

*The work of the*

# PLANNING

*Sub-Committee*

Report by  
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Due to late planning developments and the limited space within the July Magazine the Planning Report was issued as a separate loose insert. I have had members ask me to reprint it in the magazine and this is shown in italics following my current report.

The Section 215 activity is gaining momentum with just under 50% of the original identified properties having either completed work, currently carrying out work or advised dates to Dover District Council (DDC) when work will commence. Those that have not responded have been sent a second letter. Of interest work has just started on two of the worst eye sores, The Old Post Office/Labour Exchange 9/10 King Street and 7 Castle Street.

The former Grenada/ABC cinema in Castle Street was not initially on our list as it was understood that the owners (Wetherspoons) were to submit a planning application once the Dover Town Investment Zone (DTIZ) site was approved. As nearly six months has elapsed since the approval of the DTIZ plans and no application has been submitted we are pressing DDC to include this property which is without doubt the major eye-sore in Castle Street.

DDC/DTC (Dover Town Council) asked us to look at another area and our "team" has provided them with details of 60 properties in Folkestone Road at

the town/station end. DTC have performed the required Land Registry searches and all properties have been sent the 1st letter which advises the owner their property requires work. We watch with interest. DDC recently produced an excellent document with regard to acceptable types of signs and shop fronts within conservation areas. We see this as a start to bring the existing Town Conservation Area up to standard where inappropriate signage and shop fronts have been permitted in the past. The document is only a consultative document and whilst it is said existing properties can not be asked to alter to comply we shall request that any new planning applications for signage/shop fronts deliver the document's aspired standards.

Our chairman circulated the Society response to DDC with regard to the planning application for Western Heights/ Farthingloe and we await with interest to see how this progresses, in particular regarding the involvement of English Heritage who have, to date, shown little interest in protecting Dover's historic fortifications on the Western Heights.

At the executive meeting it was requested that I follow up with the police "anti-social" behaviour within the town centre and the problems of cars parking on pavements. The police have responded and their initial

comments fall short of what the executive expect with regard to the control of anti-social behaviour. The pavement parking is not an offence but driving on a pavement is. So if a vehicle is on the pavement I interpret that unless dropped from a height must have been driven onto the pavement. On a positive note the police recognise that such parking can cause danger to pedestrians, in particular those with disabilities, and we are told that a "warning to be considerate" leaflet is to be produced and will be placed on windscreens of offending vehicles.

The sad loss of Roger Marples has left the Planning Committee with a vacancy for a "Dover" committee member. In fact there are now three as we are also looking for one member from River/Temple Ewell and one from Whitfield. Anyone interested do contact me.

## July Report

*As reported in previous issues of the newsletter the Dover Society in conjunction with Dover Town Council (DTC) and Dover District Council (DDC) have been working together to improve the town by serving Section 215 notices to owners of properties in disrepair.*

*Within the "Town Centre" area the Society identified some 60 properties that ranged from requiring minor repair to major eyesores. DDC have appointed an officer with sound knowledge of enforcement using Section 215. All properties identified have photographic records in the area of concern and have been*



*No 7 Castle Street*

*checked by the DDC officer. Owners of these properties have been written to explaining what work is required, this letter is not a serving of the 215 notice but a polite request to consider doing the work identified. However, some 15 properties will have 215 notices served. It is early days but from the experience of using this area of enforcement in Hastings I am very hopeful of seeing some of these offending, and eye-sore, properties being improved to give Dover the quality it deserves.*

*In early May planning approval was granted to the three applications appertaining to the DTIZ site (St.*

James area); this is in respect of a new hotel and mast on Woolcomber Street and retail units on the St. James's site with residential property on the corner of Castle Street and Woolcomber Street. The Society was not happy with the design of the hotel or the "commercial" use of the LED Screen on the mast and our Vice Chair presented these points at the planning meeting at DDC. However, no alterations were made. We had made comments with regard to the retail/residential part and at a further planning meeting at DDC I took the opportunity of speaking. A particular concern was in respect to the roof materials being used. The Dover Society preferred to see greater use of more traditional materials (slate/tile) but this was not conceded. The use of the developers' expertise in securing tenants for possible vacant town centre shops was also raised as well as developer contribution (by way of Section 106 agreement) to improving the area adjacent to the DTIZ site. As the residential area is shown as being the last area of the development to be built (in reality possibly three or four years), we requested that the corner of Castle Street/Woolcomber Street being in a conservation area be landscaped, rather than have hoardings. I am pleased to say this area will be landscaped.

The town has waited many years for this development that will see the eyesore of Dover (Burlington House)

being demolished and we now wait with bated breath for work to start.

As I write we are awaiting the plans in respect of development at Farthingloe and Western Heights. Following the developer's public exhibition comments made by members have been sent to the developer. This development will be a highly controversial subject and we must ensure that any proposals do not have an adverse affect as some of the site is designated as being of Ancient Monument Status.

Sensitivity in design and materials will be of paramount importance. In this respect English Heritage is the custodian of such designated sites and will weigh the balance between developer and heritage under what is known as "Enabling Development". It is already stated that the developer will be making contributions to the heritage sites (in particular the Drop Redoubt). In the current economic climate funds for such improvements are scarce and if it is deemed that the developer's heritage proposals were to be accepted we shall be seeking to ensure these are delivered ahead of any commercial activity.

The Dover Society is a Historic and Amenity Society and we must ensure any sustainable growth that benefits the community (amenity value) is also delivered in accordance with the future protection of our heritage.

