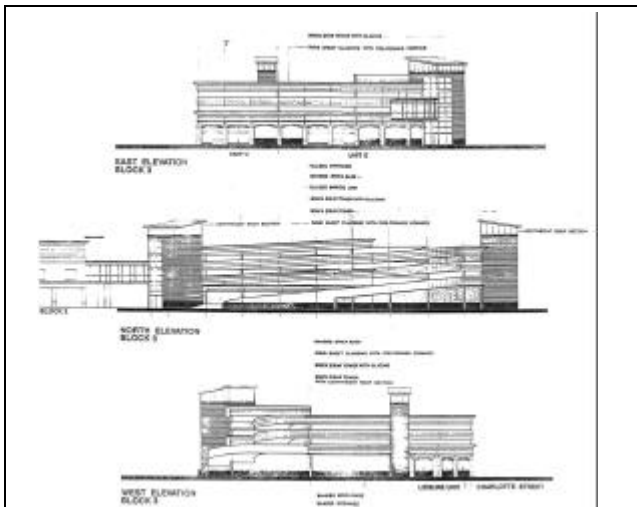


# Portsmouth Society News

The Newsletter of the Portsmouth Society AUGUST 1995



## New Plans for The Tricorn

In our last issue we reported that the Society have applied to have the Tricorn listed and we gave our reasons for wanting to save and adapt it. There is now a formal planning application for total demolition and replacement with new multi-storey car parking and eight single-storey retail units. We show the layout plan and some elevations.

Members who would like to support the Society's case should write to apply for listing to:

Mr Ian Coleman, Listing Branch, Department of National Heritage,

2 - 4 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH

and to object to the planning application by writing to The City Planning Officer, Civic Offices, Portsmouth PO1 2AU, quoting reference number: A\*22618. Public opinion, as evidenced by the number of letters received, is very much taken into account in these matters. More plans are reproduced on the back page.

## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are held at 7.30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month in Room F, 3rd Floor of the Norrish Library, Guildhall Square

### Wednesday 6 September

#### **Transport in South East Hampshire - the need for change.**

Part of the County Council's Transport Awareness Initiative. Members will be asked to put forward their views and a County Council officer will be present to answer questions.

### Sat/Sun 17/18 September

#### **Heritage Open Days 1995** - see article for details.

Visit Baltic House for the Best Views in Town (Sat & Sun 10 - 6)

See the Ward Room of HMS Nelson (Sat only, 2 - 4)

Shop at Treadgolds the Hardware and Iron-Mongers (Sat & Sun 10 - 4)

### Wednesday 4 October

Matthew Alexander, Curator of Guildford Museum, and local historian, on

#### **The Portsmouth Road**

### Saturday 21 October

**Southern Comfort 1995** - a meeting of Civic Societies from the South of England hosted this year by the Portsmouth Society and held in the Menuhin Room, Norrish Library, from 10am - 5pm. The theme is

#### **The Standard of Architecture in New Buildings** with speakers including :-

Michael Manser, Architect; Bill Fergie, Director of Development, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council; Paul Finch, Editor The Architects Journal; Kenneth Powell, The 20th Century Society; Deane Clark, Head of Historic Buildings Bureau, Hampshire County Council. Please contact Rosemary Flewitt on 817713 for more details and a booking form.

### Wednesday 1 November

Paul Spooner, Head of Marketing, Portsmouth City Council, on

#### **The Millennium Bid**

### Wednesday 6 December

David Lloyd, distinguished architectural historian and co-author of the Hampshire volume of Pevsner's Buildings of England, on

#### **The Buildings of the Isle of Wight**

### Wednesday 1 February

**Review of the Society's Design Awards**: Best New Building, Best Restoration and Best Landscaping of 1995 presented by the four judges

### Wednesday 6 March

Fraser Smith, Project Manager of Hampshire LRT, on

#### **Light Rapid Transit (LRT)**

Non-members are welcome but, except for the September meeting which is at the County Council's expense, they are asked to contribute £1 towards the cost of putting on these meetings.

## Dockyard 500 Festival

The sense of privilege in being able to explore the historic dockyard freely, late on a beautiful summer's evening was very special. The eight day festival of the 500 years since the first drydock was built attracted 35,000 people, many of them local, very much enjoying this special piece of their own home ground.

For the first time the different trusts and the museum had a combined ticket of 6 to all the attractions. I haven't been on the Warrior for years, and enjoyed the polished brass and the polished presentation, pitched exactly right. My brother tried to board the Britannia, since she was enticingly tied up at South Railway Jetty. The sailor hauling down the flag at sunset, just as a ferry came through the harbour entrance, made a great photograph.

The bus tours, organised by volunteer drivers and city guides, took us to the parts we don't normally reach, including the modern buildings such as the Heavy Plate Shop by Ove Arup. What did the Admirals and other residents make of their evening peace being interrupted by tourist guides' microphones?

We all enjoyed playing with the interactive exhibits in Boathouse 6, and the Dockyard Ditties that went with them. The high point and low point were the Association of Conservation Officers' visit to the roof of Storehouse 10 to inspect the rebuilt cupola and clock tower at first hand, and the 1730s reservoir under Block Mills.

We applaud the unprecedented amount of co-operation achieved between the Ministry of Defence, the Naval Base Property Trust, Flagship Portsmouth, the Royal Naval Museum, the Dockyard Historical Society, the City and County Councils and volunteers. It's great news that they're going to do it again!

Celia Clark

## Portsmouth Society Design Awards 1995

Nominations received so far (further nominations welcome):

### For Best New Building:

D-Day Museum extension, Royal Marines building on Whale Island, HMS Nelson extension, Langstone Flats - student's accommodation at QEOM; Unicorn Gatehouse, Dockyard; St Mary's Hospital Children's Unit; Victory Building, Dockyard; Ticket Office, Dockyard Main Gate; Solent Infant School, Farlington; Building at Foster Hall, on the University's Milton campus (new first floor on top of old single storey building).

### For Best Restoration:

Southsea Police Station; Eastney Barracks; Porter's Lodge, Dockyard; House in Jubilee Terrace; Boathouse No.7, Dockyard; South Parade Apartments (former Strathearn Hotel); Magistrates' Court, Winston Churchill Avenue; Pitt Street Gymnastics Centre; Wilmcote House, Somers Town,

There are at present no nominations for Best Landscaping. Members are asked to nominate for this and for the other categories.

## Heritage Open Days Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September 1995

Sponsored by the Civic Trust and the Department of National Heritage.

### THE PORTSMOUTH SOCIETY TAKES YOU TO THE PLACES OTHER TOURS CANNOT REACH

#### Superb Overview

Portsmouth shares with Venice and Barcelona the capacity to be seen as a whole from one point. The ninth floor of Baltic House, Kingston Crescent at the end of the M275, a white elephant of an office block, is one of these points. From here you can see the whole city, both harbours, across the Solent to the Isle of Wight, the Dockyard, Fawley, Chichester Cathedral spire, and perhaps most fascinating the comings and goings of the Continental Ferry Port. Even a motorway is fascinating when you look down on it and cannot hear it! Open 10 till 6 on the 16th and 17th.

#### Edwardian Magnificence

The Ward Room of HMS Nelson (south side of Queen Street, facing the naval barracks) - the officers' dining room. This huge room has a fine timber roof and is lined by vast paintings of battles at sea, including Trafalgar by W.L. Wyllie and his son and daughter. On your way in and out you can see the magnificent ornate staircase hung with portraits. Open 2 - 4 pm on the 16th only.

#### A Victorian Time-Capsule

Treadgolds in Bishop Street, Portsea, is a hardware and iron-monger's shop, almost unchanged from Victorian times. It was in use up to twenty years ago. It has now been restored and conserved by Hampshire County Council as a museum. Open every Thursday and Friday until 30th September, and will be open especially for the two Heritage Days.

#### Fort Cumberland

We did apply to English Heritage to be allowed to arrange guided tours of Fort Cumberland on the Heritage Days. We have just heard that they are unable to do this but there will be a tour on 30 October. Bookings are taken by

## The Norrish Central Library

The meeting place of the Portsmouth Society was renamed from the Central Library to the Norrish Central Library at a ceremony on 12th July in honour of former City Architect, the late Ken Norrish. Ken designed many well-known buildings in Portsmouth including the D-Day Museum, The Hard Interchange, the Isle of Wight car ferry terminal, the Mountbatten Centre, Paulsgrove and Beddow libraries and Somers Town Health Centre.

Gigi Norrish, Ken's widow, has written the following words of thanks:-

I was delighted to learn that the Central Library would be renamed the Norrish Library. It is wonderful to see Ken's name live in one of his creations. I am particularly grateful to the determination and support of the following people: Karl Sparrow for initiating the process; H. P. Turner, the County Librarian and the County Recreation Committee for proposing and deciding to rename the Central Library the Norrish Library to honour and mark my husband's work on the widely acclaimed building in Guildhall Square; the leader of Hampshire County Council, Councillor Mike Hancock for proposing to hold a ceremony in the library and launching the unveiling of a plaque recording the event and his witty speech acknowledging Ken's architectural skills, flare, contributions and commitments to Portsmouth; John Thorne, Divisional Librarian, for his help and attention in escorting me to and from the ceremony and for providing refreshments for everyone; Roger James for following through the proposal.

I remember the speech Roger made in 1988 at Ken's retirement dinner. He spoke with great admiration about Ken's achievements all over the city. He praised highly the unique design of the library and quoted the famous inscription in St Paul's Cathedral "If you seek his monument, look around you". Ken left Portsmouth a much better looking town than when he took over. I also want to thank everyone else who played their part in celebrating Ken's work.



*Mike Hancock, Gigi Norrish and John Thorn, with the plaque Cllr Hancock unveiled in honour of Ken Norrish, former City Architect.*

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## Hampshire Waste Disposal

Roger James, who for a year and a half now has been a member of the consultative forum to advise on Hampshire's waste disposal problem, is concerned that the problem is being resolved by drift rather than decision. The future is divided into phases. Phase 1 ends in 1996 when the remaining existing incinerators will close down. Plans are being prepared to move a substantial part of the waste for landfill out of the county during phase 2 which lasts till 2000. After that, if nothing intervenes, there will be three Energy-from-Waste (incinerator) plants in the county, one to burn 165,000 tons a year from Portsmouth and the surrounding districts will be sited in Portsmouth, almost certainly in Quartermaine Road the site for the original Burner that was Banned.

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## Commercial Road Trees

Several members had noted with consternation that tarmac was being laid right up to the trunks of the trees in the Commercial Road precinct. Celia Clark had spoken on the phone to the arboricultural officer (Gary Scammell) and an officer in the City Engineer's department. There is disagreement between the two departments. Mr Scammell thinks this will kill the trees. Engineers are doing it to prevent accidents from people tripping over the grids! (Surely drunks). CC has written to David Knight, Head of Leisure, asking him to use his authority. Mr Scammell phoned later to say he hoped to get his way; but it didn't sound quite certain. The Society will pursue this matter.

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## Portsmouth Nostalgia

Those who joined us at the Portsmouth Local History Fair on the weekend of 15/16 July will have been fascinated to see the high degree of interest shown in the sale of duplicate photographs of Portsmouth past for as little as 50p each.

Search Room volunteers have carefully sorted the photos and they will be available from the Search Room of the City Record Office from a date in September. If you would like to look through the material, please contact the City Records Office as once the photos are sold, this will be an unrepeatable offer.

# Hampshire 2011

The Society took up the County's invitation to comment on the draft Structure Plan for 2011, called Hants 2011. Though there is of course much in the plan with which we agree, our comments were mostly critical. Here is a summary of them:

The built environment. The County is renowned for its care of historic buildings and we are dismayed to find little importance given to the built environment in this document. Under the heading "Environment: conservation and enhancement", the section on the built heritage and historic buildings instead of being separate appeared merely as an appendage to the rivers, ponds and streams. We suggest that the later section on the built environment, which is very weak in comparison with that on the natural environment, should be strengthened to emphasise the importance of the quality of the built environment. This is the area where most people live and work, which concerns them most and is most in need of protection.

New areas for development. We are doubtful of the wisdom of the proposal for a major development to the west of Waterlooville. It seems to us dangerous to plan, as the draft does, a development area on the basis of an extension to the projected LRT system when the initial LRT route Fareham-Gosport-Portsmouth is still problematic. If LRT fails to materialise the new development area will be forced back on the car with all the problems to the surrounding areas that that brings. As far as we know there is no immediate prospect of funding the LRT's enormous cost. When we read of the importance given to LRT - in so far as South East Hampshire is concerned Hampshire 2011 absolutely depends on it - we have a sense of *deja vu*. The very first public meeting we held after our formation in 1973 was concerned with public transport and the Assistant County Surveyor of the time told us that LRT was the way ahead. It hasn't happened, partly in our opinion because the wrong routes have been chosen. The county's own Transportation Study of the 1980s predicted that an adequate number of people would be persuaded to use the Fareham-Gosport-Portsmouth LRT but they would come largely from users of existing public transport rather than from car-commuters. The projected extensions of LRT sketched out in the Hampshire 2011 accompanying video seem to us quite mad - paralleling the existing Fareham-Southampton and Fareham-Eastleigh railway lines.

## Public transport

We feel the county should plan to make much better use of what we have. The existing railway track has stations at many of the places people want to go to and from: Fareham, Portchester, Cosham, Hilsa, Fratton, central Portsmouth and Portsea, and also Bedhampton and Havant; and others are in the pipeline at Paulsgrove, Farlington and Copnor. We need frequent - 10 minute - rail services linking all these. If this would inconvenience and interrupt the long distance rail services then the possibility of doubling the tracks should be faced, or a tube-like signalling system. This could well be cheaper than the tunnel under the harbour entrance and the proposed LRT extension route through North End. A spur from Cosham could link a new line to Waterlooville with the existing tracks.

## Water transport

We note that in the three pages devoted to transport there is no mention of water transport either for passengers or goods in this area which is permeated and dominated by water and owes its historic development to water. Rather than preparing to sink the Gosport-Portsmouth ferry by an impossibly expensive tunnel we think we should be developing water services from Fareham and from Southampton Road, Paulsgrove, not only to Portsmouth Harbour station but to the Continental Ferry Port or Albert Johnson Quay, by conventional boat, hovercraft or hydrofoil. Even services across Langstone Harbour might be possible by hovercraft. If this seems fantastic to Winchester-based planners, they should note the well-established practice of the MoD. Dockyard workers from the Gosport peninsula park their cars in Royal Clarence Yard and are daily ferried across the water to Portsmouth dockyard; and there is a service from Haslar also. Commuters come to Portsmouth by water in considerable numbers also, of course, from the Isle of Wight.

We hear a great deal about an integrated transport system; and that is indeed what is needed. Unfortunately the rhetoric is never anywhere near matched by the provision of funds, either nationally, by the county or Portsmouth city (cf the current expenditure of £100,000 per day on the M27/M275 and the spending, to doubtful advantage, of many hundreds of thousands on Commercial Road and Market Way, Portsmouth). The integrated service we need would provide buses to take people to the railway stations, admittedly made far more difficult by desegregation of bus services. On the other hand, it does seem possible that privatisation of the railways might be exploited to provide the sort of changes we need there.

The enormous expansion of Waterlooville which has already taken place has contributed greatly to the transport problems of the Portsmouth area because, owing to the remoteness from the railway system and the poor bus service, people living there are almost bound to have cars and to use them much more than those living in the cities. The effect on Portsmouth has been that, whereas commuters from east and west can come by train - and in the case of Gosport by water, those from the Waterlooville area are almost bound to arrive by car.

## Whiteley

If we must have a major expansion area in south east Hampshire, we are surprised that the possibility of locating it in the area between the M27 and Whiteley is not even mentioned. An infrastructure of roads has already been laid out there with a few commercial buildings. This seems to us a much better area for major expansion - for a mixture of the projected housing need with the employment that is already starting to be provided there. It is near the M27 and

between the two railways lines. Even if the enormously expensive LRT ever materialises, there still has to be goods traffic servicing the houses even if this is to be a purely dormitory area with no industry (which we would be against).

**Park-and-Ride.** The report rightly stresses the importance of park-and-ride; but Portsmouth City Council still insist that there is no suitable site for Portsmouth - which we dispute. But if this is true then it is no good putting it in the Plan. We urge the county to investigate this matter. The obvious piece of unused ground when one looks at the map is the motorway triangle. For years the Cosham railway triangle was unused because of lack of access. Once the access road was built it became a useful industrial site. Access to the motorway triangle is clearly difficult but it could be achieved at a cost - with tunnels through the embankments which enclose it. There is also the reclaimed area south of the Paulsgrove tip and also the Tipner peninsula (rifle range area); but the motorway triangle would be better because of its accessibility from east as well as west. The city council have sold off the Northharbour site which was another possibility. These sites must be looked into and decided on, for or against, if the transport aspect of Hampshire 2011 is not to be a sham so far as Portsmouth is concerned. (The Kingston Traders Association have come forward with the former Johnson & Johnson factory at Paulsgrove for the site of the car park which could then be served both by bus and the new Paulsgrove railway station).

## **Inland planning**

In conclusion we should like to say that the plan shows every sign of having been devised by inland, suburban planners. We live in a city surrounded by water which is already very compact (in accordance with what Sir Richard Rogers eloquently advocated in his Reith lectures this year and which is not dying at its centre, despite the misleading impression given by the one shot of Portsmouth on the video. For most of us most of the amenities of the city are within walking distance - only the traffic makes many of the walks very unpleasant. We want the plan to be devoted much more to enhancing the environment of the cities, to encourage people to live in the centres and for instance to live over shops, so as to reduce the need for so much sprawl and security. Large tracts of MoD urban land and numbers of fine buildings remain unused, especially in Gosport, and could be brought into use to provide employment opportunities and also housing as is being done at Eastney Barracks, Portsmouth, and Peninsular Barracks, Winchester. It is very important that when such areas which have been closed to the public often for centuries are redeveloped they are opened up and do not become new ghettos.

The plan, which on its own admission depends for its success on public transport, is we think, very unimaginative in its transport planning. Existing rail routes must be reinforced, new rail routes must not parallel existing ones but provide alternatives to the car-user routes, for example to Waterlooville where there is no rail within miles; and water transport must be developed. Finally it should not be forgotten that most journeys are made on foot. Much more investment should be made in improving urban pedestrian networks and making streets nicer places to walk in.

The County Planning Officer replied with admirable speed but not to our entire satisfaction. More priority is to be given in the re-draft to the built environment as opposed to the natural one. But our comments about transport were not directly addressed. They are a matter for the South-East Hampshire Transportation Study, we are told. But, as we have pointed out, the whole Plan for this part of the county depends upon the building of the Fareham-Gosport LRT.

There will be an opportunity we hope to clarify these matters of transport at the meeting arranged for 6 September.

R.J.

## **St James Hospital**

In the last newsletter planning approval was reported as being sought for the new Mental Health Complex in St. James. This was agreed by Planning Committee but a controversial element of the application for a unit close to the main drive into the Hospital which would have obscured the view into the grounds from the road, was not submitted.

The next phase of development of the site is to go before Planning Committee on 2nd August when the area to the north of the Hospital, south of Godwit Road, seeks a renewal of outline planning permission for about 150 houses and 0.9 acres public open space, which was granted in 1989 after the city council's refusal of permission which the Society backed, was overturned at the public inquiry. This means that the 3 excellent playing fields used by over 130 children from Meon Football every Saturday throughout the year, will disappear. Concern is being expressed locally not only at the loss of this potential amenity at a time when sport is high on the National agenda and Portsmouth may be considered for a Sports Academy (has news of Pitt Street reached No.10 Downing Street??) but also at the loss of mature trees thought to house colonies of bats and at the high increase in traffic in Warren Avenue and adjoining roads which face the prospect of even greater disruption this autumn if Fratton Park is used by Brighton as well as Pompey. However the housing development here is included in the local plan.

## **Owen's Southsea Booklet**

Demand for the Owen's Southsea booklet, which the Society published in May, has been great and there are only a few copies remaining. If you would like to purchase a copy at £2 for members or £2.50 for non-members please contact the Secretary, Roger James.

Inevitably, a few errors in the text have come to light and we have prepared a set of corrected pages for insertion into the booklet.

David Lloyd's article Owen in the Context of his Time on page 11 has been slightly enlarged, Angleseyville - The Crescent and its Gardens (page 33) is now correctly attributed to Dr Brian Wright and Alverstoke Crescent Gardens on page 35 has a minor change (Gosport Borough council donated 2 Mediterranean Cyprresses not 25).

If you would like a copy of the amendments,

## Albert Road School, Cosham

Readers will be aware that the former Albert Road School is under threat of demolition. We reprint below part of our letter to the Department of National Heritage requesting that they spot list the building.

The Executive Committee of the Portsmouth Society have asked me to apply to the Secretary of State to spotlist the Albert Road School, Cosham, Portsmouth. The building's owners, Highbury College, intend to market the site because they believe the building is too expensive to repair. It is therefore vulnerable to demolition. There is very strong feeling in the Cosham area that the building should continue to serve the local community. It has been used for adult education for a considerable period as an annexe to Cosham Park House, where it is valued as a familiar and accessible centre in the heart of the local area. The newly formed Cosham Neighbourhood Forum is writing to you to support this application which is made in conjunction with Councillor John Attrill's recent letter. I enclose copies of recent newspaper coverage.

Albert Road School is a typical board school design for smaller communities. It is a gabled brick building with an unusual wooden extension block dating from 1936, still very much in use. The playground contains a large second world war brick-built air raid shelter, a rare survivor in 1995 of a whole-school shelter! I enclose photographs of the various aspects of the site.

The Society has commissioned an estimate for repair and upgrading of the building from the architect who used to be responsible for its maintenance. The total costs of repairs is £59,500 and the erection of two additional classrooms on the north-east corner of the site to provide the extra accommodation that the college say they need would cost another £50,000.

If the college have no further use for the building, Portsmouth City Council are likely to be able to use it as a community centre. Our greatest fear is that the building will be demolished so that the college can market it as a cleared site, which would mean the loss of a much valued amenity for the community of Cosham.

Albert Road School is listed as a case study of school buildings Under Threat in the forthcoming publication by SAVE Britain's Heritage *Beacons of Learning* on the potential of redundant school buildings.

It is for all these reasons that we ask the Secretary of State to spotlist the building.

## The Fresh Water Environment of Portsmouth

The Society's March meeting was addressed by Nick Walton, a professional hydrological chemist with the Portsmouth University Geology Department.

Nick demonstrated that hydrology is a precise science capable of identifying the sources and even ages of fresh water. Accurate monitoring of many rivers has been undertaken for nearly one hundred years in Britain which now provides a substantial database for increasingly accurate forecasting. Nick explained that the hydrological cycle was almost "closed" with 95% of the planet's water being saltwater, with most of the remaining 5% fresh water being locked up in ice flows, mostly (75%) in the Antarctic which only leaves a very small percentage circulating through precipitation.

In Britain, approximately, two thirds of all rainfall evaporates and of the third that does soak into the ground only a variable proportion finds its way to replenishing the water table annually.

The Portsea Island water table is usually only just above mean sea level and is fairly stable being controlled both by the tension from the salt water surrounding the Island and the hydraulic head of the local (flat) topography.

Historically, the Portsmouth Water Company could not supply enough water for the Island's needs from the springs on Farlington marshes and chose to pipe water

from the Brockhampton Springs at Bedhampton, which are amongst the most prolific freshwater springs in Europe.

Water mains have historically been leaking up to 35% of their flow although great efforts have been made over the past decade by the water companies to reduce this loss which is now more typically around 20% in the UK.

Before mains drainage, waste water went into cess pits causing the water table to be raised by urine which permeated into the local water wells and contributed to the great cholera epidemic which accompanied the growth of the nineteenth century industrial towns.

With the significant reduction in heavy industry which traditionally used great quantities of ground water the water tables under the old industrial centres are now rising. The water tables under London, Liverpool and Birmingham are rising by several meters a year and are now beginning to threaten major substructures such as underground railway tunnels and deep basement lift shafts.

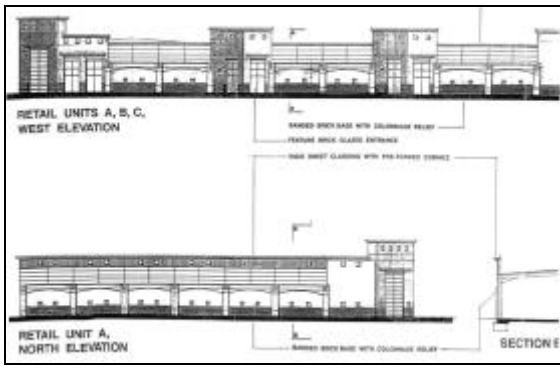
It is unlikely that those who heard Nick's presentation will ever look at a rain drop again without a great sense of wonderment and respect.

C. M. BURNS.

## The Tricorn Development - Further Plans



The Tricorn Development site plan (above) with elevations of the retail units (below).



Published by The Portsmouth Society,

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Membership Secretary, Jean Thompson, 4 Malvern Road, Southsea, Hampshire, PO5 2NA. 01705 821667.