

Townscape today – challenges and opportunities

Lichfield 8-10 October 2008



The Annual Conference was based around the 1992 publication *'Townscape in Trouble'* which was reviewed by

Gordon Somerville, opening the event with some indications of

the improvements – or otherwise – which had been achieved in the intervening years. New research, which might support good practice, was presented by English Heritage – *'The Heritage at Risk Survey'* – and the use of *Article 4 Directions*, carried out by RPS for EHTF. This goes some way to dispelling some of the myths which inhibit the use of this tool.



Local distinctiveness in Norwich

Case studies from Norwich and Lincoln illustrated the achievement of local distinctiveness and in depth characterisation. After lunch, representatives from Lichfield gave presentations on the projects underway in the small market town which is in fact a City and has

a conservation area encompassing the whole centre. It demonstrates all of these issues under examination: successful use of Article 4 Directions, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, new uses for old buildings, new buildings in a historic context, a new retail development and public realm improvements.



Lichfield - new design in historic context

Walking tours, followed by discussion groups, helped delegates to explore the issues in detail.



Delegates on the Walking Tour of Lichfield

Thursday evening's activities included a **Reception** at the Lichfield Heritage Centre at St Mary's with an exhibition of the 12 short listed images from the Photo Competition, followed by **Dinner** at Chandlers Grande Brasserie. The first prize was awarded to Roger Elphick with an image of Durham bridge. representing Roger, Wilf Newall, was presented with a voucher for a weekend for two at The Midland Hotel, sponsored by Urban Splash, a framed photo and certificate from EHTF. Chair, Sam Howes, also made the draw for a bottle of champagne from respondents to the Membership Survey; the winner was Mike Fenton of Hawkins Eades.



From l-r: Cllr David Smith, Wilf Newall and Sam Howes

On Friday, following a résumé of previous day, Harry Reeves, from the Culture Department, DCMS talked about implementing the **Heritage Protection Bill**, which was followed by questions from the floor.

The Sustainability Agenda was explored, including the economic implications and impacts from the point of view of the private sector, European guidelines on air quality and its impact on historic

buildings and monuments and “BREEAM in use”, the improved measuring tool for conservation and climate change.

The anticipated changes in the Heritage Protection regime are likely to have significant impacts on **the skills agenda**. The English Heritage ‘Historic Environment Traineeships’ were presented, followed by ‘Capacitycheck’ – the Urban Design Skills appraisal and the view of the IHBC on conservation skills and services. The importance of integrated project management and the value of local listing were presented by enthusiastic practitioners.



Locally listed buildings are of great value

Sam Howes summarised the conference, thanked all speakers and participants and invited delegates to join tours to the Linford-Bridgeman Ltd conservation crafts workshops and Lichfield Cathedral, which would take place after lunch.

Copies of the presentations can be seen as pdf files on www.ehtf.org.uk or obtained on a cd from the EHTF office (for a small fee): 0117 975 0459 or ehhf@uwe.ac.uk



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