

Monthly Report on the work of the Planning Sub-Committee

by LAWRENCE GAGE, *Chairman*

SUMMARY OF RECENT PLANNING ISSUES

Western Docks redevelopment. (Proposed multi-million pound scheme for Superstore, shops, enlarged Marina, new housing and commercial buildings).

We understand that Dover Harbour Board are revising their earlier plans to take into account the views of various parties involved, including the Department of Transport and the Superstore operators. Members may recall that the Dover Society, although welcoming the proposals in principle, was critical of many detailed aspects of the scheme proposed by Pearce Developments. It is to be hoped that the revised plans will also take into account our concerns. We expect a formal planning application will be made in the near future and the Society will take a keen interest in the proposals and will comment appropriately.

The Planning sub-Committee considers that the future of Marine Station is crucial to the whole scheme.

White Cliffs Hotel

We are very sad to note that the Hotel is to close at Christmas.

The owners, Dover Harbour Board, have confirmed that they "... *do wish to establish a quality venue in the existing building to reflect the sentiments which you (The Dover Society) expressed in March*".

Our sentiments are that the existing building should be totally refurbished in order to re-establish itself as an internationally famous luxury hotel. It might be possible to extend the hotel across Cambridge Road so that the new hotel can relate to both the promenade and any new development in Wellington Dock. Such an hotel in such a superb position could attract new people, new money and new opportunities for Dover.

We consider it vital that the hotel in its new form opens as soon as possible. Nothing could be worse for the image of tourism in the town than a boarded up hotel!

Marine Court

The residents have been given notice to vacate in five years' time and the Harbour Board have confirmed to us that "*the future of Marine Court has yet to be resolved. You will have seen from the press that no change is proposed for five years.*" Undoubtedly the site could be put to a more lucrative use – but at what cost to the residents and to Dover sea front? If it is to be redeveloped, the Dover Society will press for an appropriate use and quality design on this very important site.

144 Listed Buildings, Western Docks

In association with Dover District Council, the Dover Society has applied for the listing of further buildings in this area (i.e. the Clock Tower, the Old Custom House and the Harbour Station).

Waste Water Treatment Scheme for Dover and Folkestone

The Planning sub-Committee is worried about the economic and engineering viability of the proposed Scheme. Prefer Shakespeare platform site. Objected to Planning application. Negotiations continue.

Russell Street Multi Storey Car Park.

(Renewal of expired permission)

The Society objected – but permission given.

The Society is also very concerned at the lack of a clear policy for the whole area townwards of Townwall Street to the rear of Castle Street, from the Leisure Centre to the Market Square.

Our views were expressed in our representation to the Council on the current planning application to continue permission for a multi-storey car park on the Russell Street site.

Mr Clayton has indicated to us that he sees the future of the whole area as being determined by market forces and that car parking is essential to woo potential developers. We believe the development of this important area should not be determined by the intentions (or lack of them) of the land owners and developers.

We would like to see a major feasibility study of this whole area carried out. Such a study would need to cover social, economic and commercial factors as well as urban design and architectural considerations, and would result in a strategic masterplan *for the benefit of Dover*. Perhaps this will also be included in the forthcoming review of the Local Plan.

Proposed Market, adjacent to Charlton Centre

Permission given despite Societies reservations (see separate report)

Housing for 24 Dwellings – Kearsney Nursery Site.

Objected on the grounds of inadequate access (off Chilton Way)

Illuminated sign – Bus shelter in front of East Cliff

Objected

IMPACT (environmental improvement for Dover)

The IMPACT team are now very active in the town and we were represented on their successful first Forum held at their headquarters in Castle Street on 15 September.

Many ideas were suggested for possible projects – more than can be achieved within three years and priorities need to be identified. As a result of the Dover Society Workshop held in March we intend to press for the following:-

- General improvements around Queen Street and New Street and the environs of the York Street roundabout – it is the first impression that visitors will receive of the Town Centre when approaching on the new A20 – at present the prospect is bleak).
- Improvements to areas adjacent to Townwall Street, between the leisure centre and Russell Street, including St. James's Street Car Park. (The most likely place that visitors will be tempted, or otherwise, to stop off in the Town but currently this area is uninviting, to say the least.
- Riverside improvements generally.
- Improvements to buildings opposite the Town Hall. Renovation and use of upper floors.
- Ex Co-op and B&Q sites. Encourage new uses or quality redevelopment.
- Folkestone Road – help establish a revised rôle for the road when new A20 opens.
- Rationalise and improve signposting generally and improve links between car parks and the town and between tourist attractions.

Projects already under way or in the pipeline include improvements to Snargate Street, Bench Street and Priory Station.

Farthingloe Valley – a precious green belt between Dover and Folkestone?

The Planning sub-Committee is concerned that the ex -Eurotunnel Village site will not be reinstated to its original use now that it is no longer required for tunnel workers. The District Council, on the other hand, wish to see the site further developed as a commercial area and hope that its recent decision to allow temporary office and training facilities to occupy some of the existing portable buildings will encourage the building of permanent office blocks in the area. We consider this site in the Farthingloe Valley is unsuitable for such commercial development, not simply on visual and environmental grounds but because it will not relate directly to the trunk road network. It is our belief that modern commerce and industry prefer to have direct access to the main arteries and if another commercial site is needed it should be directly accessible to the new A20 or A2.

National Trust Visitors Centre, Langdon Cliffs

After receiving national publicity on this issue, members of the Planning sub-Committee met the Regional Director of the National Trust, Mr Peter Griffiths, and two of his colleagues, to find out what is being proposed.

A limited architectural competition is under way for the design of a visitors centre in the vicinity of the existing café on Langdon Cliffs. The brief includes a shop, an exhibition area, an education room, internal and external self-service refreshment areas, toilets and stores, etc., together with houses and workshops for two resident wardens. We were assured that the building (or buildings) will be sympathetic to the unique nature of the site. It is clear that if anything is built on the Cliffs it will be designed as well as possible, but the crucial question still remains – **do we really want or need anything at all on the Cliffs?**

- 146 A planning application is expected in February 1994, based on the winning design competition entry and the Dover Society will have the opportunity to comment again then.

If any members or readers have any comments on the above or any other planning matters, please contact Lawrence Gage, (Chairman of the Planning sub-Committee) on (0304) 242749 or call at his office at 9 Castle Street.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Several members have commented on the fact that some items are reported in the local press as opinions or decisions of "The Dover Society" when the total membership has not been canvassed on a particular issue. Any decisions thus reported have, however, been debated in committee meetings and the committee urges members who feel strongly about any issue at any time to write to the Secretary, Leo Wright, or to the Chairman of the Planning sub-Committee, Lawrence Gage, in time for the next committee meeting, held on the second Thursday in each month (excepting August).

Membership Notes ————— SHEILA COPE

At this time of year our numbers are reduced because some members, in spite of reminders, have forgotten to renew their annual subscription. They usually become aware of this when the *Newsletter* fails to arrive. The standing order scheme prevents such mishaps and is a very convenient method of paying subscriptions. Unlike a direct debit the amount taken from your bank account cannot be varied without your specific instruction in advance.

Please ask for an application form

Deadline for CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor welcomes contributions and illustrations, particularly line drawings. Coloured photographs can be accepted where the contrast and sharpness meet the standards the printing process requires.

The deadline for issue No. 19 – for publication on 1 April 1994 – is 28 February. The producer would prefer "copy" to be typed, but in any case, it should be double-spaced. Single spacing, especially in manuscript, is a very frequent source of typesetting error.

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