

Portsmouth Society News

The Newsletter of The Portsmouth Society - Winter 2004

THE TRICORN - WHAT FUTURE?

"The Tricorn is a Portsmouth eyesore. It failed almost from day one. It cannot be refurbished and demolition of the building is due to start in late spring 2004..."

This claim is made in a consultation leaflet by Centros Miller. We say - "Rubbish!", and so do a large majority of our Executive Committee, and of those who attended our packed public meeting on November 5th where the principal designer, Rodney Gordon, spoke. A consultation leaflet is available from the City Planning Department and on the Web site www.northernquarter.info.

No Plan!

On 16 December Celia Clark, Roger James and Mick Morris were invited to a meeting with the developers as part of the consultation over the future of what they call the 'Northern Quarter', previously City Centre North, which includes the Tricorn. Present at the meeting were Lester Hampson of Centros Miller, the developers, Roger Wilson of Chapman Taylor, their architects, Steve Bryson of Halogen, the developers' agents and organisers of the public consultation, together with Paul Newbold and Barry Harmer of the City Planning Department.

It contains a very misleading street plan of the Tricorn and Cascades area overlaid with a diagram showing proposed 'permeability' - pedestrian routes through the area. We pointed out three dishonest features: 1. the indication that there are pedestrian routes through the Cascades, although these are closed at 6 pm; 2. the two left hand permeability arrows lead you only to the MoD lorry park; and 3. it shows as closed the one most used north-south pedestrian route which is also a route for vehicles - Landport View - which leads to the pedestrian crossing, Sainsburys, the Gymnastics Centre and the Victory retail park. We had been expecting to see sketches and plans of what was now proposed; but there was nothing to discuss so make your comments known.

Design Principles

We were told that "the first role of the developer is to listen". Our meeting was one of twenty Centros Miller are holding with various groups including young people. They believe that they must demolish



Sculpture in the air? - Tricorn stairs and Lift tower.

the Tricorn which, in their view, had done quite a bit of damage to Portsmouth. They had seven design principles which included Mixed Uses and Attractiveness - high quality design of buildings and spaces and distinctive identity. The Master Plan, which they kept asking whether we agreed with, was no more than an intention to provide, not just retail, but residential and commercial to 'recreate vitality'; but there wasn't a plan; so we refused to endorse it. As Mick Morris said afterwards it was like finding there were no girls when you'd been invited to judge a beauty competition! We asked what they had been doing in the four years since we last met Centros Miller; but got no sensible answer.

We said we were pleased to know that there is to be an attempt to improve the context of St Agatha's; but when challenged as to how they proposed to remedy the original problem that the Tricorn is not integrated with the shopping in Commercial Road, their answer was not convincing. Demolition of the Tricorn would

*In this edition .. The Tricorn - What Future?, Tricorn as an Inspiration, Cr*p Towns!, Meeting with Gunwharf Developers and Architects, Your favourite urban place, Lost History, Best Practice in Regeneration 2003, Consuming Less in our Homes, The New Queen Alexandra Hospital, BBC Southern Ways in South Today, The Tower - What Cost?, Portsmouth Point, Wasted Space, The Riviera but Nearer, Quote of the Month, What's On?*

The upper car decks of the Tricorn

cost about £2.5 million and the properties to the north east of the Tricorn would have to be acquired, Market Way moved northwards up to Sainsburys. The developers were not concerned about the cost of demolition. This would be only 1% of a £200 + million development.



We told them we did not accept that the Tricorn had to come down. All the uses they suggest could be put in the existing building, which has an infinitely flexible ground floor which could be accessed from above at any point from the reinforced lorry-bearing first floor, for the former vegetable wholesale market.

We need to know how the new development is intended to relate to the other shopping centres. Is it in competition or is it to provide what is lacking in Commercial Road? Commercial Road is said to be losing trade, because of competition from Gunwharf, West Quay and Southsea. We need to see how the developers see its new role.

In our letter to Centros Miller after the meeting we said that we thought the City Council and also to an extent the developers are abrogating their responsibility in not coming up with a concrete outline plan. It is you, we said, and the previous leaseholders who have kept this area, including the Tricorn, rundown and unproductive through all these years. You cannot design a new city area by asking people to tick boxes. You have to come up with a plan and then ask the public whether they like it or not.

Tricorn as an Inspiration

In 2003, the world-famous architect, Daniel Liebeskind, congratulated Portsmouth on possessing 'this gem of the 1960s'.

In his book Buildings of Portsmouth and its Environs published by the City Of Portsmouth In 1972, the distinguished architectural historian and co-author of the Hampshire volume of Pevsner's Buildings of England, wrote this about the Tricorn:

"In form it is a romantic piece of 'concrete sculpture' on a huge scale ... The shape of the Tricorn as seen from the road to the north-west suggests allusions

both to an Arabic city and to an oil refinery, expressed in the medium of concrete. The effects of the horizontal 'trays' of car parking space separated by dark space are dramatically exploited as are the concrete driveways up the round towers at the angles. The main building is massively chunky in form, and the irregular skyline is punctuated by round-topped turrets..." Some years later he wrote: "Looking again at the building ... I realise what a superb piece of architectural massing it is - with the varied skyline and elevations in the main part of the structure; the dramatic rounded shelving on the multi-storey car park; and the spiral approach to the car parking. . . If only the building were painted in white . . its wonderful sculptural form would be even more emphasised".

Action Now

If you made a video, film, painting or other art work about the Tricorn, went to the clubs and pub, lived in the flats or worked or traded there, please let us know as soon as possible. Centros Miller have agreed to fund a Tricorn Fest, provided it does not endanger their proposals! We believe it should be on site, to celebrate all the diverse things it means to people. John Thomson told us of a film which won the 1993 BFI award, shown at Sundance Festival; there are TV programmes and videos which we are tracking down. Lighting the Tricorn excitingly could have an enormous impact on its image. Jeannie Kerswell is designing hoardings, paid for by Centros Miller. David Adjaye, architect on Dreamspaces BBC3 TV show about it, has been asked for what we really need: good images of how it could look.

Since we discovered at our meeting with Centros Miller et al that there is no plan for what is to replace the Tricorn - only its destruction - we have increased our efforts to keep the building and modify it to today's needs. In response to Celia's letters published in the Architects' Journal and Building Design we have received several offers of help to design something that reuses, extends or modifies it.

Architects Mick Morris, Kate Mackintosh and George Finch are both redesigning the Tricorn, to meet the uses the developers intend, retaining particularly the car park, north spiral ramp and seven storey trays and adding housing, with shops at ground level. We will submit these proposals to the developers. Mick is working in conjunction with graphic designer Tim McGinley who is to produce a virtual model of the Tricorn as a design tool, record, and as a setting for gameshows. We need to understand the economics and use the sustainability arguments for reuse of existing fabric. Chapman Taylor are designing a shopping centre called Princess Hey in Exeter with an oval multi-storey car park which looks very like the Tricorn!

Do please respond to the invitation in the Northern Quarter consultation leaflet to "Have your say", at least by simply ticking the Yes or No boxes (no stamp needed). But if you are prepared to do more, to use your design skills or make other suggestions, please get in touch with Roger James - phone and address as per this newsletter or e-mail roger_james@lineone.net

Even more important, please write to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport at 2-4 Cockspur Street, London SW1 5DH supporting our application asking the minister to spotlist it. Even if it is listed, the Tricorn still can be modernised.

Your favourite urban place

Chapman Taylor's Roger Miller challenged us to come up with our favourite places in towns and cities across the world. One of them is undoubtedly the top deck of the Tricorn, which could be transformed into a public space as dramatic as Norman Forster's top of the Reichstag, perhaps with a glazed cafe bar, restaurant and club, or a conservatory like the Barbican in London. Others might be the panorama from Portsmouth Point, the courtyard and terrace of Somerset House... What are memorable places for you? Suggestions to: CeliaDeane.Clark@bopenworld.com

Tricorn Public Arts Project

The Tricorn has been with us for 37 years and a lot has happened there - good and bad - funny and serious. Help us remember and have your comments added to the hoardings.

Love it or hate it? What are the best and worst things about the Tricorn architecture and atmosphere?

What was your favourite stall or shop, best bargain, most bizarre purchase?

Do you remember Grannies and Basins? What was your favourite band, memorable night out?

Fantasy, Fiction, realistic, visionary - do you have any ideas on the future site?

All ideas to Jeannie Kerswell who can be contacted on 07904 193219. The project is funded by Centros Miller.

Gunwharf



Proposed tower and East Side Plaza, Gunwharf

Celia Clark and Roger James were invited to a meeting with Berkeleys and their architects Broadway Malyan on 16 December about their revised proposals for the two developments - East Side Plaza and Ariadne at the eastern end of Gunwharf Quays. Present were Robin Shepherd, planning manager for Berkeley Homes and Mario Yacoub, associate director and another director of Broadway Malyan. They had already done a presentation to the councillors.

East Side Plaza

CABE have seen the applications twice and are happy at this stage. The Architects' Panel agree in principle and so do English Heritage. There has been a major redesign since the plans were first submitted for these two developments. The tower block of flats is now proposed to be 29 storeys, with six flats per floor. It is at the back of the site away from the waterfront and the shopping, that is at the front when approached from the city centre. In section the tower is now egg-shaped, the antithesis, the architect says of the 1960s square box. This shape is good in reducing the wind impact. Part of the building recedes and in effect disappears. It will be half the height of the Spinnaker, 300 metres away, which will still dominate.

The proportions of the East Side Plaza tower are more elegant than before. It will be faced in slightly grey reflective glass with white metallic panels. The top is slashed through at an angle facing the harbour, rather than cut off square, giving it a different character from different viewpoints. Inside the cut-off there are four stepped terraces screened from the sides.

Originally there was a residential crescent attached to the tower. In the new scheme it is detached and the west side now more elegantly detailed, clad in terracotta, brown like that used in the hotel, stepping down from the 29 floors of the tower to 12 and then

to 8 and then to the 3-storey car park with basement which faces Gunwharf Road - a total of 306 flats with 301 car parking spaces and 9397 sq.ft of retail.

We are please to see that they propose a car club - which may be run by 'Smart Move' - intended to be available not only to everybody in Gunwharf but to anybody else who wants to use it. In the main, we are happy with the design of the main block, but less so with the back of the lower flats which face Gunwharf Road and St. George's Road.

They say that wind above 2.5 m doesn't matter. At lower levels they reckoned to be able to manage it by planting, landscaping, canopies, enclosure. They can identify problem areas and put a screen, e.g. a bandstand. Berkeleys have abandoned Adrian Fisher's sunburst design for the arena in front, preferring a flat circular space at the end of the canal - more adaptable for special events. There will be lighting in the paving and of the trees, and architectural lighting of the tower, with pools of lighting in the residential area. There will be a degree of symmetry. The space will be used for fire engines, for vintage cars, for street entertainment, skating in winter. There is a space reserved for a public work of art at the end of the canal, with a vertical emphasis. We welcomed this, but pointed out that art need not only be vertical. The design of the plaza should be a work of art too: using different colours, textures and patterns, which will be enjoyable close up and from above. Berkeleys have agreed that the public art finalists will be assessed by a public art panel with advice on the commission and judging by the Hampshire Sculpture Trust, which has key members living in Portsmouth.

Ariadne

We are less happy with Ariadne - the design has been improved but not to the same extent. The design claims to be more akin to the first phase of Gunwharf: residential, red brick, traditional feel, vertical bays picking up military buildings, but there is still a case for a sleeker, curved shape. There is still poor allocation of affordable housing, considering there is none on Gunwharf at present. There will be 126 keyworker flats with 50 private, totalling 176 in 7-8-10 storeys high; nursery 5640 sq.ft., 83 car parking spaces; 197 residents and nursery space + 20 visitors. There had been three objections to the original design for Ariadne: the bulky architectural character, the car parking and the materials. They have changed all three. The block is reduced by two floors because they have taken out the offices, so the height is reduced. The key workers' housing will have 'pods', manufactured off site, which enhances quality control. RJ agreed that the Peabody Trust has done this in at least one of their pioneering new buildings with apparent success.

However, we are concerned that the outdoor space provided for the nursery is too limited, and too

overshadowed, particularly in winter, when sun seems unlikely at all. Will the fees be affordable by people working in Gunwharf? We have asked the developers to reconsider childrens' play for the whole site, when the huge numbers of shoppers' and workers' children are taken into account. By this, we do not mean those plastic play structures which children rarely enjoy for long because they do not allow for any experiment. We suggested that experts' advice should be sought on making the whole of Gunwharf more child friendly: by things to climb and jump from, varied surfaces, textures and colours: which adults would enjoy too.

They've decided against providing other amenities e.g. doctor, community centre, though there may be a food store in East Side Plaza. The applications still includes the demolition of Donegal Lodge. We are being sent the archaeological reports about the King's Mill and the East bastion, with recommendations about how the remains are to be treated.

Pedestrians first

We objected strongly to the current arrangements for pedestrians to leave the site from the Vernon gateway. At present they are forced to double back quite a long way along the outside of the site, instead of being allowed to cross at the traffic lights at the actual junction. The present arrangements are dangerous, because people walking always choose the shortest route. Here, they cross the road outside the railings if there is nothing coming- and we speak from experience! We have asked Berkeleys to redesign this junction - to conform to their stated policy of making the whole site permeable on foot.

Overall, we are pleased at the improvements in design of the scheme, although we still have reservations about the lack of community facilities. These might be provided in the south wing of Vulcan. There is little soft landscaping, given the huge scale of the development. We have asked to be kept up to date with the progress of the Aspex Gallery. Berkeleys have agreed to an Open Day for the Vulcan at Easter - when people could see the interior and Aspex Gallery's plans. We offered to help supervise it, if required.

Lost History

We are very sad - and puzzled - by Gales' removal of all the artefacts telling the history of the site from the Customs House pub. Berkeleys are asking Gales what has happened to the many photographs and historical information about the Ordnance Yard, HMS Vernon, Sir Peter Scott etc. so the collection can still be available on Gunwharf. Otherwise, the site has no memory, apart from the odd torpedo and figurehead. Celia Clark and Roger James

Heritage Open Days 2003 - An apology

We wish to apologise to those who were hoping to visit the interior of the Vulcan Building on Saturday 13th September. Unfortunately, it was not possible to open the building on that date but we are arranging a visit to take place before Easter.

Cr*p Towns!

The Idler book of Crap Towns The 50 Worse Places to Live in the UK published by Boxtree nominates Portsmouth as Number 11. Its disgusting description of the sea as "of the brown variety. It is brown, stinking and full of used condoms and needles all the year round", was also printed in *The Big Issue*. *The homeless man selling The Big Issue outside Waitrose said that he lived under South Parade Pier, and he had never seen any such thing!*

We also challenge this: "On the architecture front, Portsmouth boasts many triumphs of the idiocy of the human spirit. The 'Tricorn', a shopping centre, is surely the ugliest concrete monstrosity on the face of the earth"...

Best Practice in Regeneration 2003

BEDzed and Caterham Barracks have won Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Awards; Gunwharf Quays has won a British Urban Regeneration Association Award and an English Partnership Award.

Consuming Less in our Homes



EcoSE is another new regional organisation. We were invited to the inaugural event, held at the Hilton Hotel at Gatwick Airport, on 27 November to launch the manifesto for change - for a step change in building design and

construction in the South East of England. It is to aid the change from a three-planet society to a one-planet one. This refers to the estimate that it would take three planets to sustain the whole world's population in the life style at present enjoyed in the West; but we have only one.

EcoSE want all developments in the SE to be to ecohomes' "very good" or "excellent" standards. These standards are based on assessment in seven categories of energy conservation; water consumption; pollution; materials; transport; ecology and land use; health and well-being. At present several institutions who commission new houses in

the region are signed up to these standards: SEEDA (excellent), English Partnerships (very good), Millennium Communities (excellent), Regional Housing Strategy - for developments funded through the Housing Corporation (good with an aspiration to very good). In several of the speeches BEDZED, the pioneering nearly self-sufficient, zero energy-consuming new development near Croydon which some members of the Society went to visit, was held up as the standard to be aiming at. The government were urged to address the issues of sustainability through the planning legislation with an updated PPG1. This has already been begun successfully with the design supplements to PPG3 and to PPG6.

800,000 new homes in the SE will place a considerable demand on resources; but there is a great need to upgrade the existing 3.4 million homes particularly in respect of energy and water consumption. 'Retrofitting' of the existing housing stock is advocated including water-saving measures; 4 litre dual-flush WCs, 70 litre baths, rainwater collection systems of 150-200 litres capacity, aerating spray taps on all wash basins, water efficient white appliances, showers with flow rate of less than 4.5 litres per minute. There was a similar list of energy-saving, mainly heat-saving, measures that should be retrofitted. I raised the question of the disposal of the mountain of discarded WC cisterns, taps, baths and windows.

The first talk entitled Sustainable Buildings - Why, How and When? was by Sir John Harman, Chairman of the Environment Agency. George Ferguson, President of the RIBA and designer of the proposed redevelopment here of Broad Street and the Point, spoke about redevelopment in central Bristol. Mike Gwilliam, former Director of the Civic Trust and now Director of Planning & Transport of SEERA formally launched the manifesto consisting of five issues. No.2 for example was: Promoting and encouraging the raising of construction standards for all new buildings to achieve high levels of energy and water efficiency coupled with minimisation of waste.

We broke up into workshops in the afternoon. In the one that I attended we discussed the difficulties of consulting the public. There was praise for what had been achieved in Ashford. A Winchester city councillor raised the matter of the Major Development Area now being constructed south east of Waterlooville in defiance of all planning principles and in spite of many representations against it by the public. Incidentally at the early stage of the drafting of the South Hampshire Structure Plan, we, the Portsmouth Society, objected to this scheme, pointing out that it breached the County Council's own principles.

RJ

The New Queen Alexandra Hospital



The Great Western Hospital, Swindon built for The Hospital Company, the preferred partners for the QA scheme. We don't want a building like this!

The massive new QA hospital was universally condemned. The application has now been withdrawn, but we hope that the redesign is more than skin deep.

"At the moment most hospital environments say to the patient, in effect: "How you feel is unimportant. You are not of value. Fit in with us, not us with you". With very little effort and money, this could be changed to something like: "Welcome. And don't worry. We are here to reassure you and your treatment will be good and helpful to you". A View from the Front Line Maggie Keswick Jencks 1995. The network of Maggie's Centres dedicated to her memory for cancer patients are designed to be comfortable, welcoming places, very different from the institutional spaces of the NHS. Her husband says "These are buildings that can have a huge impact on people's lives. You can't cure people by giving them a nice building but I believe that the spirit of the place does have a therapeutic role. Architecture can give people strength and help them challenge their fate" The Architect's Journal 25 September 2003

To see what might have been, we only need to look at the same consortium's ugly Swindon and Woolwich by BDP, massive, depressing, and unwelcoming.

Radio 4 recently had item on Healthy Hospitals, asking people to vote on ideas for improving their design and also containing some useful quotes about giving good design priority. Their website is www.healthyhospitals.org.uk. The new ACAD centre in the Middlesex Hospital was praised by Jon Rouse, chief exec. of CABE. He says it is the best healthcare building he's seen for years.

"...the interior is uplifting, full of natural light; here is order and clarity. The really special thing is that it works as well for staff as for patients. The public areas are serene and relaxing, while the work areas are extraordinarily functional and pleasing. The details are meticulously thought through.

He contrasts it with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich, which opened a couple of years ago. "A PFI hospital, it is truly dreadful. It is impossible to get to unless you can drive, so cars are parked nose-to-tail around the building. It has no real relationship with its surroundings and is surrounded by a 7ft-high chain-link fence, giving it the look of a high-security prison or an out-of-town retail centre. Inside is a sprawling layout, split by long, forbidding planning 'long corridors...' etc. as well as the outside and car parking arrangements that were depressing."

Paulsgrove - and Portsmouth deserve better. We entirely agree with Ron Tate that Portsmouth deserves an award winning hospital.

The Tower - What Cost?

The News is constantly coming up with the figure of £8 million for the amount that the Millennium Tower is costing council taxpayers. On the other hand the councillors responsible have always assured us that it will not cost us a penny. We decided to try to find out the truth. We wrote to the Audit Commission. Their answer was as follows:

The Council's Director of Finance and Resources has informed me that spending on the tower to the end of October 2003 amounted to £22,213,423. This has been funded from the following sources.

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|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Millennium Commission grant | £12,858,287 |
| Contributions in kind - Berkeley | £3,130,000 |
| Cash contribution | £3,000,000 |
| Interest earned on cash contribution | £165,000 |
| Contributions in kind - PCC | £455,600 |
| Cash contributions - PCC | £2,604,536 |

We were not quite satisfied with this and wrote back asking further questions:

1. Does this account include compensation payments made to various contractors?
2. Does it include officers' time?
3. Does it include legal expenses?
4. What was the source of the capital reserves if not from council taxpayers?
5. What will be the indirect cost to council taxpayers of the deferral of other capital schemes?

On 11 December the Audit Manager wrote to say that he would write again when he had made further appropriate enquiries.

So, more in our next newsletter!

RJ

BBC Southern Ways in South Today



Deane and I have had a most enjoyable time presenting six short programmes on Southern Ways in connection with the BBC 2 series Restoration which ran in the Autumn. So far we have been able to persuade them to do any other threatened buildings in Portsmouth, but do keep sending in suggestions to BBC South in Southampton because there will be another series.

We were driven about in a beige 1948 Jaguar with cherry red upholstery seats - a bit like the Two Fat Ladies! On the first day (fryingly hot) we looked at a derelict twelfth century Dorset chapel once on a pilgrimage route between two abbeys which has been falling down for most of the twentieth century. The farmer owner has great plans for festivals on his beautiful land. Clavell Tower teetering on a cliff by Kimmeridge Bay may be rescued as a holiday home by the Landmark Trust, rebuilt a bit further back.

One place I really wanted to feature was the Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough, because the new owners, Slough Estates don't really know what to do with the marvellous windtunnels and key sites of invention in the history of flight. It should be a separate museum / workshops entity amongst new workshops for innovation. SAVE Britain's Heritage are working on this. In the afternoon we saw the remarkably large Elizabethan Shaw Hall which served as a secondary school until someone rashly removed a key inside wall to put in some loos and made it unsafe. The geography teacher was eloquent on what it was like to teach in such august surroundings. West Berkshire council hope to win a lottery bid to turn it into community facilities including a marriage hall and meeting rooms. The third day was devoted to Sussex barns: how to ruin them and how to convert them well into expensive houses.

It was good to see that Gosport Gun Boat sheds and the railway station were well looked after - by QinetiQ, - newly privatised defence research agency, and Hampshire County Council, but it would be better to see them both in use. QinetiQ manager David Gant showed us his largest amazing ship testing tank - which we should try and arrange a Society visit too. A planning brief is being prepared for public input on the station - new uses invited! We also saw the porters' lodges at HMS Hornet - terribly neglected, a sad shock for two sisters who grew up there in wartime. Tangmere control tower is the standard model for Airfix kits, a Modernist box, now boarded up and on Church Commissioners' farm land. Lottery bids to restore it as a feature of the Military Aviation Museum failed, but as the land

agent wants to save it, may be everyone should have another go.

Cowdray House, Midhurst is the logo for the Restoration series: the most beautiful ruin since a fire in 1793, which the Town Council are taking a lease on to stabilise the walls so the public can enjoy access.

On the last day we met a Peace Camp campaigner, Sarah Hipperson at the memorial garden at Greenham Common before peering over a triple fence at the hardened hangers where the cruise missiles were kept. The night before we were there, the Minister of Defence agreed to sell the site to Flying A Services, who want to repair and store historic aircraft there. They won't be able to fly them, however, as the runway has been dug up and placed under the A34; the site is reverting to common. Our last assignment was milestones: the enthusiast was concerned about keeping them whitewashed and visible, especially those on the Hungerford/Newbury stretch of the A4.

We had to be quick on the draw and say whatever came into our heads! The presenters said they learnt a lot, and so did we, especially from the beautiful shots by cameraman Trevor Adamson and the skilful editing. The whole thing got quite addictive! It was a marvellous opportunity to communicate with hundreds of thousands of people, even if they were not really concentrating, but munching their supper!

Celia Clark

Portsmouth Point

There have been two applications in recent months to redevelop the Wightlink site at Portsmouth Point by Acanthus Mann architects. RIBA President Elect George Ferguson and Portsmouth trained Roger Goodliff came to present his designs for a Bristol developer who originally came from North End to members of the Society, but we had to tell him that we were very disappointed. He said his aim was to do much better than poorly detailed Gunwharf, but his design is fussy and unimpressive: the blocks on the Point have two pointless features which need to be unified to respond to the corner block on Gunwharf.

The most annoying feature is a meaningless gap in the line of Broad Street three houses wide, which is said to be a response to the planning brief and a demand by people opposite for a view. Not to knit together the lost east side of Broad Street seems thoroughly reprehensible. The terraces of houses are rather dull and there are no buildings along the waterfront, just cars. It just doesn't work, overall or in detail. We hope the Development Control committee will insist on something better for a marvellous site, of the presence of the newish housing scheme on the water approach to Venice.

Celia Clark

The Riviera but Nearer

The Torbay Civic Society have enterprisingly teamed up with The Quayside Hotel, Brixham to offer civic societies special interest holidays - as you'll see in the accompanying leaflets.

With representatives of six other societies Deane and I had a lovely taster in July. Torbay is very beautiful, and exploring its fascinating history and architecture with expert guides, hosted by the Torbay Society, is definitely recommended. We visited the splendid Britannia Naval College, Oldway Mansion in Paignton built by the Singer Sewing Machine millionaire, Torre Abbey and elegant mid nineteenth century terraces and villas in Torquay reminiscent of Owen's Southsea with John Risdon, a very knowledgeable guide. His photographs of the River Dart filled a wonderful evening, and the chairman of the Torbay Civic Society is an amusing speaker.

Discussion between the different society members about matters of mutual interest was very lively! Staff at the Quayside Hotel in Brixham are very welcoming, and the food is delicious. 'The Riviera but Nearer' is just the place for a short special interest holiday.

Celia and Deane Clark

Quote of the Month

From the Business Design Partnership Web site <http://www.bdp.co.uk/> - "The Traditional Mall is Dead - Long Live the Retail Quarter". So that's why City Centre North has become the Northern Quarter!

Design Awards - correction

We would like to correct an error in the Autumn Newsletter in the article on the design awards. The New Downland Housing Associations scheme at Guerny Road was designed and built by the Contractor, Kier Partnership and not as stated. Mike Leighton of Welling Partnerships from Millbrook Southampton acted as the site agent.

Wasted Space

CABE Space launched a campaign in September, to identify the country's worst wasted space - nominate somewhere near you at www.wastedspace.org.uk. We hear there have already been over 1000 nominations, and there are plans for enabling work for a number of 'winning wasted spaces', as well as wider dissemination of information on how to improve sites.

Meetings and Events

Our meetings are on the first Wednesday of each month (January, August and September excepting) at the Norrish Central Library, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth. There is no admission charge and all are welcome.

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| Wednesday 4th February 2004 | Norrish Central Library, Room F, 7.30pm | Portsmouth Society Design Awards - Reports from the judges of the 2003 competition. |
| Wednesday 3rd March | Norrish Central Library, Room F, 7.30pm | Constructing the Tower - An insight into how the Spinnaker Tower is |
| Wednesday 7th April | Norrish Central Library, Room F, 7.30pm | Annual General Meeting followed by The Architecture of Berlin and Dresden - illustrated talk by Celia Clark. |
| Wednesday 5th May | Norrish Central Library, Room F, 7.30pm | Regenerating Neighbourhoods - Gloria Stevens is the Community Development Officer for Portsmouth City Council and she will speak about the successes and challenges facing regeneration in Portsmouth. |
| Wednesday 2nd June | Norrish Central Library, Room F, 7.30pm | Before D-Day and After - As part of the 60th anniversary celebrations, after D-Day. |

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We welcome new members. Please come to any of our meetings or contact Jean Thompson for more details.