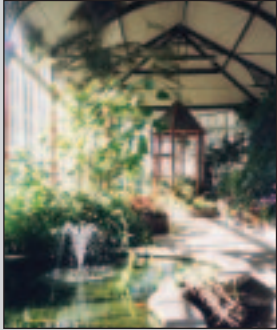


News



ENGLISH HISTORIC TOWNS FORUM
for prosperity and conservation in historic towns

JUNE 2004



'FOCUS ON ... REGENERATION THROUGH PUBLIC BUILDINGS & SPACES'

Buxton - 29 June 2004

After the success of our 'Focus on... Local Identity' Seminar, held in Ludlow on 13 May, we are continuing the 'Focus on the Public Realm' Series in Buxton.

The Seminar will be held at The Palace Hotel, where we will be exploring how the market town has responded to seemingly overwhelming problems of disuse and under-funding, and the success

in attracting funding, enabling a transformation to begin.

Delegates will have the opportunity to measure the impact of heritage-led regeneration of its major buildings and open spaces. Walking tours will explore the projects that are being implemented in Buxton. If you would like further information about this event you will find a booking form and full programme on our website please see: www.ehtf.org.uk/events.asp

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'Building Confidence in High Quality Design' Seminar Series



This series was delivered by EHTF with support from the Commission for Architecture and the Built

Environment (CABE) and the North West Development Agency (NWD); they took place in:

Chester on 12 February
Crewe on 18 March
Lancaster on 26 February
Wigan on 31 March
Whitehaven on 4 March
Liverpool on 22 April

The programme for each included a keynote presentation from George Ferguson, Les Sparks (Lancaster and Crewe), Jonathan Davis, Charles Wilson and Andrea Titterington; this was intended to set the topic in a wider context and to stimulate discussion and 'inspire' delegates. In each case the presentation reflected the wide experience and knowledge of the speaker and was very well delivered. We are grateful to the presenters for their participation.

There followed a presentation of the chosen local case study, in all but one case, by a senior local authority officer. A tour of the case study was guided by those closely involved with the project. The case studies were very varied and offered different perspectives of the project topic.

The stage of development of the case study also varied – from pre-proposal to almost completion. The style of design of each was also different. Delegates were therefore offered a very wide range of contexts in which to explore the topic.

Francis Golding (author of 'Building in Context') was engaged to facilitate the afternoon workshops, guiding the discussions in order that delegates might address the relevant issues in a way that they might increase their knowledge and understanding of the design perspectives.

Workshop leaders had been 'recruited' from a range of professionals with knowledge and an interest of the issues and/or local context. In all 18 people gave their time voluntarily to the project for this important component.

It was not the intention of the seminars to reach conclusions about each of the case studies, but to use it to focus attention on the issues and to provoke discussion. Delegates were encouraged to explore their own understanding of 'high quality design', its benefits, how it might be achieved and to identify good and bad practice.

Conclusions

The project team has been meeting to discuss these and to finalise plans for the training tool which will be produced in the form of a cd-rom to capture the main points of the seminars, with extracts from presentations and case study images, and to make recommendations.

These are likely to include:

- The need for more use of 'master-planning'
- The lack of knowledge of the process of 'master-planning'
- The need for more community planning
- The need for the appointment of Design Champions
- The need for good, working partnerships
- The lack of confidence, due to lack of knowledge, of many of those engaged in the processes of planning, design and development
- Gaps in education and skills training for planners, architects etc as well as council officers and members
- The lack of an urban design element in education and training courses

There is a great deal of 'good practice' advice already available, and the cd will include a 'directory' of sources with direct links to web-information, together with advice on how to deal with constraints and build on strengths.

The cd rom is expected to be available soon; see the website for news - www.ehtf.org.uk/news.asp

EHTF is supported by

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MEMBERS NEWS

Publications Discount Increased

The EHTF Executive Committee recently reviewed publication prices and decided to increase discount on publications to our Members.

The new discounts offered will be in line with those given on conference fees:

25% Full, Corporate, Personal and Civic and Amenity Members
12.5% Affiliated Members

This gives a significant saving, for example a copy of 'Bus-Based Park and Ride – A good practice guide 2nd Edition' would normally cost £31, but to members will now cost only £23.25 or £27.12 respectively.

For a full list of our publications please see the website:
www.ehtf.org.uk/publications.asp or contact the EHTF office.

New Members

The North West Regional Assembly recently became Affiliated Members of EHTF. Please add their details to your directory:

North West Regional Assembly,
Wigan Investment Centre,
Waterside Drive,
Wigan WN3 5BA
Tel: 01942 776932
Fax: 01942 776740
Web: <http://www.nwra.gov.uk/>

On the Move

Richard Guise, formally of University of the West of England, Bristol, has set up his own practice, Context4D and has become a Personal Member of EHTF.

Jerry Spencer, formally of The North West Development Agency, who was greatly involved with our recent 'Building Confidence in High Quality Design' seminar series has taken up the new position of Assistant Director, Regeneration Strategy at Stoke on Trent Council.

Roy Templeman, formally of City of York Council has joined Chester-le-Street District Council as Chief Executive Officer.

We would like to thank Richard, Jerry and Roy for their participation in EHTF projects and wish them all success in their new ventures.

'Focus on ... local identity'

Ludlow Seminar 12 - 13 May

Continuing the 'Focus on the Public Realm' theme launched at last year's Annual Conference, the event in Ludlow explored some of the town's recent and on-going projects.

In the EHTF tradition, the evening prior to the seminar gave delegates the opportunity to meet together informally and to familiarise themselves with Ludlow and to sample some of its hospitality.

The lengths to which the Local Authority has gone to retain the town's local distinctiveness include the manufacture of local bricks and thatch and the capture and re-establishment of many local skills, which were in danger of being lost. Colin Richards, Conservation Officer, explained how renovation and development in the town has benefited from a sensitive approach to the context, as well as the style, of the existing fabric.

James Caird, Head of Planning and Building Control at South Shropshire DC, said that the economy of Ludlow has always traded on the initiatives brought to the town. Harnessing and managing these was the key to success. "Don't try to play King Canute!" he warned "Go with the flow – but manage it".

Some of his main points were that:

- Nothing worthwhile can be achieved overnight – what we were seeing was the result of 15 years of partnerships.
- Things that make places unique are more important than those which make them the same.

He also suggested that we need to develop a methodology for assessing quality which might include:

- Design quality
- Appropriateness
- Craftsmanship
- Sourcing and correct use of materials
- Developing a structured approach

Ludlow, home to many leading restaurants and a variety of festivals, has been chosen to lead the **Cittaslow** project in England and its principles and objectives were explained by Paul Russell the Town Clerk.



"Ludslow"?

Getting down to the urban design details Rob Surl of Shropshire County Council and Colin Davis of CJDA Ltd explained both the theory and the practice behind the projects being carried out in the town centre. Delegates were led on walking tours of the town to see for themselves the projects which had been presented, returning to the Assembly Rooms for some further discussion.



Market Square

Sam Howes, Chair of EHTF, summarised the day's event and concluded that:

- James' comment that **"the things that make a place unique are more important than the ones that make them the same"** should be remembered.
- It is important to get three things right: - **design, materials and skills.**
- We must continue to lobby the Department for Transport for support in using appropriate methods of traffic control in sensitive areas.

He also recommended the EHTF publications which were designed and written to help with the problems which had been discussed: **'Focus on the Public Realm'**, the **'Historic Core Zones Project'** report and the **'Historic Core Zones Project Review'**.

A full report can be downloaded as a pdf from our website:
www.ehtf.org.uk/admin/getfile.asp?ID=52



CORPORATE AND AFFILIATED MEMBERS

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TOURISM ISSUES

Sustainable EU Tourism



Leuven, Belgium: The EU policy recognises the need to anticipate increasing tourism pressure on new destinations

The European Commission has called for an EU-wide drive to enhance the economic, social and environmental sustainability of tourism. The report *Basic Orientations for the Sustainability of European Tourism* emphasises the importance of consistent policies and co-operation between industry, destinations and government. Both are needed to respond to the challenges of growing demand, changing preferences and increasing revenue.

EU-wide initiatives include: harmonising Community policies and complementary measures in the field of tourism; participating in international initiatives; promoting good governance; and helping stakeholders to assume their responsibilities.

Tourist destinations and public authorities are asked to:

- Lead and promote Local Agenda 21 processes
- Influence the consumption patterns of tourists
- Develop ways of making those who generate social and environmental costs pay for them
- Adopt triple-bottom-line (economic, social and environmental) reporting
- Work in partnership with business and other sectors
- Use inter-disciplinary land use management, impact assessment and monitoring
- Develop voluntary agreements, labelling, self-certification and self-regulation schemes
- Pay attention to carrying capacity
- Diversify the economy and tourism sector
- Improve knowledge, training and skills across the board

An EU Tourism Sustainability Group will be set up to draft a detailed framework for action.

Draft PPS6: Planning for Town Centres

When the Government decided to scrap PPG21 *Tourism* it promised that tourism issues would be reflected in the new Planning Policy Statements (PPS). Draft PPS6 *Planning for Town Centres* should be important for tourism and the Tourism Group made some comments for the EHTF.

- The Statement is ambiguous: it ought to be a clear statement of policy, yet at times appeared theoretical; it should be strategic, yet descended to a surprising level of detail.
- The final version must pay closer attention to the context within which the main land uses of retail and leisure occur, in particular:
 - the importance of the quality of the public realm;
 - the conservation of the historic environment;
 - the multi-functional character of town centres; and
 - the relationship with the resident community.



Rochester, Kent: Draft PPS6 tries to address the relationship between tourism and other town centre activities.

The draft referred to 'town centre management'. This should include destination management and be linked to the preparation of tourism strategies.

- The Statement sought to ensure that town centre functions remain concentrated within the centre. There needs to be recognition that for tourism it may be desirable to promote dispersal. Edge of town hotel development may be appropriate in such cases. The sequential test is unhelpful.
- Tourism is used as a generic term, but in practice it will include a diverse range of visitors. These have different impacts and different relationships with town centres, consequently the words 'tourism' or 'tourist' need to be used with more precision.

Development Plans and Tourism

As part of its review of the development plan system the Government has published draft guidance on Local Development Frameworks. The Tourism group made the following key comments on behalf of the EHTF.

"Under the proposed new planning regime Area Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents have the potential to be very useful tools for achieving Destination Management and the more sustainable growth of tourism. However, this will not happen if that potential is not spelt out clearly, both to those who do not have tourism as their main interest and those who do."

"The consultation documents rightly stress the importance of the Development Plan providing an integrated set of policies and proposals, which are based on a clear understanding of the economic, social and environmental needs of the area and any constraints on meeting those needs. This should provide a strong focus for integrating the boundaries between land use/transport planning, tourism/product planning and development and destination management and marketing."

"Tourism is not a well-defined area of activity and planning across a whole range of activities affects it..... There is, consequently, a need for effective guidance ... on the development and application of planning policy to tourism matters. National tourism planning policy could be devalued in status if the OPDM does not recognise the links."

Planning and Tourism

Following the decision to replace PPG21 *Tourism*, the Government (ODPM) has appointed Land Use Consultants as the lead consultants to prepare a Good Practice Guide on tourism and planning. The work involves a number of steps: a literature review/desk top research, consultation (including a virtual review panel), case studies and detailed analysis and evaluation. The final guidance is expected to be based heavily on case studies.

The draft guide should be produced at the end of May and the aim is to complete final editing by 28 June. The publication date has yet to be announced.

Chair of Tourism Working Group - Brian Human
brian.human@cambridge.gov.uk

Notes from an easy Chair

I hope you like the new style 'News' which is packed with information on recent and forthcoming EHTF events, publications, advice and opinion. We want 'News' to be more interactive than its predecessor – to say more about our constituent member towns and cities; to give you a mechanism through which to exchange information, views or to seek advice – which is where you come in.

Please contact Chris or the Team at the EHTF office if you have any material you wish to share with us. Remember, the Forum represents most significant historic towns and cities from Carlisle to Canterbury, so your message/requirements will be read far and wide.

Make 'News' work for you by disseminating it widely throughout your organisation.

I hope to see you at one of our excellent events soon.

Sam Howes - Chair, EHTF.

NB: Executive Committee meeting - 1 July, Land Securities, 5 Strand, London.

Europe Update

May Fair

May saw a major EUCLID organised event in Manchester which joined national cultural representatives from the new EU Accession countries with delegates from cultural industry sectors in the UK. A very significant element of interest from the 'new Members' focuses on the cultural heritage of historic towns and cities and they are very keen to both learn from the experience of English cities and to partner with them in future EU funded collaboration programmes such as Culture 2000. Further information from www.euclid-uk.info

Cities for People

The largest European conference on pedestrian spaces and walking – Walk 21 'Cities for People' – was hosted in Copenhagen in early June. Speakers included Lord Rogers and, as well as experts such as Jan Gehl from the host nation, presentations on the South Bronx, San Francisco, Melbourne, Thailand, Japan, Finland, Malaysia, Columbia, Spain, New Zealand, Mexico and South Africa. **EHTF Executive Member Michael Loveday** presented a paper on the 'Liveable City' – a 5 nation EU Interreg project on joined up public space planning, regeneration, management and maintenance involving 6 European cities, which he leads. The conference not only brought together an unparalleled set of best practice examples on public space improvement, but also delivered cutting edge presentations on research and performance from a variety of academic institutions.

Further information from www.citiesforpeople.dk

European Heritage Conference

In September 2004, the European Association of Historic Towns and Regions, the Council of Europe, Norwich City Council and the Norwich Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust (HEART) will jointly stage a major European conference in Norwich on 'Heritage for the Future – Realising the Economic & Social Potential of a Key Asset'. Confirmed speakers so far include Sir Neil Cossons, Chair of English Heritage, Ian Lush, Chief Executive of the Architectural Heritage Fund and a variety of high profile speakers from governmental and academic institutions from mainland Europe. The purpose of the conference will be to share experience on how the value of heritage regeneration and promotion can be measured in economic and social terms. The conference is expected to draw delegates from across Europe and particularly eastern European nations, so there will be opportunities to develop new east/west collaborative partnerships.

Further information from paulshreeve@norwich.gov.uk

Programme of Events

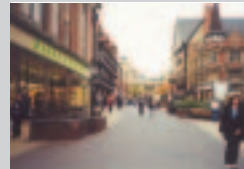
Details and booking forms will be posted on the website as soon as they are available

www.ehtf.org.uk/events.asp



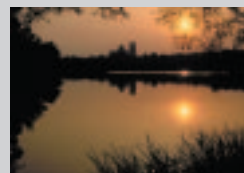
Buxton
29 June

'Focus on... regeneration through public buildings & spaces'



Lincoln
20-22
October

Annual Conference & AGM



Ely
November
date to be confirmed

'Focus On...' further aspects of the Public Realm

Members discounts are shown below:

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Discounts on charges for exhibition and advertising space are available to Corporate Members, please contact us for details.

EHTF will be also be represented at the Park & Ride 2004

Conference taking place on 16 June at Savoy Place, London, WC2

Feature Town: Christchurch



Christchurch maps out its future

The Ancient Borough of Christchurch has a documented and recorded history dating back to its Saxon origins and, like many historic towns, it is struggling to absorb contemporary demands and pressures while maintaining its unique character and heritage. This uniqueness relies partly on its exquisite natural surroundings, partly on its historical buildings, structures and street patterns and partly on its social and economic history. Today, Christchurch is a place where people want to live and in consequence, builders want to build. They want to build in the countryside and in peoples gardens; they want to turn houses into flats and turn low-rise into high-rise.

In response to PPG 3, i.e. the design of housing must be informed by its wider townscape and landscape context, Christchurch has prepared and adopted its first Borough-wide Character Assessment. The Assessment identifies rural and urban character areas, the latter being further sub-divided into neighbourhood character areas; each being analysed in terms of its historical and environmental characteristics; and its sensitivity and capacity to accommodate change. Of course, the true value of this work will be in the way landowners and builders respond in forming development proposals and what weight Planning Inspectors give it, in determining appeals – but that's another story for another time.

Nigel Davies, Director of Community Services,
Christchurch Borough Council

To view the full length article please see www.ehtf.org.uk/admin/getfile.asp?ID=54 and for further information see www.christchurch.gov.uk