



# Newsletter April 2017



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## PETERBOROUGH BLUE PLAQUES



Twenty new blue plaques have now been installed by the Society at locations within easy walking distance of the city centre.

In addition to the plaques themselves, we have produced a free leaflet, a copy of which is enclosed with this newsletter. The leaflet is available from the Visitor Information Centre in Bridge Street. Additional, more detailed information about each plaque can be found on our website.

Thanks must also go to Sam Falco from Peterborough City Council and Mark Broadhead, centre manager, Queensgate for their support and assistance.

The Society's committee will be evaluating the success of the project and looking at any potential future expansion of the scheme.

A photographic exhibition of all the blue plaques and the accompanying trail will be in the Cathedral's Heritage and Education centre throughout June. Society committee members will also be in attendance at this exhibition during the annual Heritage Festival which takes place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June.

## IN BRIEF ...

### Your Freebie - thanks to Civic Voice

Peterborough Civic Society is affiliated to the umbrella society for Civic Societies, Civic Voice. As such you, as a member of our Society, are eligible for a free pass to a National Trust property (worth £14). The current batch of passes are valid until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017, so get your request in quick!

To claim your pass, you complete an application form on our web-site and send it to Civic Voice at the address on the form. It is at: <http://www.peterboroughcivicsociety.org.uk/doc/CVNTDayPassForm>

We will let you know via our web site if the concession is extended for a further year.

### Name for new Council offices at Fletton Quays

The leader of Peterborough City Council, Cllr. John Holdich has been in touch to ask if we have any ideas as to what to call the new offices to be sited at Fletton Quays. Members are invited to put on thinking caps to come up with suitable suggestions. Our initial thoughts are that any name should reflect either a historical connection or reference to the location of the building (on the south side of the river Nene). Please forward any ideas to either Toby Wood or Peter Lee via email.

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

## SUMMER VISITS 2017 – BOOK NOW! (form enclosed with newsletter)

### **Stamford: 2pm start. Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May Tour of Stamford Town Hall and guided walk around Stamford.**

This year Stamford celebrates 50 years since its designation as the country's first conservation area. Our colleagues at Stamford Civic Society are hosting this visit. We will meet at the Town Hall on St Mary's Hill (PE9 2DR). It is a three-storey building with steps up to the front door. We will have the opportunity of a regalia visit and viewing of the Malcolm Sargent exhibition or the court room. We will then split into two groups to be taken on a conducted tour of Stamford's Georgian and medieval heritage by members of the Stamford Civic Society.



**Parking:** There are several car parks in Stamford, but the closest to the Town Hall is Bath Row car park, overlooking the Town Meadows.

**Cost: £5**



### **Exton Church and Oakham Castle: 1.15 for 1.30 start Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

Exton Church (LE16 8AX) is famed for its spectacular collection of monuments. We will begin there with a half-hour guided tour of the interior. Then on to Oakham Castle (PE29 2BA) for a guided tour which will conclude with a cream tea (included in the price).



**Getting there:** From A1 heading North take A606 (signposted Melton Mowbray & Oakham) to Empingham. In the village turn right at sign for Exton. Follow Exton signs passing through Exton Fox & Hounds on your left onto Oakham Road. After about 500 yards turn right at signpost for "Parish Church". Follow narrow drive to Church, parking (on grass) at Church.

On leaving Church turn right onto Oakham Road and follow signs for Oakham. Castle is on right of High Street turn into Market St. Go through gate. Parking is in Castle grounds.

**Cost £11**

### **Walking tour of Peterborough's new Blue Plaques 2pm Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June**

This tour, led by our own architectural historian Henry Duckett, will take you on a figure-of-eight walk to all 20 of our blue plaque sites (or 10 if you run out of time). Meet at 2pm in the plaque exhibition in the new Cathedral Visitor and Learning Centre at 25 Minster Precincts. Booking essential please.

**No charge, but numbers limited.**

### **Island Hall, Godmanchester. 2pm Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July**

Island Hall is at 18 Post Street, Godmanchester. It is an elegant red-brick riverside mansion on the street frontage – think Peckover House Wisbech to grasp its scale. It has been rescued from parlous condition by its current private owner. Built in the 1740's it has formal gardens linked to an ornamental island by a Chinese Bridge.

We will have an introductory talk and tour of the house by one of the owning family members, followed by tea/coffee and biscuits and a chance to stroll in the gardens.



**Getting there:** From Huntingdon ring road, follow signs to Godmanchester and go over the river bridge. After half a mile you enter the town and pass over a pelican crossing by the Black Bull pub on your left. 200 yards further on is Island Hall on your right. Carry on over a second pelican crossing and turn immediately right into Mill Yard public car park. The car park for navigation purposes is PE29 2AQ. Meet by Island Hall front door.

**Cost £15**

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following is a selection of the cases your Plans Groups have looked at since your last newsletter and decisions made on applications where we submitted comments previously. The reference numbers are given so that you can examine the plans if you wish on the 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 the Planning and Building Online Register.

### **Residential development (80 houses - outline) Uffington Road Barnack (15/01840/OUT)**

A major application for development off Uffington Road and outside the village envelope line of Barnack was refused by the City Council in March last year. An appeal was lodged and was the subject of a Public Inquiry in January. Village envelopes are specifically designed to define the limit of the built up areas and are varied from time to time through the Local Plan process. But no land outside the Barnack envelope had been allocated for development either in the current Peterborough Local Plan or in the latest draft of its replacement. So your Plans Groups were shocked to hear that the appeal had been allowed by the Government's inspector. Why? The key issue was the City Council's inability to convince the inspector that sufficient land was readily developable in the Peterborough district to provide five years of land supply. This is a requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework Para 49. This meant that the NPPF's pro development position trumped all the relevant local planning policies. Whether this decision will result in a rush of applications by other land-owners remains to be seen, but if so the rush will only be stemmed when the current draft of the local plan has reached an advance stage and a new set of calculations can come into play. **Appeal allowed.**

### **Housing Hampton Court, Westwood centre car-park (16/02184/R4FUL)**

Our comment: The provision of a significant number of affordable housing by a local housing association is very welcome. Layout could be changed to improve urban form and sense of enclosure. This became a controversial application for local residents who were concerned on many grounds, especially on the effects of loss of the car park. However the **application was approved.**

### **Alterations to Shop Front and Signage, 29 Long Causeway (16/01750/FUL)**

Comment: The alterations proposed, to the ground and first floor parts of the elevation, are out of scale and character with the remainder of the elevation. **Application approved.**

### **68 Dwellings. Flaxland, Bretton Woods (16/01796/R4FUL)**

The residential development of this site is supported in principle and the inclusion of 40% affordable housing is especially welcomed. However the layout is uninspired and unattractive. Some modifications made.

**Application approved**

### **Res Dev. 190 Dwellings Wittering (16/01361/FUL)**

The Civic Society does not object in principle to this proposal but permission for the residential development should be conditional on providing a practical set of measures to improve safety at the A1 junction. We made suggestions to enhance the appearance and reduce visual impact of the new housing in views from the south-west of the site. **Awaiting decision.**

### **30 bed student accommodation block at Brassey Close (16/00260/FUL)**

This was a resubmission of an earlier scheme to which the Society objected on grounds of overdevelopment, inadequate provision for external facilities and adverse effect on the a New England cottages Conservation Area. Whilst some of our concerns had been addressed the main points on objection remained.

The Council refused the application on grounds of overdevelopment, lack of amenity space, overbearing impact on the GN cottages, inadequate access and parking and the impact on trees.

**An appeal was dismissed.**

### **New entrance and doors Cumbergate entrance to Queensgate (17/00051/FUL)**

This involves the introduction of a stronger entrance feature frame to the Cumbergate entrance to Queensgate and the insertion of doors both in it and opposite at the entrance from the Westgate Arcade. We objected on the grounds that the dominant new entrance feature would be out of scale with the adjacent Cumbergate listed buildings, and that the route was a public right of way that Queensgate had no legal right to close off with doors.

**Outcome:** Application approved but with a planning condition requiring that the doors shall be able to be opened from 7 am until midnight and only closed/locked thereafter.

**Anti-suicide fencing on the Northminster multi-storey car park (16/02139/R3FUL).**

This is an application to install fencing at all floors of the car park and on the roof perimeter. In view of the unsightliness of the Queensgate car park fencing, and the risk of impairing views of the Cathedral we requested that the top floor fencing be canted inwards to reduce its visual impact (as on the Frank Perkins car park opposite Queensgate). We were informed that the height of the top floor wall did not permit this solution and that the views of the Cathedral would not be affected. **Application approved.**

**Conversion of former Barnack Methodist chapel to residential (16/02067/FUL)**

This is an ingenious conversion entirely sensitive to the nature of the building. We requested that a photographic record be kept of all plaques and inscriptions within and outside the building. This was commissioned.

**Shop fronts at No's 9-15 Bridge Street (16/01877/FUL)**

This is the amalgamation of the three shop units south of St Peter's Arcade into one unit to create a large Middleton's Steakhouse. The shop fronts were sensitive to the building, but with 119 covers we wondered how much hungrier Peterborough people could get! **Application approved.**

**Signs at 46 Queensgate (17/00436/ADV)** This application relates to the brick facade to the Queensgate centre which overlooks St John's Square. This was a disappointing element of Queensgate, of less importance when shielded by the Norwich Union Building than now, opened to full view as one of the defining elevations fronting the square. The proposal is to open up 3 shop fronts on the Square frontage and one on the Queen St side. All to be occupied by, guess what, a Caribbean restaurant. We had no objections in principle, but did object to an overload of signage. **Awaiting decision.**

**Alterations at 10 Queen Street Peterborough (17/00314/LBC)**

This is the former Clark's Restaurant, a Grade 2\* listed Georgian building. Work to the rear elevation was considered acceptable but alterations to the entrance hall would have exposed studwork and created a Tudoresque falseness whilst destroying the few remaining internal features of its original residential character. Historic England has objected and we have done so too.

**Awaiting decision.**

**REFORMATION IN LONGTHORPE**

Many will have read in the Peterborough Telegraph of the controversy surrounding proposed works to St Botolph's Church Longthorpe. The Society has sent a letter setting out our disappointment to the Chancellor of the Diocese. Even Stewart Jackson MP has waded in to criticise them. We don't know all the details, but the destruction of most of the Victorian fittings and features (more extensive than replacement of pews with chairs) has not just been proposed, but actually approved. And approved in the teeth of considered objections from national authorities and statutory consultative bodies, in this case not only the national Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Societies but Historic England itself. These bodies do not object as a matter of course to all 'reordering' of churches. They recognise the realities of our changing society and accept or support many proposals. So when they object as firmly as they have done in this case they should be heeded.

The fact that they have been overruled in this case comes about because the Church of England, through its Faculty system, grants itself permission for internal alterations, thanks to so called Ecclesiastical Exemption.

There is a strong argument for this system to be abolished and the historic character of our churches to be subject to the more open and objective processes of Listed Building control which apply to all other historic buildings. Otherwise we, specialists and general public alike, continue to sit impotently on the side-lines watching the historic interiors of some of our most important local historic buildings fall victim to local, and sometimes temporary, variations in formality or informality of religious practice. Fortunately, in most cases, there is insufficient funding available for such unnecessary and insensitive work to be affordable. Not so, it seems, in Longthorpe.

