
Wetherby Civic Society

Spring Newsletter

www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk

April 2010

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We could begin this section by quoting from any one of our recent Newsletters. The number of planning applications is so much less than when compared with previous years. However, we do make a point of examining each week's applications and where necessary responding to any which we feel present particular problems.

As a Society our main interest is in applications affecting the historic town centre and its immediate surroundings but from time to time there is an application which does raise concern in the peripheral residential areas. One such recent one was an application to erect a conventional dormer bungalow in the front garden of one of the "Woodentop" houses off Sicklinghall Road. We believed that this was so out of keeping with its neighbours that we entered a plea for the application to be rejected.

Of course, so called garden grabbing is a sensitive subject. At the moment gardens fall within the brownfield designation and so an application for new build within a garden does not have to jump the same hurdles as an application on a greenfield site. Nevertheless, we are concerned that too much infill can alter the character of an area and it is important to keep a close eye on proposed developments.

Within the historic town centre the approval of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan on March 1st gives us additional ammunition when looking at proposed developments. For anybody

interested in Wetherby's wellbeing this should be a mandatory read. It is available online at www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation and its 20 pages provide the best summary we have seen recently of the history, development and character of the town. It also provides practical guidance to owners wishing to improve their properties.

Most of us when walking around the town will be aware of the number of empty shops. However, this has not prevented landlords submitting applications to upgrade and improve their properties. One such recent one on Church Street did trouble us in that the treatment of new windows and doors was not in sympathy with its neighbours. We took some comfort that permission was granted subject to consultation regarding materials and design with Leeds Conservation officers but the outcome is not as we would have wished. This is a great pity since Church Street and Bank Street so often feature in magazine and press articles about Wetherby.

In spite of local publicity regarding a new use for the empty health centre on Crossley Street we have yet to see any detailed proposals. This is something for which we shall be keeping watch.

Stop Press. Just this week there is an application to demolish the health centre but no proposals yet for its replacement.

CIVIC VOICE

No, this isn't a political slogan! It is the name for the new body representing to government the views and interests of civic and amenity societies throughout the United Kingdom. It is just over a year since the Civic Trust went into administration and since then a small group of committed people have been busy getting a successor off the ground. With support from many other likeminded national bodies such as the National Trust and English Heritage their work has been successful and our Society has become one of its founding members.

No matter how well regarded was the old Civic Trust, its fate is a warning to any voluntary organisation taking on work which is funded by an

outside body. Will you be able to continue when the grant is withdrawn and the work goes elsewhere? This is what happened at the Civic Trust when contracts were not renewed and their fixed overhead costs still had to be met. Civic Voice will offer the same services we enjoyed with the Trust and we hope develop the same influence and reputation as its predecessor. One of the consequences of the Trust's demise is that the new body starts from scratch financially and we can expect to pay increasingly higher membership fees in future years. At the moment this doesn't present any problems to us but one thing we can be sure about the future, is that it will not turn out as we either expect or hope.

JUBILEE GARDEN AND THE GEORGIAN BATH HOUSE



The Woodland Garden and the Georgian Bath House, Westgate – April 2010

We are writing this the week after the annual coffee morning at the Jubilee Garden. We enjoyed a lovely spring day for the event and we were pleased to raise £145 all of which will be spent on plants and the garden. Many thanks to all who helped on the day and to all who contributed so generously. The garden is maintained by a small group of members and helpers from Wetherby in Bloom. They meet most Tuesday mornings. If you would like to help please contact either Margaret Dabell - 01937 581234 or Ruth Wheeler – 01937 583186.

The garden is a woodland spring garden and is at its best before the trees come into leaf. If you haven't seen it recently now is the time to take a walk along Westgate next time you are in town. The Society intends to hold another event in the garden on Saturday June 19th of which more details later.

SUMMER EVENTS

Our programme of summer events is now under way. Details of visits to the Himalayan Gardens at Grewelthorpe on May 26th and the Royal Hall Harrogate on June 14th have now been circulated to interested members. Please contact Mary Barnett at 01937 587298 if you wish further information about these and the other visits still to come later in the summer.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

This is our first Newsletter distributed by email. If you would like a printed copy please let me know at derek@wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk. If you have received a printed copy and would like to receive future Newsletters and other information by email, again please let me know at the same email address.

WETHERBY CIVIC SOCIETY

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