

## Report on the work of the Planning Sub-Committee

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THINGS have gone very quiet on the planning front recently. The few planning applications affecting Dover Town have been mostly concerned with minor alterations and the provision of advertising signs – an indication, perhaps, that Dover is still in recession.

However, all is not doom and gloom. Currently there is a plan to regenerate the Old Park Barracks and already a number of new businesses have been attracted to the programme giving rise to much needed jobs. The possibility of a Cruise Liner Terminal at the Western Docks has moved one stage closer with formal application for listed building consent. Plans for a multi-million pound millennium project are progressing with the setting up of a Steering Group. (see separate article).

### **Old Park Barracks**

The Ministry of Defence, in consultation with the Local Planning department, have prepared a Planning Brief for the redevelopment of this large and important site at Whitfield. The Dover Society has received a copy and will be studying it carefully prior to making a full representation.

### **Cruise Liner Terminal**

In early August members of the Planning Sub-Committee held a meeting with the Harbour Board to discuss their plans for the proposed terminal at the Western Docks Station which closed on 28 September. It is intended to demolish some of the less attractive sections of this listed building and to remove the more recent visually-intrusive additions. The original façade to the town will be revealed again in its full glory. The four seaward bays of the original train shed will be converted into the Cruise terminal which will involve the insertion of a mezzanine floor and a new façade at this end of the building. The remainder and the majority of the existing building will be used for covered car parking until a more appropriate use can be found for it.

The proposal is currently the subject of a listed building application and the Dover Society has generally welcomed and given its support to the application. The sub-committee considers a Cruise Terminal to be just the thing to bring life back to the Western Docks and that it will complement the Harbour Board's plans for the area in general. However, we have some reservations regarding detailed design of the terminal and the need to allow for an appropriate re-use of the main part of the building and these views have been made known to the planners. A decision has yet to be made but we remain optimistic that the closure of the Western Docks Station will not necessarily result in its demise as an international transport interchange.

### **National Trust Visitors' Centre – Langdon Cliffs**

Despite our strong objections planning permission has been granted. Members are urged to enjoy the present unspoilt atmosphere on the top of the cliffs while it lasts!

### **Impact/DHB Sea Front Scheme**

The general plans for upgrading the seafront have been deferred until a new application for E.C. funding for the project is made. In addition to revising the traffic circulation and new landscaping proposals, ways are being investigated to incorporate existing and new activities on the sea front, including a new pier!. Definitely planned for installation by next summer is a major 'landmark' sculpture on the sea front in line with the new Bench Street underpass. In September the Dover Society was represented on the judging panel when three artists were shortlisted from eighty entries to the international competition for the project. The three are currently developing their ideas and the winner will be chosen in February.

### **New Clubhouse for Dover Sea Angling Assn: 137 Snargate Street**

The proposed scheme will 'fill the gap' in Snargate Street and we are very supportive of the application in principle but are critical of the 'cottage style' elevation proposed. We hope a more appropriate design will be developed to add to the strong architectural character of the Street.

### **Hoardings and Signs**

As a result of our comments, the hoardings erected to advertise the Western Docks development are fewer in number and less obtrusive than originally intended. It is hoped that our comments on the proposed very large illuminated sign on the P&O building will be equally heeded. We are also pressing for a number of 'maverick' hoardings around the town to be controlled.

### **Kearsney Abbey Tea Room**

Currently teas are served in a building designed as a Billiard Room. This is all that remains of the original mock gothic Abbey Mansion. It may not be a very pretty building externally but it has an interesting history and the interior is rather special, containing timber panelling and some unique decorative billiard themed glass. We understand the Council intend to apply to demolish this listed building. This is a very rare situation as local authorities are duty bound to protect listed buildings! There will need to be a Listed Building application in the usual way and the Dover Society will, no doubt, wish to comment, but no application has yet been made. It is possible that the district planning committee may refuse the application which will be the end of it, but if it approves demolition the decision will need to be ratified by the D.o.E. and owing to the unusual circumstances, a public enquiry is likely which will provide a further opportunity for the Society to influence the decision.

The planning sub-committee has not yet commented but if an application is made, will need to form a view. Should the building be renovated, at an estimated cost of £170,000 – OR – should a new purpose-designed tea room be built (hopefully of superb design) ?

*A number of members have already expressed a view on the proposed demolition and we would be pleased to receive further comments on this or any other issue. Write to Lawrence Gage at 9 Castle Street – or ring 242749.*