
Wetherby Civic Society

Spring Newsletter

March 2005

PLANNING MATTERS

The past winter months have been relatively quiet as far as planning applications are concerned. No major developments have been proposed but this has not stopped our planning working party committee keeping its watching brief on all applications affecting the town.

Every week it monitors all applications submitted for the Wetherby Ward and where necessary makes representations on the individual proposals.

These have included comments on a series of proposals to upgrade the shopping mall area of the Horsefair shopping precinct. Additional shopping units have been proposed and eventually the mall itself will become an enclosed area. All being well this should result in a much more attractive area which, since the new superstore opened, seems to have become a bit of a dead area as far as shopping activity is concerned. In its comments on the plans the Society pressed for replacements for existing amenity areas.

A further extension of the super store car park was also proposed and work on this is underway. This will be combined with changes in the car parking arrangements at the High School which will create an off road school bus waiting area. This should reduce congestion on Hallfields Lane. Again the Society made representations regarding retention and replacement where necessary of trees and green areas.

Not strictly a planning matter since permission was granted some time ago is the imminent redevelopment of the old cattle market. When completed this will bring back into economic use a valuable town centre site.

The public enquiry into the proposals contained in the review of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for new housing on part of the Thorp Arch industrial site has finished its public hearings. Even if the public enquiry supports the proposals we should not expect immediate building activities

since the UDP is meant to guide long term development and detailed planning applications will still have to be made.

In any event planning authorities will have to replace UDPs with new Local Development Frameworks by the year 2007. Built into the legislation is an expectation that planning authorities will undertake community consultations.

The Society has already put down a marker to be included in such consultations since, under the legislation, changes will be made in the way which heritage matters such as listed buildings and conservation areas are controlled. The whole of Wetherby town centre lies within a conservation area and within the town there is one ancient monument - the bridge - and over 20 listed buildings.

So it is important that the Society makes an informed contribution to any plans or changes affecting the conservation area or the listed buildings.

BUILDING & ENVIRONMENT

It has been a long story, but we are now in sight of public access to the Wharfedale Lawn pleasure ground. Within the past few weeks seating has been installed and a small group of us from Wetherby in Bloom and the Society have been clearing the area near the Bathhouse of weeds and ground elder and ivy. Once the area has been treated for weeds it will be planted up with shrubs and other ground covering

plants. With the ground cleared the remains of an ornamental garden with terraces and paths became clear. The Weir Trust has kindly offered to do some wall rebuilding. Our chairman, Ruth Wheeler has managed the whole project, and she would very much like to hear from any member who would like to help with the remaining work.

Members who use it, will know that the Harland Way within the Leeds boundary has been up graded with a new surface and improved access points. Leeds City has now adopted it as a recognised cycle track. As such it falls into the categories of footpaths and bridleways where the responsibility of maintenance and oversight has been devolved to town and parish councils. In Wetherby, the Town Council has

involved local groups in discharging this responsibility and the Society is pleased to have been able to assist in this regard.

At a more advanced level, we still do not know when we shall see an overall town traffic management proposal. The partial pedestrianisation of the Town Hall area is no further forward.

Further up the scale there seems to be a change coming in how best to deal with the motor car in

towns and cities. The concept of the "naked street" is being aired as the way forward. This works on the principle that if you do not give drivers signals as to where and how they are meant to drive they will have to drive more slowly as they work out where they are meant to be. The removal of signs, road markings, even pavements gives to all users no indication of who has priority so they all take care and more importantly motor vehicle speeds are reduced.

Having personally experienced variations of this system in France last year it does appear to work. And, of course, we already have a very small example of it in Wetherby. Next time you are in the town centre have a look at The Shambles. This appears to be a pedestrianised area but it isn't. It is not even a one way street. But yet cars, cycles, pedestrians and café tables all seem to fit in without too much trouble.

TREES

The Society has continued its tree-planting programme on The Ings. We have been very fortunate in the past by people contributing to the cost of this by donating trees in memory of friends and relatives. If any member wishes to help with this, or if they know of anyone else

who would like to be associated with this, Peter Maun our tree convenor will only be too pleased to help.

After all its problems the lime tree avenue on Hudson's Park is now well established. The memorial stone is in place and we

hope to have a dedication ceremony later this year. The Society believes that early spring bulbs between the trees would make an attractive addition to the avenue and, if any member would like to take this on either in whole or in part, again would they contact Peter Maun.

SUMMER EVENTS

Our summer events are detailed below. All those who have returned the original booking form will be asked to confirm their attendance at each event in good time beforehand. If you have not already advised the Secretary that you wish to attend a particular event please contact him as soon as possible as there may be vacant places still available.

**Tuesday 19th April
Ripley Castle & Gardens.**

Spring is the best time to see the Castle's flowering bulbs and National Hyacinth Collection.
Gardens from 1.30pm. Castle Guided Tour 2.00pm

**Wednesday 18th May
Ripon Law & Order Trail
The Prison & Police Museum, The Workhouse
Museum & The Courthouse Museum are all being
kept open specially for the Society**

Start time 6.30pm Allow 2hrs 15mins to see all three

**Thursday June 23rd
Hovingham Hall**

The Hall is open for just 5 weeks each year
1.45pm

**Tuesday 19th July
Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway**

Dep Embsay 3.00pm
Rtn from Bolton Abbey 3.40pm or 5.10pm

**Tuesday 20th September
Temple Newsam House & Garden**

6.00pm Private Visit to the newly refurbished house

Enjoy the summer!

WETHERBY CIVIC SOCIETY
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