at White Cross, and more are planned this winter at both ends of Kings Acre Avenue.

The Tree Fund will be managed by Herefordshire Community Foundation, registered charity number 01094935. There will be an annual grant-making process through an advisory panel.

If you share this vision of a greener, healthier, more beautiful city, please support The Tree Fund by making a donation by sending a cheque made payable to 'Herefordshire Community Foundation', and send to: David Barclay, Herefordshire Community Foundation, Fred Bulmer Centre, Wall Street, Hereford, HR4 9HP.

Further information from David Marshall, Tree Fund Advisory Panel at [damagelimited@btinternet.com](mailto:damagelimited@btinternet.com)

# Hereford Now

## Hereford Sea Cadets' HQ

There is no reason why a youth "hut" shouldn't meet Vitruvius's three criteria for a good building, firmness, commodity and delight, and here the local committee has met them all, at a low price including donated and recycled materials; congratulations – and no architect involved!

Firmness – soundly constructed on piles to cover the 1 in 100 flood risk, it is well insulated and includes under floor heating for the classrooms and office.

Commodity – deck room, stores, kitchen and classrooms all to their particular requirements and uniquely designed for seafarers! The lavatories can be separately accessed for partial use of the building by those using the adjacent playing fields.

Delight – It is a functional design that suggests it's nautical connection with two porthole windows and timber cladding to the riverside, and the generally green decoration fits well in the local scene. It's a place the local youth want to visit, that's the real delight.



## Hyndburn Borough Council

Developers Peel Holdings have launched judicial review proceedings against Hyndburn Borough Council in a row over restrictions on what type of retailer can occupy a retail park. The Council's planning committee has refused to lift conditions intended to protect shops in the town centres of Blackburn and Accrington. Good on them, meanwhile HC is apparently giving concessions to the ESG developers; which, essentially, is a new deal. .

## Kidderminster Civic Society visit Hereford

Thirty keen and interested members of Kidderminster Civic Society came to see us and, firstly, took coffee in the recently reordered St.Peter's Church in St.Owen Street. Our chairman outlined our work, and how we divide our projects between members of the committee, who then recruit further from the membership and beyond. Three walks were offered - down Georgian St.Owens Street; an emphasis on churches, or a City centre walk. At lunchtime we met up on Castle Green for a picnic, and then our visitors were free to wander until their coach collected them.

We much look forward to our return visit to Kidderminster on Tuesday 6th November 2012. –see Forthcoming Events.

## A member writes

When I park in Tesco's city centre store I enjoy two hours free parking. Shouldn't all the other retailers pay for our car parking? Let us have two hours free (at their expense) and then hefty charges, to deter long term parking.

## Racecourse, under starter's orders

Big business trying to stitch us up and the majority of Herefordians saying lets just keep it. The, not unusual, clash bringing about hurried decisions and rushed out statements. "Over my dead body" said our Leader – when asked if it would be sold for housing. But let's look at this coolly and with an open mind.

The present tenants appear to be acting unreasonably. Not relinquishing their lease until it is too late to arrange next years racing calendar; but seem set on leaving. The Council get back a sporting facility apparently requiring investment to bring it up to a good standard. There has been racing in Hereford for a very long time, it is good for our name, many want it retained. Also we need housing land, and this location, within walking and cycling distance of the City centre would be ideal.

Couldn't we do both? Some stylish apartment blocks overlooking the race and golf courses, a hotel as well, speculative and shared housing, together with supported living, filling in the corners of the site. A truly mixed community, all enjoying the sports atmosphere. This is an extremely valuable site, HC should get maximum value for it. Sporting and housing - Councillors should brief their officers to undertake a "back of envelope" review – no major consultants retained – if the figures stack up then go for it. A Sporting Quarter!

JB

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# A view from inside.....

Alistair McHarg – local property manager reflects on the long running ESG saga.

Successful property investment and management is, in part, about the controlling of risk, the seizing of opportunity and the meeting of customers and clients needs and expectations.

It requires the ability to absorb and accommodate national and local economic factors, and to bring competing elements of budget control with market understanding together to create a product that is desirable to the market and avoids functional obsolescence ... and of course... to be lucky!

It has therefore been interesting to watch the machinations of Hereford Futures (formerly Edgar Street Grid Ltd) and "the Old Market site". The project is one of those strange hybrid developments of "public and private sector partnerships" with the private sector bringing experience, entrepreneurship and capital. The public sector providing the land, infrastructure and political will together with pump priming finance.

I recently looked through my files relating to this scheme to discover that as a local land owner in the area we had submitted responses to consultations regarding this area going back to 1997. 15 years later, we have a Conservative led full Council, the scheme has been much reduced and all elements for beginning work on the site are in place – including funding.

This was to be provided through "partnerships" and a regeneration company was established utilizing public money from the Government's Advantage West Midlands organisation. Expensive and expert staff were recruited and an "independent" board selected, it was chaired by someone of standing in the community with highly attuned and acknowledged commercial experience. There followed a "beauty contest" of private sector partners which resulted in Stanhope's appointment to lead the development of the retail quarter.

So, let's look at how the main players performed. Firstly, Stanhope. In terms of property investment and management disciplines we can be reasonably sure that Stanhope will have minimized their risk, succeeded in meeting their partner's agendas (at least in part), obtained the pre-lets necessary to make the deal happen and secured the private sector finance needed to proceed and quite properly made their profit.

Herefordshire Council, how has it done? Although everything is "commercially confidential", we know that the capital receipts that the Council is to receive bear absolutely no resemblance to what was originally envisaged. They have even had to borrow £27m to fund the link road which was previously to be provided through developer's contribution. They have created much angst amongst their own business community within the City Centre. They have brought into question, in the minds of many people, whether their processes are honest and transparent

and that their motives were genuinely for the greater good and not ultimately for political expediency.

However, it can be acknowledged that the Council has pursued its agenda with great determination, albeit in the face of a challenging economic climate, against the backdrop of ever evolving and changing shopping habits coupled with falling demand and rent levels for retail space and even scepticism from its own community.

Will the "Old Market" retail scheme provide the element of regeneration that the Council wanted without having a deleterious effect on our historic city centre?

The jury is out and only time will tell, but we can be sure of one thing, all of those involved on the political side of this "partnership" will either have retired or been removed from office before we will know the true effect.

The politicians responsible for this "punt", which is what it is, will not themselves be financially accountable for what they have done; after all, it is not their money. They have merely sought to use public assets to achieve their ambitions for our City, let us hope that they were right, if not... it is Herefordshire's citizens who will have to pay for the deal that had to be done.

## Down From The Hills.....

Corinne Westacott – former television producer and journalist who works from a small remote settlement in south Herefordshire. Here she tells us what a trip into Hereford means to her and to her rural friends and neighbours.

We're a funny sort of people in the South Herefordshire rural hinterland. I've been doing a small, and recklessly unscientific, survey amongst friends and neighbours, finding out how they use Hereford – how often they travel the fourteen miles into the city and what they do when they get there. It seems we're all very unlikely to go trawling around High Town's clothes shops; when you live amongst sheep you can spend years in the same jeans and moth-eaten jumpers. We're far more likely to salivate over cheap rolls of chicken wire out at Countrywide or spend a pleasant half hour comparing mole traps in Philip Morris.

There's a serious point here. Fifty four percent of the county's inhabitants live in the countryside and, although not all of us keep running ducks and knit our own yoghurt, we'd prefer a city which reflects our needs, not those of the people of Milton Keynes.

As it is, in a city equivalent of the game, "Snog, Marry, Avoid," most of the people I spoke to, avoid Hereford. We tend to "snog" Monmouth or Ross or Abergavenny as those north of the city probably play footy with Leominster, Bromyard or Ludlow. People who choose to live off the beaten track see shopping and towns as an unfortunate necessity. So those towns which are not über-urban, where the architecture speaks of the vernacular and where you can park and shop easily, call to us every time. So what would woo us back to Hereford?

Perhaps a traffic system which does not resemble a Black Hole. From the south, cross Greyfriars Bridge at your peril, for you may not return. Once across the bridge, you arrive at the Newmarket Street roundabout. Turning right onto the dual carriageway, you head for the Maylord car park. You have to drive nearly to Ledbury before you can turn back on yourself to get to it. Some friends told me they once had visitors who set off to see the Mappa Mundi. They found themselves being channelled along the aforementioned carriageway into what looked like the underbelly of the city. They couldn't turn around, kept going and ended up back home in Birmingham. We also have the only Tesco in Britain where you need insider knowledge and an advanced driving certificate to get into the car park. Whatever goodies there are in the city centre, if accessing them is painful, people just won't come.

I think we hicks from the sticks would embrace a new invention: a rural city (an oxymoron, I know), one which embraces quieter, greener values and avoids the homogenous and bland. Well done, those people who decided to abandon the redevelopment of the perfectly elegant Broad Street in favour of creating more cycle routes to the city. We should also up the country ante by making more of the Wye. Boat hire, river events, riverside cafés opposite the Cathedral - a new river focus would help revitalise Bridge Street and the poor old Left Bank.

We're also hoping that the redevelopment of the Buttermarket creates an opportunity to buy all our superb Herefordshire produce under one roof. Markets have always been central to the rural way of life and a good one could be a lynchpin of Hereford. At the moment, we drive past all our orchards and our famous cattle and then come into the city centre and find French apples and a large bronze bull. And we have to negotiate Traffic Armageddon to get there. Is it really any wonder it's hard to coax us out of our lovely hills?



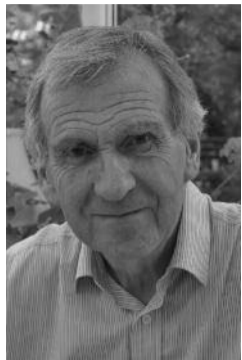
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# Rus in urbe – country in the city

David Whitehead – Hereford historian and author

David continues his perambulations around Hereford, this quarter heading North – to Munstone and Shelwick Green



For the first six years of my life in Hereford I lived at Holmer, just within the boundary of the Liberty of Hereford, which follows the Roman Road. Indeed, I lived close to a major Roman crossroads where *Itinera* XIV travelling south from Wroxeter to Caerleon crossed the road from Worcester to Brecon. I could almost hear the legions trudging through our house – as I told my children. In 1970 Roman Road marked the thin line between the countryside and the town, as it had done since the time of the Saxons. Now the boundary is less clear and already breached with much development either side of Holmer Park. Nevertheless, there

is still some traditional countryside here – small fields and thick hedge-rows - if you cross the A49 into Church Way, nearly opposite Holmer parish church. There is also historical interest. The neat row of cottages - some rather spoilt by the loss of their gardens – were illustrated by John Duncumb in the *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Hereford* (1805) as model cottages ‘for the accommodation of poor families, not requiring more extensive apartments’. They were built by the parish as an alternative to the workhouse. Next door, Holmer Park, now a health centre, was built by Charles Watkins, the proprietor of the Hereford Brewery and Alfred Watkins’ father. The sturdy iron palisade either side of the main gate once surrounded the precinct of St Paul’s cathedral in London and, if you peep inside the back gate, there is the largest surviving fragment of famous Hereford Market Hall that stood in High Town until 1861. Watkins converted it into an aviary. Opposite is Copelands, a late Regency house, set in fine gardens shaded by giant Wellingtonias, immune, it seems, from lightning strikes. The lane adjoining it – Coldwell Lane – leads to the ‘cold well’ – a pool fed by the infant Aylesbrook, one of the lost streams of Hereford, which disappears beneath the racecourse. The local scouts in the 1970s spent much time keeping this pond open as a wildlife refuge. It is still clear of vegetation but rather muddy after the recent rains. The road climbs up through floriferous hedgerows and, on the north, beyond Highfield House there is an ancient orchard of perry pears. Below is the Rose Garden where clearly there was a rose nursery in the past on its still extensive grounds. This was already a popular watering hole forty years ago – and accessible by a footpath via Holmer Court, if you wanted to drink and not drive. Two hundred yards beyond the pub you cross the original route of the A49 – the lane to Lower Lyde – which emerged from Hereford via Widemarsh Street, over College Hill, across the Roman Road, heading for the medieval bridge across

the Lugg at Moreton. In the early 1970s Irish horse dealers still drove ponies from the Brecon Beacons *en masse* to Hereford market and we – my family and I – met a stampede on a Sunday afternoon in the narrow lane; a frightening but old-world experience.



Bathing at Shelwick Green

The ultimate objective of our walks – or cycle ride – along this lane through Munstone was Shelwick Green, which like the mythological Camberwick Green had a romantic ring about it. Unlike Shelwick village, which has been dreadfully over-developed with every type of off-the-shelf housing since the 1960s, the Green albeit a little gentrified today, was patently a ‘squatter settlement’ in the 1970s with flimsy housing, goats and chickens very much in evidence, and the detritus of dealing in marginal products e.g. second hand cars etc. Presumably because of the threat of flooding there has been very little infilling and so, the hedged enclosures, orchards and a scattering of vernacular structures make this one of Herefordshire’s least spoilt hamlets. All the cottages have a wonderful array of outbuildings, sheds and workshops, with much exquisitely rusted corrugated iron in evidence. Also, there is a strip of common land running through the community. Little did we realise, at the time, that one of the derelict houses, Shelwick Court, was a 15th century hall house – now owned and restored by the Landmark Trust. Where the hamlet runs out into the Lugg Meadows there is a long cobbled causeway, raised above the common land, which ends abruptly at the river. Later I learnt that this was a piece of medieval engineering work carried out by the Bishop of Hereford, giving all season access to his lucrative watermill. For us, it was a place with a gravelly beach and safe access to the river. Along with a few discriminating teenagers this was a place to spend a summer’s day swimming, paddling, eating, and reading a book – rusticing at Shelwick Green. However, nothing is safe today, if you glance at a map, the Western Relief Road will take-off westwards from the A49 somewhere between Lyde and Holmer, and so too will its eastern extension, heading for a junction with the Bromyard and Worcester roads, through Munstone and/or Shelwick.



Shelwick Green – asympny in rusted iron and grey timber

## North Lights Building - Rotherwas

The future of this huge building covering over an acre has an uncertain future. Some wish to see it demolished, some to refurbish it as a SAS exhibition and museum site. Whilst I appreciate the potential value of a popular tourist destination, is the time right to raise millions? The viability of our macro economy is likely to be questionable for, at least, a decade. My suggestion is to build a small glass sided pavilion in one corner, incorporating historical information and just leave the rest to further deteriorate as a memorial to the foolishness of conflict. It was here that hundreds of tons of explosives were despatched to wreak destruction in Europe. We shouldn’t be proud of our local history – we should seek to just remember. The Enterprise Zone should concentrate on security matters and look forward, rather than being a historical theme park. It is where we are going that is important.

JB

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# Short Term Local Transport Plan Out for Consultation

Joan Simple – auditor and local activist

Herefordshire Council started its latest consultation on a short term transport plan for 2012-2015 on 10th September 2012. Next year a consultation will then be undertaken on a longer term transport plan (to 2031), as part of the Core Strategy, once officers have produced a Local Development Plan that is both “sound” and “economically viable”.

The current consultation which runs from 10th September until the 16th November, has commenced despite the fact that all the available evidence has yet to be provided. Key elements are missing- the report on the strategy for Car Parking in Hereford (previously done in 2009) is not due to be published until the end of September; and a report on extending rail services into Rotherwas/Holme Lacy and increasing train frequency, may not even be available until after the consultation. The Council has not done a report on rail in the last 6 years despite previous transport



consultations showing that improving rail infrastructure and services was ranked 5th out of transport priorities in the LTP 3 Consultation report in March 2010. The other flaw in the short term transport plan and response form is that it is once again written in a form of transport management speak, asking local residents to rank Network Development, Active Travel, Public Transport, Transport Safety, Asset Management. I welcome the fact that residents should be encouraged to read the transport plan in detail, I think this group classification is confusing for the average person in the street.

A lot of Herefordshire's Council decisions, particularly those regarding planning and transport matters, are not founded on a sound, coherent and robust evidence base. The council's own Overview and Scrutiny committee has made recommendations to the Cabinet on how to deliver a good consultation, highlighting that these should not be commenced until all the evidence is available and up to date and the documents can be easily understood. However, the comments and recommendations of this sole scrutiny committee didn't even get reported to the Cabinet this July, let alone minuted and implemented. Things only improve when we learn from mistakes, otherwise the same mistakes keep being repeated ad infinitum.

Transport is a key issue for everyone. Many people will be unaware that transport is being consulted upon, as the consultation is being wrapped up in a much wider exercise for local residents to “be vocal about the services that are important to them”. If you wish to take part in this latest consultation please visit the council website at [www.consult.herefordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/LTPlan/consultationHome](http://www.consult.herefordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/LTPlan/consultationHome)

## Confusing stats. from the Council

HCS asked Herefordshire Council (HC) to confirm the statements in Ms.Simple's article.

This current LTP is an interim measure, decoupled from the Local Development Framework, to achieve some progress up to 2015, subject to the views expressed by the consultees.

HCS maintains that local consultation documents should be clearer than this one.

Essentially projects not covered by this Local Transport Plan, 2012 – 2015, are the

- Link Road – funded by capital programme although to be constructed within the Plan period.
- Some of the £6.8m (local contribution) of Destination Hereford funding is included.

The Capital cycle infrastructure costs for 2012-13 are £540,000 (includes the Stretton Sugwas cycle scheme).

HC must make consultation clearer and easier to understand. Whilst opinions expressed by contributors are their own, HCS believes Ms. Simple's article is broadly correct in detail subject to the above clarifications.

## New Highways contract

With Hereford Council's contract with Amey concluding in 2013, this proposal keeps our highway spend in the county, enhances our local economy and could be a brainwave.

The HCS visit to Amey's works and salt barn stimulated discussion on how Herefordshire should best look after its public assets. HCS is apolitical but believes that community and localism are important and, not least, government policy is followed. Subcontracting of public services to the private sector is widely adopted by most local authorities but the style of the 'deal' varies and clearly is important.

Historically, around 400 people worked for the Council's own works department and then were TUPEd over to Jarvis and to Amey in 2007. A very few Amey HQ staff were parachuted in to turn the service around – essentially by convincing the same staff that Amey is great, PFI delivers now, being nice to the customer is paramount, wearing suits in the office is encouraged and maximising margins for them (albeit within budgets) is king.

Herefordshire Council only employs eight staff to oversee Amey's work of £30m per annum. Amey meets most of the Key Performance Indicators and has created a confident 'can do' attitude. It uses other major national contractors to provide some services as this is 'cost effective' according to them. It is not possible to prove this across all their sub-contracts but, essentially, many Hereford pounds leave our county – and are spent elsewhere. But the more money that circulates within the county the better for us all.

Since 2007 Amey have achieved all this but with the contract due for review in 2013, do we need this very small team from Amey HO? I suggest not – let's take the contract back, promote a few key staff to the Board, turn all employees into partners along the lines of the John Lewis model, and with HC taking a 50% share. Thanks Amey, you've put in place some good procedures, but now let's run it ourselves for us in Herefordshire.

HCS is a forum for the built environment – it is not for us to lobby and persuade – for us it is about stimulating debate and providing some ideas. We believe this proposal warrants consideration and hope the Regeneration Director's department together with the appropriate cabinet member for will give it due consideration. HCS isn't privy to the detail but endeavouring to retain spending in Herefordshire has to be a prime reason to test this proposal.



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# Planning Matters.....

Andree Poppleston continues to monitor all planning applications and highlights interesting and controversial proposals; where we see major reasons to query we write to the Herefordshire Council.

Rather than list many planning applications we now detail those applications that have been considered in some detail by our committee. All applications are accessible using the Herefordshire Council website - [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk)

## 5121798/F – new three bed house adjacent 28 Southbank Road, Hereford HR1 2UF

This contemporary design was welcomed but especially the comments of the Senior Building Conservation Officer on 3.8.12. Some of his comments are copied here:-

“The main heritage impact of the proposal is the relationship with No 28, although the principle of development in this location has been established by previous permissions. Clearly there is a contrast between the architectural idioms, but this is not necessarily a fatal conflict; the architectural character of the conservation area is typically eclectic, in the late Victorian manner, and

South Elevation  
1:80



## Listed Building Consent procedural changes

A new approach to development and quicker resolution of planning applications are welcome. However, Hereford Civic Society is concerned about the Government's hasty consultation on the procedures for obtaining Listed Building Consent. The Government is keen to reform the Listed Building Consent (LBC) system and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (ERR) Bill, (which will get its 3rd reading in Parliament this Autumn), is seen as a good opportunity through which to do this. Less than a month was allowed for consultation up to 23rd August 2012.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) consultation proposes replacing local authority conservation officer recommendations for LBC by those made by “accredited agents”. Planning applicants would be able to commission private sector consultants to make “technical, expert recommendations” to local planning authorities before they determine listed building applications.

The consultation document on simplifying LBCs says the agent “would take on some of the role” of the council in setting out the special interest of the building in question, analysing the impact of the proposed works and recommending whether consent should be granted.

Councils would “normally be expected” to follow the recommendation unless, in their opinion, the special interest of the building would be harmed. HCS sees this as likely to add to the administrative burden rather than simplify it. The document acknowledges that there are challenges to this approach, as it often requires different factors to be weighed up in reaching a judgement.

The key elements of our objection sent to the DCMS:-

The proposals are legally flawed because they remove the independent oversight of public interest.

- The present system needs to be enacted in a more pragmatic way
- Minor works should be possible by agreement with conservation officers by exchange of emails; failure to agree would lead to a full application in the usual way”.

the immediate environs of the site are dominated by fairly indifferent late C20 suburban housing.

Passivhaus technology imposes strict functional demands and it is inevitable that these have influenced the design in areas such as massing, orientation, fenestration etc, over and above purely aesthetic considerations. Nevertheless the scheme carries clear references to the interwar ‘International Style’, and it seems ironic that this is still perceived as challengingly ‘modern’, 80 years after its heyday and in an era when most of its UK exemplars are themselves listed buildings.”

However, HCS doesn't agree that the application of Passivhaus principles “inevitably influence the design....over and above purely aesthetic considerations”. In this case the use of some local materials and colour might have softened the prominent outline.

## S122009/F – Take-away shop and flats, The Oval, Belmont, Hereford

Whilst pleased to see the redevelopment and a pragmatic design, the lack of details of the refuse storage is of some concern. It will likely be another scruffy area, poorly fenced and visually offensive.

## S121750/O – redevelopment Holmer Trading Estate, College Road, Hereford

This mixed scheme makes a valiant attempt to cram in a lot of houses. Whilst dense development in a city is valid this only works well when full consideration of orientation is respected. Here most gardens are on the north side of the houses. Why?

## S121554/F – residential redevelopment of Pomona Works, Attwood Lane, Holmer

Wow, this is boring, standard development stuff. We expect better than this. And as in S121750/O orientation of the houses has been ignored. This is a very poor approach to environmental matters.

## S122028/F & S122029/L – Green Dragon, retail shops in Aubrey Street

First floated by our Nick Jones in our Spring 2010 edition, the Berrington Quarter is the ideal and best place for expanding retail in our city. HCS is pleased to see this application to create three shops to the rear of the Green Dragon. Whilst small, it is hopefully another step to brighten up this often forgotten area; note how good the refurbished alms houses in Berrington Street look now, following their wholesale renovation in 2010. Whilst aware the area has multiple owners it would be good to see something really positive happen here. Isn't this the job of 'strategic planning'?

## Railway Bridge and Access

HCS has contributed to the discussions on the improvements to the Grade II listed Station and the installation of lifts. This was proper consultation by Network Rail, asking us for comments on some draft sketches, followed by a meeting and the detailed drawings which we believe are a pragmatic solution. In essence there will be brickwork to approximately 8' and then vertical stained timber cladding to two new lift shafts giving access onto the existing bridge which will have improved cladding.

## Broad Street development replaced with plans to expand city cycle network

Herefordshire Council has put on hold proposals to carry out a major redevelopment of Broad Street, Hereford, as a result of a consultation exercise held over the summer. Instead, the council is planning a major expansion of city cycle networks.

Funding for the Broad Street development came from Destination Hereford: a programme funded by the Department of Transport that aims to reduce congestion, increase low carbon transport use and support sustainable economic growth around Hereford.

HCS, along with others, claims it was our well presented argument that prompted Councillor Graham Powell, cabinet member for education and infrastructure, to take this logical change of tack. He said “People have told us that they want the funding spent on sustainable travel projects that would have a more immediate and tangible impact on the community.”

“Every weekday morning during the school term, over 10,000 car journeys start and end within Hereford. People on those journeys are travelling less than 5km. By investing in cycle routes we will be making it easier for those people to move about the city, supporting the economy and tackling congestion”.

The Destination Hereford programme includes the Hereford Connect 2 Greenway scheme which the council has committed to delivering over the coming year. This will link pedestrian and cycle pathways from north east Hereford directly to the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone.

Further details of new cycle schemes will be announced, over the coming months, and are likely to include extending the cycle network out to Clehonger, providing a cycle route along Whitecross Road and Kings Acre Road and providing direct cycle access to the city centre from St Owen's Street.

HCS will continue to keep close to the developing ideas - junctions, crossings, integration of cycling routes, etc. etc. It is a large exercise, how many cyclists will want to ride along the Kings Acre Road compared with those who want to cross Greyfriars Bridge, for example? How will the priorities be set?



Works progressing well at the Enterprise Zone

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## Recent Meetings

18th July 2012 – **Enterprise Zone and Summer Drinks Party**

Nick Webster, economic officer of Herefordshire Council, guided us on a walk through the new Skylon EZ. It was stunning; the extent of work already accomplished, remediation of the contaminated soil following the demolition of the old armaments buildings, spine roadways in place and mountains of crushed concrete ready to be reused. Several original blast walls have been retained (areas where the shells were filled, so in the case of an explosion the blast would be restricted). One vast building (the North Lights) covering an area of over an acre is amazing, with slim trusses supporting a huge roof and with a headroom of less than twenty feet, the unit appears limitless in size. This is the last remaining building and there are plans to retain it – see panel on page 5.

The completed EZ has plans for factories employing up to 6000 employees. HCS continues to monitor the design process and, so far, is encouraged. A master plan is about to be unveiled and will be discussed at our February meeting.

The evening concluded with drinks in the beautiful little chapel at Rotherwas, deconsecrated in 1928, it is now a peaceful empty space - a fitting contrast to what we had seen. JB

### Meetings

Over the last year we've held a number of meetings at different venues and different nights of the week.

Everybody has their own view but this year we will:-

- have a card with a full year's listings
- stick to one venue for the winter months (Kindle Centre – easy parking) on the third Tuesday (many clubs meet and events happen on a Wednesday)
- get out and about in the summer
- have a couple of joint meetings with other societies
- be a little more active – not just lectures – real debate

All so that we can claim we are **the** forum for the built environment

## Join us

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

**Subscription: Single £15 pa / Two memberships at the same address £25 pa.** Questions? Phone 01981 580002 or email [chair@herefordcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:chair@herefordcivicsociety.org.uk)

## Join online

[www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk/join](http://www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk/join)

The Society assumes this is gift aided, allowing us to claim back from HMRC. If it is not, please add NOGA (No Gift Aid) after your surname.

## Join by cheque

Send a cheque to The Treasurer, Hereford Civic Society, 60 Broomy Hill, Hereford HR4 0LQ.

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4th September 2012 – **Visit to Amey** – Ruth Kinsella

Amey do much more than repair potholes, they keep the highway infrastructure serviceable - all within tight budget restraints. This was the message from Ruth, who is the Watchman in Chief, the person who ensures we (Herefordshire tax payers) get value for money. Together with three articulate managers, she spoke positively about the relationship.

In 2003 Herefordshire Council privatised highways, building maintenance and some other services, including printing, and awarded the 10 year contract to Jarvis. This well known national company failed and Amey bought the contract from them in 2007, and now the contract is up for renewal in 2013. Whilst not a complete surprise, it was intriguing to learn that the 400 hundred or so staff previously employed by the Council were transferred to Jarvis and then to Amey. Amey's input has been managed by a small task force who have been parachuted in to create a new ethos and new procedures.

Amey appear to beat most of the Key Performance Indicators; projects below £250,000 are completed to a schedule of rates or cost plus. Amey claim they have a local first approach to the subcontracting of some services but also use major national subcontractors on cost grounds. The visit concluded with a close up inspection of a gritter and the enormous salt barn, stacked ready for the bad weather.

## HEREFORD CIVIC SOCIETY –CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT - YEAR TO 31 AUGUST 2012

Taking over as Chair in October 2011 has been a stimulating experience; meeting and working with councillors and council staff and building on relationships with other amenity societies. After many years of enthusiastic service to the Society four stalwart members are retiring. Their contributions of expertise, sound judgement and dedicated work over the years has enabled the Society to flourish; the chores that have to be done, have just happened. Andree Poppleston has perused thousands of planning applications and brought to our attention those that she feels we should comment upon; Ginny Garman has long attended to governance issues and booked countless speakers ensuring a varied programme for many years; Jean Ellis has kept the membership records and been the tireless pursuer of late subscriptions; and Hubert Porte, the reliable and vigilant agitator on Council plans and policies. All will be much missed. Impossible as they will be to replace, we are looking for members to undertake these and other tasks – the commitment could be as little as a few hours a month.

We have had some influence as "key partners" in the sustainable transport programme, especially bringing sense to spending on cycle routes etc rather than a grandiose legacy project as was originally proposed for Broad Street. We are founder members of the Hereford Tree Forum, led by committee member Mo Burns, and are contributing to keeping the provision of a green context high on the Council's agenda. Much of our work is important but low key with input into areas such as signage, street clutter and commenting on planning applications.

We've had a diverse range of speakers for our monthly meetings, and took part in the national Civic Day survey based at our little pagoda in High Town. These have all been reported upon in our quarterly magazine; one of the highlights was the launch of the new edition of the Herefordshire Pevsner at All Saints, and an impressive tour of the new Skylon Enterprise Zone. The season was rounded off with celebratory drinks at the old Rotherwas Chapel.

HCS entertained members of Kidderminster Civic Society offering different themed walks around the City, culminating with a picnic on sunny Castle Green and we look forward to visiting Kidderminster on 6th November.

Four editions of HCS News were published, all illustrating our contribution to discussion about the built environment. Members Nick Jones, John Faulkner and David Thame have made pertinent comment on a wide range of issues. We welcome new contributors for the coming year who will be offering a similarly wide and thought provoking perspective. Our website features copies of our reports and magazines, together with a calendar of future events. We see it developing as a dynamic information point about both our local built environment, and European solutions to town planning.

A new financial year is upon us. Hereford Civic Society is fortunate in that our events are popular; we attract high quality speakers and have no immediate money worries.

A great programme is booked for 2012/13 – go to our website [www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk) for information. John Bothamley

26th September 2012 – **A meeting of architectural minds**

A room full of members and guests enjoyed Hereford's first Pecha Kucha session; a Japanese way of allowing designers to show their work and ideas in a quick fire manner. Twelve images are displayed for just 30 seconds each, and the presenters talk about them as they appear – no time to dwell or pontificate – the next image has arrived. Five local practices contributed:- Mark Owen, Jane Chamberlain of Caroe and Partners, Ken Pearce of JBD Architects, Alex Coppock of Communion Design and Jonathan Hines of Architype.

There followed a lively discussion both about Hereford and the design and planning process. It was good humoured and stimulating hearing dedicated architects passionately wishing to get the best for their clients and for Hereford. The absence of any real plan for the City was lamented. There was a groundswell of opinion that HCS should be doing something about it! (There is a Hereford 2032 meeting after our AGM) As the meeting dispersed it was resolved that we should – there will be more discussion and action towards pressing for that overall plan.

## Forth coming events

**TUESDAY 6th November 2012 9:00**

### A day out to Kidderminster

Hosted by the Kidderminster Civic Society who will be showing us the best of their town including the new museum of carpet and recently restored Caldwell Tower.

Meet Merton Meadow carpark for sharing transport to leave by 9 am

**WEDNESDAY 21st November 2012 7:00 for 7:30pm**

St.Peters, St Owen Stree Hereford

### Hereford Rail Station

The grade 2 listed station built in 1854-5 after the Barton Road station was demolished and now in need of some updating for accessibility.

An illustrated lecture by Gordon Wood

**TUESDAY 18th December 2012 7:00 for 7:15pm**

Belmont Abbey, Hereford

### Christmas at Belmont Abbey

Hear the history of Pugin's Belmont Abbey built in 1853 for F R Wegg-Prosser who had recently converted to Roman Catholicism. Compline at 8 if you wish -

followed by drinks and mincepies at 8.15.

Our host for the evening - Father Simon

**TUESDAY 15th January 2013 7:00 for 7:30pm**

Kindle Centre, beside ASDA, Belmont Roundabout, Hereford.

### Contemporary Libraries

A full on review of libraries to coincide with our Winter 2013 HCS NEWS supplement  
John Faulkner and John Hitchin

**TUESDAY 19th February 2013**

Kindle Centre, beside ASDA, Belmont Roundabout, Hereford.

### Work, Rest and Play

Directors from Enterprise Zone, Hereford Housing and Halo discuss how they plan to serve the residents of Herefordshire.

## HCS Contact Details

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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.