

THE NEW COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

BRIAN BRISCOE, THE NEW COUNTY PLANNING OFFICER, speaking on the Revision of the County Structure Plan, said that the Federation is an important client of the County Council and that there should be a symbiotic relationship between us (!) Our view of the M25, the Channel Tunnel, the high-speed rail link, the abolition of EC barriers in 1992 and changes in local government organisation and finance was unnecessarily gloomy. The one fifth of the designated as Green Belt would survive as such.

Kent does need development because the existing community would generate 55,000 new households by 2001. New forms of industry need new-style premises but the countryside is not about to be handed over to the developers.

The real issue is the absence of local plans. Less energy should be spent on obtaining planning consent and more in competition between designs of quality as in the USA. Local planning decisions should be made locally. He mentioned the success of the KCC Impact Projects, already in Gravesham and prospectively in Ramsgate.

Mr Briscoe noted with approval that negotiation with Trans-Manche Link meant that 81% of Channel Tunnel material was delivered by rail. Attitudes to the proposed high-speed rail link should be governed by consideration of the environmental effects of not having it.

SHOPPING CENTRES

Mr A.J. CHADWICK, SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER of GRAVEHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL and SECRETARY of the S.E. REGION of the ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE began by emphasising that shopping, whether in village shops, town or by television was a dynamic and fast-changing activity and the starting point is always out-of-date.

Increasing wealth has changed patterns of spending. Food is less important compared with housing and transport. Car and home ownership mean dispersed dwellings and smaller family units.

The traditional High Street is now a conflict of vehicles and pedestrians. Car and fridge have replaced the traditional grocer and the change to out-of-town shopping in big sheds. DIY, with the warehouse it requires for bulky goods, has also benefitted from spacious display areas.

How will the traditional town centre cope? With its historic fabric it is more than a mere retail centre and may fight back with the refurbishment of shopping malls and speciality shopping. The multi-storey department store is unpopular and (like the village shop) declining. The United States precedent of ever-widening circles of urban expansion and decay is socially horrendous.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN CONSERVATION

Speaking on this theme MARTIN BRADSHAW, DIRECTOR OF THE CIVIC TRUST, also stressed the benefits of community involvement in conservation. He agreed with his former colleague Mr Briscoe that concentration on control procedures had meant that design and aesthetics were neglected.

Respect for the past could ossify. The heritage industry (*sic*) must not only embody romantic nostalgia. Various combinations of private and public enterprise and funding had produced other popular successes - Covent Garden and

Dockland in London, the Albert Dock in Liverpool, the Bradford Alhambra. It is possible that the release of pressures on town centres by out-of-town shopping developments might be beneficial. There is a case to be made against the preservation of architectural facades only.

It is desirable to be good at new design as well as restoration.

Ken Wraight & Jack Woolford

Jack is also Chairman of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies.



EASTERN DOCKS VISIT Phyllis Dobbins

Our grateful thanks go to John Gerrard and Dover Harbour Board staff for a well-organised tour that took 35 members from top to bottom, inside and out, under, over and through most of the buildings and other works in their part of the harbour.

We met at 3.00 p.m. on Saturday 17 September inside the Passenger Terminal building and were soon taken up to the sixth floor of the recently modernised Terminal Control Centre for a bird's-eye view of the whole harbour. Those who had known the terminal in the early post-war period were astonished by the enormous expansion of the working area since 1965, achieved by reclamation of the whole Camber area, in order to provide increased vehicle assembly areas and car parking. The original Nos 1 and 2 berths have disappeared to be replaced by new Nos 2 and 3 berths capable of taking the new 'Pride' class ferries. No 1 berth is now in the Eastern Arm and is designed to handle a wide variety of vessels. Thought is also being given to facilities for an even larger future class of ferries.

For many of us the highlight of the tour was the opportunity to visit the 'five cathedrals of Dover'. These are gigantic man-made caverns excavated before the war in 1938 to hold a total of 3 million gallons of fuel oil, enough, it is said, to keep the navy going for a week! They are reached through an inconspicuous wooden door at ground level. Armed with torches we climbed up 187 steps, then deeper into the cliff along a corridor about 10 feet wide we could enter No 4 cavern, situated, we were told, beneath the ice-cream stand on Langdon Cliff. Even when our eyes had adjusted to the darkness the torchlight only gave glimpses of the dimensions which appeared to be about 150 feet in length and 40 to 50 feet in height. Suggestions made for possible future use ranged from storage of wine (in a constant temperature of about 50 degrees Fahrenheit) to an alternative site for the Heritage Centre.

Few people can say they have walked on the Goodwin Sands, but those of us who made a detour to see the 'submarine pens' crossed the sandy area of the Camber reclaimed by infill dredged from the Goodwins. The pens were very solidly constructed of concrete eight feet thick to form bomb-proof housing for motor torpedo-boats. They are one of the few structures likely to survive indefinitely as the cost of demolition is prohibitive.

Most of the buildings and other structures at Eastern Docks are considered old if they have existed for 15 years or so. Demolition and reconstruction are