

June 2006

ENGLISH HISTORIC TOWNS FORUM
for prosperity and conservation in historic towns

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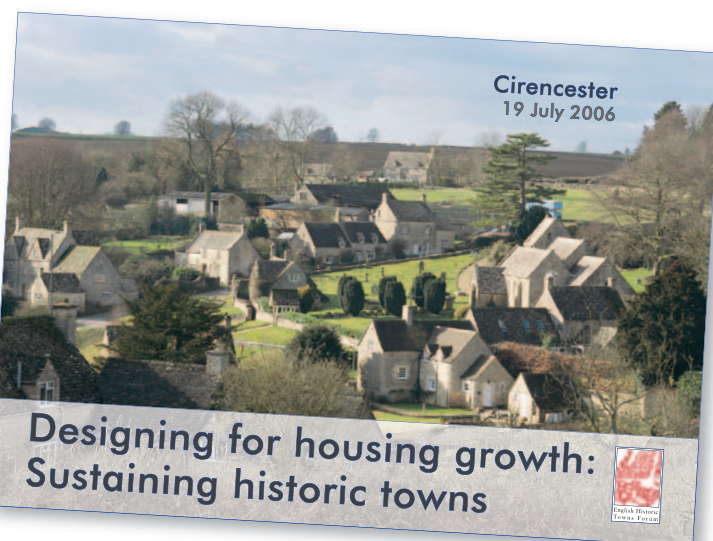
Feature Town:
Newcastle upon Tyne

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Managing housing growth in historic towns

EHTF is taking a two-pronged approach to the challenge facing many of its Member town and cities – that of accommodating the requirement for more housing within their sensitive and often constrained historic environs.

At a conference to be held in Cirencester on 19th July representatives from CABE, the Prince's Foundation, Urban Initiatives, Donaldsons and Colin Buchanan, all with wide experience from planning and design perspectives, will come together to help to identify good practice.



This will be further supported by the results of research and collaboration with EHTF Members, Pegasus Planning Group, and a workshop held last year to which a range of Members brought their own experiences.

The conference programme and brochure above will be circulated in the near future.

You can find details of all EHTF events and publications on our website www.ehfh.org.uk, where an online booking facility is also available.



More good practice guidance
from EHTF

'Managing rapid growth in historic towns' was explored at a conference held in Ely in December 2004.

The topic continues to be of great interest to EHTF Members and the good practice and lessons brought out at the event will be published in the summer.

New Members

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Raise your profile through EHTF

Very competitive advertising rates are available, including exhibition space at our forthcoming Annual Conference.

Discuss options with our Marketing Administrator
Helen Johnson

Tel: 0117 975 0459

Planning for Tourism

Tourism Developments should be as sustainable as possible and contribute to protecting and enhancing the environment, according to the new Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism.

The Guide, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, includes a review of the importance of tourism, sets out the planning framework for the industry and gives advice on how good planning principles should be applied through both forward planning and development control.

Two of the strengths of the Guide are that it sets planning for tourism in the context of prosperous and sustainable communities and has as much to say to the private sector as to local authorities.

The EHTF commented on the draft Guide and it is disappointing that the final version continues to take a very rose tinted view of tourism, moreover it ought to say more about whole destination issues and the consumption of public goods. However, it is a major step forward and a welcome replacement for Planning Policy Guidance 21: Tourism.

We must urge the public and private sectors to use the Guide in parallel with the integrated approach advocated by the Forum in its Focus on Tourism.

The Guide is available at www.communities.gov.uk.

Brian Human
Cambridge City Council
EHTF Tourism Portfolio Holder

Oxford Castle opening



Her Majesty the Queen with Debbie Dance, Director of Oxford Preservation Trust, at the official opening of the Oxford Castle

Chris Winter, Director, represented EHTF at the opening of the Oxford Castle by Her Majesty the Queen on 5th May. This was the culmination of an ambitious project which was first explained to an EHTF audience by Trevor Osborne at the conference held in Buxton in June 2004. Progress was then seen by delegates to the Annual Conference held in Oxford last year, therefore we were delighted to have been part of the celebration of its completion.

Nick Worlledge, of Oxford City Council, a firm supporter of the Forum, was presented to Her Majesty and congratulated on his perseverance throughout the project. The conversion of the former castle and prison has transformed a fairly neglected part of Oxford, bringing a new vibrant quarter to the City. The project illustrates much of the good practice advocated in the DCMS and EHTF Tourism guides.

EHTF Members receive 10% discount at Park & Ride event

EHTF was once again invited to partner the annual Park & Ride conference held in London on 15 June.

EHTF Members will receive a 10% reduction on booking fees. For details about the conference please contact Landor Conferences tel: 0845 270 7965 or email: conferences@landor.co.uk.

The publication 'Bus-based Park & Ride - A good practice guide' remains popular and can be



obtained from the office or by ordering online at www.ehtf.org.uk (see publications page).

National Sustainable Tourism Indicators

If there is debate about what sustainable tourism means there is probably even more argument about how to measure it.

The Government has now published National Sustainable Tourism Indicators, which seeks to capture and measure the success of policies in moving the industry towards more sustainable performance. It aims to provide a snapshot of the state of tourism and aid in deciding the priorities for action.

There are thirteen indicators covering qualitative and quantitative assessments of spending, transport, employment, visitor numbers, environmental issues and the quality of facilities. Progress, or lack of it, from 2000-2004 is shown.

While the indicators do not cover local performance, they provide a national context and guidance on what local information might be sought.

The report can be seen at www.culture.gov.uk. For a valuable review of the subject, Monitoring for a Sustainable Tourism Transition by Miller and Twining-Ward (CABI 2005) is worth a look.

Brian Human

Training seminars reach 300 around the regions

The response to the seminars run by EHTF and UWE has demonstrated the unease felt by many Local Planning Authorities with regard to BVPI 219b&c, concerning conservation area appraisals and management plans.

Delegates attending each of the six regional seminars have taken part in discussions and workshops which have not only supported their own efforts but which will contribute to continuing work to develop best practice guidance and to lobby policy making bodies.

Information about this will be made available on www.ehtf.org.uk.

A



C



B



D



- A Delegates in King's Lynn study examples of appraisals in the workshop
- B An example of special places in Shrewsbury - the glimpses which encourage further exploration
- C Burchatts Barn in Guildford gave delegates first hand experience of new use for old buildings
- D Delegates undertake a mini-appraisal as part of the seminar in York

Risking our historic towns and villages

A Defra-funded report (1) published last year says that many older houses are energy-inefficient, cannot be adapted sensibly and should be demolished and replaced by modern energy-efficient houses to meet Government energy-saving targets.



Thermal image of Buckingham Palace
(image courtesy of British Gas)

In some cases this may make sense; but we need to look more carefully at the evidence.

- Many historic buildings probably use less energy than estimated if sensibly maintained, adapted (especially insulated) and lived in.
- Historic buildings and areas are important to people, to quality of life, and to local economies.
- When whole life energy costs are calculated, taking into account useful life and the energy used in building, maintenance and demolition, the energy advantage of new buildings is relatively smaller and may disappear.
- Demolishing neighbourhoods often destroys communities

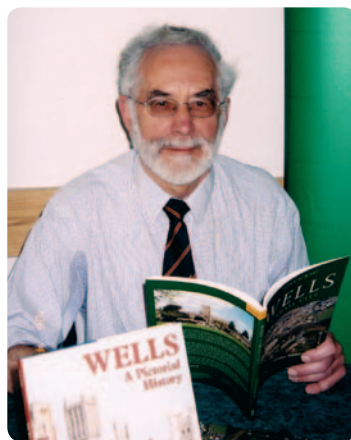
It is important that we do more to provide a strong evidence base to inform the debate; this is a priority for English Heritage, and we need to work with the rest of the sector in doing this.

For more information see *British Archaeology* 85: 52 (2005)

Sebastian Payne, Chief Scientist, English Heritage
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(1) 40% House Report 2005: www.eci.ox.ac.uk/lowercf/40house.html#report

Wells - A small city



Tony Scrase, who worked for many years with EHTF, until his retirement from UWE, launched his book "Wells – a small city" on 22nd April.

This is the latest in Tony's studies of the history of Wells – the smallest and best recorded city in England.

He explores the evolution of the city and its buildings, in the context of what was a leading commercial centre for many centuries.

For copies or information contact
Tempus Publishing Ltd,
Tel: 01453 883300.

City Walls Seminar



Cllr David Challen welcomes
delegates to The Water Tower
in the City Walls

The problems of management and maintenance of City Walls were discussed from a range of perspectives in Chester on April 27. Local, national and international speakers brought together ideas on ways in which the profile and the funding for walls can be raised: from working with disabled primary school children to events involving scaling the walls and swimming the moat, and from public art to archaeology, all aspects were explored. The benefits of applying management plans were clear, as was bringing stakeholders together in order to draw a complete picture of the walls and their history.

One of the problems emphasised was that of fire risk, which had been experienced in the recent past in Chester.

Cllr James Latham would like to hear from anyone who has information to share or experience in averting the problem.

Delegates also enjoyed a tour of the walls, including a reception held in The Water Tower, which can not normally be accessed by the public.

To find the full conference report look in the document store on our website at www.ehtf.org.uk. To obtain handouts of the speakers' power point presentations please contact the EHTF office.

View from the Chair

Twin towns

At the recent EAHTR Bureau meeting, a delegate from France gave a short presentation on her desire to establish an organisation similar to the Forum in that country. Although one had been established in the 1990's, it seems that for various reasons interest waned and the organisation folded. In the ensuing discussion I remarked that although many English towns and cities are twinned with those in France and, in fact across Europe, there appear to be few if any examples of local authority officers in planning, conservation, tourism etc exchanging thoughts, ideas or good practice. I am sure that many will agree that town twinning events are more commonly social occasions for the people of the towns concerned.

An idea that the EAHTR agreed to pursue was whether it might be possible for the Association to facilitate linking up officers in member towns to their European twins and consequently sharing good practice to more towns and countries across Europe.

I therefore agreed to compile a list of twin towns of EHTF member towns in order to start the ball rolling. With this in mind, I would be grateful if anyone from an EHTF full member town could email me with a list of towns that your historic town is twinned with. My email address is ian.poole@stedsb.gov.uk My own town of Bury St Edmunds is twinned with Compiègne in France and Kavelaer in Germany.

European Association of Historic Towns Bureau meeting

I recently attended the meeting of the management bureau of the EAHTR in Paris. Representatives from Finland, Turkey, Belgium and Croatia as well as the Council of Europe were present.

One of the remarkable things to emerge at the meeting was the size and enthusiasm of the Turkish Association, which has recently celebrated its 200th member town. Members of the Association are very keen to learn from other towns across Europe about how issues common to historic towns are being tackled and to emphasise this, their representative reported on a recent visit by around 200 officials to another European country to look at good practice issues!

The Association is very keen to create ties with other historic towns and cities so if you are interested in finding out more about this and other European historic towns why not visit the links on www.historic-towns.org

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Neil Robson Head of Property & Planning
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Feature Town : Newcastle Upon Tyne



Seven Stories,
Ouseburn Valley
Civic Trust Special
Award Winner

The importance of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne has been recognised for hundreds of years. The continuity of development through Roman, Medieval, Industrial and Modern eras has meant that the present does not merely overlie the past; it is rooted in it, drawing strength from a rich and varied history in a conscious and living tradition.

Although a large conurbation, the city has a distinct and unique historic core which faces the same issues and opportunities as many other members of the EHTF. Consequently, Newcastle upon Tyne benefits a great deal from membership of the EHTF, by both learning from good practice in the conservation and enhancement of other historic towns and cities throughout the country, and contributing to the debate by informing members of successful schemes within our city.

There are a number of heritage-led regeneration projects which the City Council has recently been involved in which has revitalised both the city centre and surrounding areas. Between 1997 and 2003 the historic core, also known as 'Grainger Town', underwent a successful £194 million renaissance which was internationally acclaimed and is still used as an exemplar of good practice in heritage-led regeneration. The industrial Ouseburn Valley, on the outskirts of the city, is in the process of being transformed through a regeneration project based on the physical, social and cultural heritage of the area. Finally, the historic Quayside, is currently being conserved and enhanced through a combination of a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme focusing on specific buildings at risk and other City Council initiatives, such as public realm works.

The Visions and Values of Newcastle City Council include the aim 'to build on the heritage, cultural and economic strengths of Newcastle and the sense of identity and civic pride of our people'. We feel that by exchanging good practice and lessons learnt about the many problems and opportunities faced by historic towns through the EHTF, we will go a long way to achieve this.

*Tony Wyatt, EHTF Executive Committee Member
Group Manager, Urban Design and Conservation - Newcastle City Council*

More on housing development from EHTF Sponsor/partners Donaldsons

Donaldsons
Consulting

"In Donaldsons' experience town centre regeneration and the provision of new residential development within centres can enhance the historic, tradition and unique element of a location.

- **Bringing buildings back into use** can provide the required commercial values to deliver redevelopment schemes that bring back into use derelict or underused buildings, either through redevelopment or refurbishment.
- **Removal of poor quality buildings** and replacement with new, high quality modern developments sympathetic to the urban fabric of the town.
- **Stimulating mixed use development** and providing uses that improve the centre as a destination location. Residential led mixed use developments can offer modern commercial space which provides economic and social benefits through the retention of a quality skill base and the creation of market to assist inward investment.
- **Providing affordable housing** through both market forces and planning policy in centres either as part of a private sector led development, through financial contributions or through public sector led/Housing Association type developments. This is important in retaining key workers within these locations.
- **Facilitating public realm improvements** in town centres either through the provision of a private sector led development or contributing to public sector led environmental improvement schemes.
- **High quality design** is of key importance in delivering an increase in the amount of residential units in historic areas. Whilst recognising the importance of the use of sustainable materials and energy efficient methods in construction and running costs, it is important that the design of new developments does not detract from the historic nature of the town. However, it is acknowledged that modern design in many cases can improve and complement the historic nature of the town or city."

Jonathan Lambert, Principal Surveyor, Development Consulting, Donaldsons LLP

To view the full article with case studies in Bristol & Plymouth visit the news page on www.ehtf.org.uk