

Rotherham District Civic Society

Notes of the third Quarterly Liaison Meeting with Environment and Development Services, Rotherham Borough Council, 11th September 2009.

Present:

Bronwen Peace, Planning Manager.

Peter Thornborrow, Conservation & Historic Buildings Officer.

Stan Crowther, Chairman, Civic Society.

Peter Hawkridge, Secretary.

Ian Hawkridge.

The following points were discussed:

1. The Three Cranes –

The Council had put an offer to the liquidator, earlier in the week, which amounted to c.£455,000 for the Three Cranes, George Wright building and No.29 High Street. The funding is provided by Yorkshire Forward and Strategic Investment money. Other bids in, including Mr Willoughby – using another company name.

The Building Preservation Trust has prepared 12 reports in total on the buildings and is very keen to progress a scheme.

2. All Saints Building –

John Smales chairing a working party to discuss the public realm proposals for the site. PH invited to attend. It was stressed that the Civic Society would like to see a long term solution, and this was at some odds with PT's view of a 5 year timescale. There was also some discussion on the merits of holding a design competition which P.T was firmly against. The preference is to extend the work of the Minster Yard design consultants.

3. Red Lion Yard –

No progress. M.Meekins off on long term sick leave.

4. Minster Yard –

The Civic Society representatives expressed their disappointment that K.Boyes had had to give apologies for both last month's Executive Committee meeting and the Society's recent AGM at which she had been expected to provide an update on both the Minster Yard and the THI.

P.T. indicated that he had not been happy with the original design of the Minster Yard – too expensive, particularly in the use of stone blocks for the seating areas. Also wanted curved path link to Vicarage Lane and a curve in the entrance steps on Church

Street. Emphasised the likely Saxon origins of the church and the likelihood of archaeological remains near the south entrance.

5. Cutlers Arms / Alma Tavern –

It was suggested that P.T. had misinterpreted the Society's concerns with respect to the building which related specifically to its long term future under Satnam ownership. The Society's representatives felt that the Council should be far more proactive in progressing the regeneration of the surrounding area for housing – citing the Westgate Design Code & Draft IPS proposals, and the fact that this was one area which was not subject to flooding limitations. It was therefore capable of accommodating some of the vast number of housing units demanded by the Core Strategy.

6. Big W, Catcliffe –

For this item, David Temple, Development Control Officer, was present.

The Society was minded to oppose this recent planning application but wished to know the Council's views first.

D.T. indicated that the existing store was to be subdivided into 6 units, and can't be objected to on planning grounds. Permitted development rights on the mezzanine floor. 134 sq m net increase in total, and the developer is arguing that he doesn't need a PPS6 statement.

DT has major reservations on the elevational changes proposed and upon the materials to be used. Considers the existing 2 stores to be a 'human scale' and using similar materials.

The new block of 8 kiosk shops is being objected to by Morrisons on traffic impact grounds. From the Society's viewpoint the kiosk shops are likely to detract from the local centre proposed as part of the new Waverley community.

7. Millmoor and Rotherham United –

PH indicated that the Civic Society are to start a campaign on sustainability grounds and Masbrough's need for regeneration, to bring Rotherham United back to Millmoor. It was emphasised that the Council are a key player in this particularly given Millmoor's current UDP allocation for 'Community Leisure', and its commitment to encouraging sustainable travel patterns. It was suggested that the Council should proactively engage with the Booth family and with Tony Stewart on this. In the end the Society might lobby for the use of CPO powers.

B.P. indicated that K.B. 'had bent over backwards trying to get Rotherham United back to Millmoor'.

8. Core Strategy : Housing –

SC indicated that K.B's response to his letter was upsetting. He strongly felt that the Central Government bureaucracy was destroying local government, and wanted a

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clear answer as to who was demanding the housing numbers. It was agreed that Phil Turnidge, Forward Planning Manager, would be invited to the Society's next Executive Committee meeting. (n.b. scheduled for 7pm, Tuesday, 6th October).

9. Firbeck Hall –

After the fire P.T. contacted the owner, Glen Saint, by e-mail. He was advised that temporary repairs cannot be made to the roof – it needs new roof trusses etc. One tenth of the roof affected – 2 bays – 3 roof trusses c. £25,000. No response yet. The windows have now been boarded up. Although this keeps out the birds, it also blocks out the sunlight which was having a positive effect on the fabric.

10. Masbrough Chapel –

Receivers looking for £80,000 - £100,000.

Culture & Leisure were originally interested but now no money and had to say no.

There is a problem with the dual tenancy that has been created. P.T. would hope that it is sold to a third party, as in his opinion this is likely to create less resentment and threat from the original owner.

11. Boston Castle –

PH raised the issue of the TRC Observatory proposal and the issue of security.

PT has supplied the architects with ideas of wooden shutters and steel mesh as used on National Trust properties.

12. Thrybergh St Leonards Church –

The church's precarious position, and the prominence given to St Peter's was discussed. PT mentioned that the interior had been painted with white gloss before a wedding causing the walls to 'sweat'. He recognised the key historical importance of the memorial tablets. The Council will try and do its best to talk the PCC out of closing the church.