



# Newsletter April 2015



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## HERITAGE WEEKEND 2015

Good News! The Peterborough Heritage Festival will be back bigger and better than ever for 2015. Its future has been secured thanks to support from Perkins as part of a three-year partnership announced recently. The Festival will take place on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

Record numbers attended the Heritage Festival in 2014 with more than 30,000 people flocking to the city centre over the course of two days. The Civic Society will have a stand again this year – be sure to come and say 'Hello'!

## GHOST SIGNS



Ghost signs are the faded remains of signs painted on walls and are often re-exposed when a shop or building is being renovated. A good example of this occurred in November 2009 when the shop on the corner of Long Causeway and Westgate, known to old Peterborians as Barrett's Corner, was renovated and the old sign exposed.

The Civic Society has asked members of Peterborough Photographic Society to look out for examples in and around Peterborough. So often these signs are revealed for a few days, then boarded over for perhaps another generation!

Another really good recent example turned up when Cowgate was being improved and upgraded. The photograph of Milletts Surplus Stores is courtesy of Sam Roberts from [www.ghostsigns.co.uk](http://www.ghostsigns.co.uk) who is always keen to hear about newly unearthed examples.

If you know of any examples locally please either photograph them yourself and let us know or contact Toby Wood who will rush to see it, camera in hand!



## NOW YOU SEE IT .....!

As you know your Society always keeps up-to-date with planning applications. Every now and again a building has a significant change of use or is even demolished – before you know it the building is a distant memory. A few weeks ago The Royal Arms in Eye Road was demolished to make way for a development of 20 flats (approved late 2014).

Members may recall the Royal Arms to be an Elgood's pub at which coaches would often stop on their way to, or returning from, a day trip to Hunstanton, Eye Road being on the A47 at the time. Toby Wood popped along with his camera on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March just in time to take a few last photographs before demolition. By Thursday of the same week the building was virtually gone and by Saturday completely flattened! Once again, if you know of any buildings that are about to undergo a significant change of use, or even demolition, please let Toby know and a photographic record can quickly be made before it's too late!



## IN BRIEF

### Richard Sandbach

We are sorry to report the death in January of Richard Sandbach, aged 99. He was a long-time member and legal advisor to the Society and was best known for his work as a solicitor and his many roles and extensive work, including publications, for the Freemasonry movement. His roles in Peterborough's community included Chairmanship of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

### EECAS

A body called 'East of England Civic and Amenities Societies' is a regional level link between the Civic Societies of the region and our umbrella body Civic Voice. Following the resignation of Prof Peter Lansdoff of the Cambridge society (called Cambridge Past Present and Future) from its chairmanship, our Committee member Peter Lee has taken on the role. We congratulate him.

### For Sale

Following sell-out of the original production number, we have taken delivery of another batch of our DVD 'RAF Peterborough'. It tells the history of Westwood Airfield particularly featuring its time as an RAF training base and is available from Peter Lee or via our web site for £10.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Ian Webb, our membership secretary and webmaster, would like to (gently!) remind members to let him know if there is a change of address, telephone number or email address. Ian tries hard to ensure that the Society's records are kept up-to-date but this is not always easy. If there are any changes please contact Ian via the email address below or telephone one of the newsletter editors.

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[www.peterboroughcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.peterboroughcivicsociety.org.uk)

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Each fortnight a Plans Group meets to review the latest applications for planning permission and listed building consent. The following is a selection of the cases they have commented upon since your last newsletter together with the subsequent decision of the City Council where available.

The reference numbers have been given so that should you wish to examine the plans, you can access them via this page on Peterborough City Council's web-site: [http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning\\_and\\_building.aspx](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning_and_building.aspx) and by clicking on Planning & Building Online Register.

**13/01752/FUL North Lodge Ufford new dwelling.** Following our objection on design grounds, revised plans submitted which addressed our objections. Consent 13<sup>th</sup> January.

**14/01962/FUL Queensgate car parks. Installation of stainless steel wire security mesh screens on rooftops and voids** (to restrain suicide attempts). Not opposed. Outcome: consent 18<sup>th</sup> Dec with condition that mesh colour be stainless steel, galvanised or pale grey.

**14/02102/FUL Former Carnegie Library building Broadway.** Installation of new entrance and ramped access. Opposed as seriously upsetting the balanced design of the Broadway elevation. Decision pending.

**14/01699/PRIOR and 15/00141/FUL Touthill Close office block.** The first is a 'Prior Notification' application (one not requiring full planning permission under the recent relaxation of planning controls but which the local authority can consider only for potential adverse traffic, flood and contamination effects). The proposal was for change of use from offices to residential units throughout the building. We were concerned at the lack of a comprehensive approach to the land behind the building. The second application was for an addition floor on top of the block for 6 additional units. The floor is shown set back from the main elevations such that it was considered acceptable. Outcome: for PRIOR application, no application required; second application decision pending.

**14/02167/OUT. Redevelopment of part of Great Northern Hotel site for offices plus hotel extension etc.** This is an identical application to that originally submitted and approved by the City Council in 2012 (ref 12/00329/OUT). Approval this time was being sought for an outline permission lasting 5 years rather than the 3 years originally granted. We repeated our previous objections to this scheme on numerous grounds (excessive height and visual impact on Bourges Blvd, overshadowing to the north, bad design of hotel extension etc). In addition the scheme does not take into account changes nearby implemented since 2012, so we objected also on grounds that it fails to demonstrate how the pedestrian/cycle links in the scheme relate to the new/proposed crossings. Outcome: consent 13<sup>th</sup> March included a condition requiring details of footway/cycle links to be provided and agreed before development starts.

**15/00009/FUL. 21 Priestgate (Former City and Counties Club) Change of use to 9 residential flats.** We regretted the loss of this long-established meeting place and recommended some minor amendments but did not oppose. Decision pending.

**15/00058/FUL. 1A Brassey Close** Three-storey block of housing for 30 students. No objection to the principle of a development here to improve the Bourges Blvd frontage. But oppose this scheme - overbearing impact on the GN Cottages and their Conservation Area, bad internal layout causing noise problems for the occupants, very poor design, lack of provision for cycles/ motorcycles, etc. Decision pending.

## THE ONWARD MARCH OF OFFICE CONVERSIONS

Above we refer to the proposed 'permitted development' change of use of Touthill Close to residential use. There have been a considerable number of these in the city centre, including Hereward Centre multi-storey block, the Edith Cavell building between North Street and Lincoln Road, Geneva House (next to Park Road Baptist Church) and 57 Priestgate. Outside the city centre there have been a few such schemes, most notably the large office building in Vicarage Farm Road previously occupied by Perkins.

This relaxation of the normal planning process in this way is a cunning scheme for increasing 'housing' numbers, and we have not heard of eviction of healthy businesses to create higher value residential use as has occurred in parts of London. But the inability to control such changes through the planning system does mean that a wide range of office sizes cannot be protected for prospective in-coming businesses.