
CHESTERFIELD & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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177 HOUSES AND FLATS FOR WATERSIDE ...

One of the biggest planning applications for some time affecting the town is for the construction of 177 flats and houses by Chesterfield Waterside, the company which is redeveloping the derelict land between Brimington Road and the A61 Bypass once occupied by the Trebor factory, Arnold Laver and the former Great Central station. It is good to see that years of preparatory work, much of it below ground, is finally bearing fruit in the form of large-scale new building.

The Civic Society committee is generally supportive of this scheme, although we feel that more thought could be given to the overall layout of the housing to divide it into different zones and create better links with the existing built-up area. Some of the house-types proposed are very small and are to be built on very small plots, with little or no garden in some cases. It is true that the scheme includes generous swathes of open space, including the retention of woodland along the river. On the other hand, some of housing seems almost to revert to Victoria ideas of 'straight onto the street' terraces, which were abandoned after the First World War when both councils and (locally) the Industrial Housing Association adopted more generous layouts with shorter terraces and a garden for each house.

We have sent quite a lengthy and detailed response to the council, expressing the hope that there can be second thoughts about some of the house designs.

The plans are available on the council's planning website under the reference CHE/19/00007/REM.

... AND NOW PLANS FOR OFFICES ANNOUNCED

As members who read the *Derbyshire Times* will already know, the application for new houses and flats on the Waterside site has been followed almost immediately with another, this time for office blocks at the southern end of the site, with access from Brimington Road. These plans are also available on the council's planning website, under the reference CHE/19/00116/REM. The committee will be making its thoughts known to the council within the next week or so. If any members would like to suggest points we might make, please email the chairman, Philip Riden (philip.riden@nottingham.ac.uk) and we will try to work them into our submission.

A NEW VILLAGE AT MASTIN MOOR

The Civic Society has never closely defined what '& District' means in its name, but it is certainly interested in changes that affect any part of the post-1974 Borough of Chesterfield, including Brimington and Staveley. Right at the edge of this area, near the boundary with Bolsover District, lies Mastin Moor, which in its modern form consists mainly of a large post-war local authority housing estate to the north of Worksop Road (A619).

Chatsworth Estates is proposing to develop land to the south of the main road with what amounts to a completely new village of about 650 houses, including a district centre, with shops, doctors' surgery etc. Given the number of houses, a new primary school will

presumably also be needed. At this stage only an indicative layout has been submitted to the council, with no details of house designs.

The scheme has been opposed by local residents, mainly because it would create additional traffic on Worksop Road as those living in the new houses try to get to either Junction 30 of the M1 or Chesterfield. This is a similar problem to that which North East Derbyshire district council have chosen to create on the A61 south of Chesterfield by allowing the building of a large number of houses on the site of the Avenue Carbonisation Plant at Wingerworth. In that case, most of the loss of amenity will be borne by residents of Birdholme, which of course lies within the Borough of Chesterfield.

At Mastin Moor, a strong argument in favour of new housing, most of which will be owner-occupied, is that it will broaden the social structure of the community and make it possible to improve services for all residents. It will also help to meet the need for new houses in north-east Derbyshire, within easy reach of both Chesterfield and the motorway. For these reasons the Civic Society committee has written to the borough council supporting the scheme.

Members interested in the plans can browse through no fewer than 145 documents on the Borough Council's planning website under the reference CHE/17/00469/OUT. These include the usual 'archaeological assessment', intended to set out the history of the area. This we feel is very weak and has failed to use a number of readily accessible sources. The most serious omission is the lack of any use of a plan of the area prepared in 1611 by William Senior for the 1st Earl of Devonshire. This is particularly odd considering that the report was commissioned by Chatsworth Estates from Wessex Archaeology, who

describe themselves as 'one of the leading archaeological contractors in the United Kingdom providing specialist services and advice across the heritage sector'. And where is this map, which these experts failed to locate? At Chatsworth.

NEW BLUE PLAQUE TO BE UNVEILED

We are delighted to announce that the latest Civic Society blue plaque will be unveiled at 2 p.m. on Wednesday 20 March at a small ceremony to which all members are warmly invited. There is no need to book: members are welcome to arrive just before the due time outside 55 West Bars, which is today the home of the Co-operative Funeral Service. This occupies part of what was originally the first large store built by the Chesterfield Co-operative Society (in 1905, extended in 1908). The shop was partly (but not wholly) superseded by the store opened on Elder Way in the early 1930s. The plaque has been generously sponsored by the Chesterfield Co-operative Party to mark their centenary.

MORE BLUE PLAQUES TO FOLLOW

The Civic Society committee has discussed at numerous meetings where to go next with our programme of erecting plaques. Several ideas have fallen through for different reasons and we may have given the impression that we are not doing anything. At the March meeting we made a definite decision to seek to erect a plaque on one of the more prominent Nonconformist places of worship in the town centre, and possibly a second. We will try to progress this as quickly as possible, initially by seeking the support of the Church which owns the building.

ADDITIONS TO THE LOCAL LIST OF HERITAGE ASSETS

This list, compiled by the Borough Council, was mentioned in the last Newsletter and is available on the council's website. The Civic Society committee is beginning to send in suggested additions to the draft list. If any other members would like suggest buildings that might be included they can do so direct to the council, or through Janet Murphy, the Civic Society committee member who is coordinating our response. Janet's email is janmurphy255@btinternet.com

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS SEPTEMBER 2019

The idea of opening a large number of buildings, many of them not usually open to the public, on a particular weekend in September is now quite well established. It has been done in Chesterfield for a few years, although in a slightly limited and uncoordinated way. The Civic Society committee has decided to try to take a coordinating role in Heritage Open Days in Chesterfield this year. We hope to issue a consolidated programme for the event, which will run from 13 to 22 September (i.e. two weekends and the week in between) and to encourage more buildings to open. Initially, we are making lists of buildings that already open and those we might to persuade to open, and will then compile a calendar of when each building will be open. We may also try to prepare some simple historical notes on each building.

MEETING REPORT: DO WE WANT HS2 IN NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE?

Over 30 members and guests met at St Thomas's church centre on February 28 for a Civic Society discussion meeting on 'Do we want

HS2 in North East Derbyshire?'

Andrew Pritchard, representing East Midlands Cities and Transport for the East Midlands, outlined the strategic case for the north-eastern leg of the high speed railway. Explaining the need for greater capacity for passenger services between London and major cities on the route, he emphasised that the proposed hub at Toton would be the most important station on the system outside London, bringing enormous employment benefits to that part of the region.

Enhanced opportunities, especially for young people in the poorer areas of north-east Derbyshire, was a theme stressed by the Leader of Chesterfield Borough Council, Coun. Mrs Tricia Gilby. She mentioned the high quality skilled jobs that would be created, directly and indirectly, by HS2, and the scope to develop tourism by encouraging more visitors to come to Chesterfield by train. Coun. Gilby showed new architect's drawings of the proposed remodelling of the station approach, including a large car-park, seamless integration with bus services, and a pedestrian walkway into the town centre.

A note of caution was expressed by Glynn Waite, a railway consultant, who detailed the congestion on the existing Clay Cross-Sheffield line and showed how trains could be seriously delayed for any of several reasons. These included lack of capacity on the adjoining Dore-Chinley line and the poor track layout at Sheffield station. Mr Waite felt that these problems must be tackled before plans are made to run high speed trains on the Midland Main Line.

Finally, Tony Mellors spoke on behalf of a community group in Blackwell and Newton, near Alfreton, opposed to the building of a link from the Erewash Valley line to Clay Cross, since this will sever communities in their area. Over 20 houses will have to be demolished, some only a few years old, which has already caused distress to longstanding local residents. Aided by slide showing a white elephant, Mr Mellors argued that HS2 was likely to cost much more than currently predicted and was a poor use of public money.

The escalating cost of the project and questionable claims for the benefit-cost ratio were among the points raised during a lively discussion at the end of the meeting. In reply, Mr Pritchard pointed out that the north-eastern leg had the best commercial prospects of any part

of HS2, and Coun. Gilby emphasised that the Borough Council's 'local labour' clause in all its building contracts would ensure that jobs connected with HS2 came to the town.

NEW RAILINGS ON ABERCROMBIE STREET AND NEW WINDOWS AT HOLLY HOUSE

Typical of the small-scale changes which can affect the street scene, whether for good or ill, about which the Civic Society is consulted by the Borough Council, are two recent Listed Building Consent applications.

One is from the owner of 22a Abercrombie Street to replace a wooden fence which sits on top of his stone boundary wall with wrought-iron rail-

ings. In this case, the change is undoubtedly an improvement, since the wall would not originally have had a fence on it, and iron railings will suit much better the character of Abercrombie Street, which was developed in the 1840s as a high-status residential suburb. We have therefore written to the council supporting the application.

The second is from Holly House, the residential special school in Old Whittington, which wishes to replace the windows in an extension built in the 1970s. The house itself appears to date from the late eighteenth century. There has been full consultation beforehand about the design and choice of materials with the Borough Council's conservation staff and the outcome is an application which the Civic Society committee is happy to support. We have also been able to submit some additional historical information about Holly House, drawn from the Victoria County History's draft history of Whit-

tington.

BRITAIN FROM THE AIR

English Heritage have produced a free website called Britain from the Air. The pages are very extensive and have aerial photographs from the about 1924 through to the 1950s, including some of Chesterfield. The photos are free to download providing they are not used for profit or gain. The home page is <https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk>.

Type any town or place in the search box and a wonderful array of photos is shown.