

Transforming Cities

a presentation by author and urban designer Nick Corbett
on Monday, February 11 at 7.30pm
in the Shopfront Theatre, City Arcade off Queen Victoria Road

His talk will focus on the role of public squares
and the arts in transforming cities

All welcome; £1 for non-members
light refreshments



February 2013

Listing



Like them or loathe it's undisputable that Broadgate House and the 'Bridge' form a cohesive group of buildings that frame Coventry's premier square, the site of Broadgate Garden Island until the 1970s.

Now English Heritage has announced the listing of these buildings. Those of us who were around in the forties and fifties will no doubt recall the visit by the King and Queen to see the Festival of Britain style architecture in the new central shopping area.

Successful

The launch night of the *Camera Principis* show saw the gallery packed with folk from all walks of life including the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress Councillor and Mrs Tim Sawdon, who mingled with visitors for nearly two hours. The many vibrant displays certainly challenged people to think differently about our city.



The Past Lane



Ornate: the timber-framed Bayley House at No.22 and the brick-faced No.23 next door

In claiming that Coventry's Bayley Lane is the best preserved Mediaeval Street in England, historian and broadcaster Dr Jonathan Foyle was perhaps stretching a point. Yet, once again he has drawn our attention to the tremendous opportunities available if we use our heritage to regenerate the City.

His timely words come following an application to convert the last remaining timber-framed house, Bayley House, and No.23 next door into 18 student flats.

He told the Coventry Telegraph that Bayley House is an "eye-catcher" in the "best medieval street in Britain". "To use it as student digs doesn't promote long-term care of historic

buildings in the city, and the image is, we don't care so why should you. It actually drives people away."

Councillor Ed Ruane, Coventry City Council's cabinet member for housing, leisure and culture, also joined the debate in saying that the plan is inappropriate for the building. In a report he said: "We should not only be preserving this medieval part of the city, but doing more to attract visitors to this culturally rich part of the city. It is our duty as a council to protect some of Coventry's medieval assets but more importantly to promote them."

Also in the limelight is St Mary's Guildhall, sadly closed to visitors for the winter. No-one could have been more surprised than Dr Foyle who, using superlatives again, declared it to be Britain's 'finest medieval guildhall. "It's a real jewel in Coventry's crown," he said. "It has many national importances, and you could spend a day unpicking its history. With a little investment and the right marketing, it would bring people flooding to Coventry."

The Bayley Lane scenario wouldn't be complete without reference to recent news about Drapers' Hall that could well see the listed building become a music and performing arts venue, if plans being drawn up by the Alan Edward Higgs Charity are approved by City planners.

Bayley Lane is at the heart of the historic Cathedral Quarter and we earnestly hope that planners will ask themselves the question: 'Shouldn't Coventry be using Bayley House to enhance the heart of our heritage offer?'

► The Society is now preparing a representation objecting to the conversion of Bayley House to student accommodation.

More news and views on our website: www.coventrysociety.org.uk

Charterhouse - the way forward



Garden: A recent photograph of Charterhouse



Urgent repair: The monastic wall to be rebuilt

Progress continues apace at the Charterhouse as longer term uses are now being considered and tested as part of an Options Appraisal. The process has been commissioned by the Charterhouse Coventry Preservation Trust (CCPT), co-founded with members of the Coventry Society in September 2011. The Options Appraisal now proceeding with the assistance of a grant from the Architectural Heritage Fund, involves a detailed study of the building by consultants PCPT, a firm of architects based in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. PCPT has been behind a host of Coventry based heritage led regeneration schemes including the former Ribbon Factory at Priory Place and historic buildings at Far Gosford Street.

Stuart Daniel, trustee of CCPT and Coventry Society committee member, drafted the brief that was submitted to the consultants.

He explained: "The completion of the Options Appraisal is a key step forward for Charterhouse as the viability study is part of the process that will enable the Trust to unlock substantial funding to get major repair works underway. We have quickly identified the monastic wall to the rear of the Charterhouse as being a priority for repair. It is likely that this structure will be one of the first to receive attention from the Trust and I look forward to seeing work start later this year. The Options Appraisal will also allow the Trust to identify what options exist for future use of the Charterhouse and to assess which of those options will be viable. That will ensure the longer term survival of this unique Grade I listed gem."

The Charterhouse building has recently been added to English Heritage's 'At Risk' register which perhaps curiously, is to be seen as a positive development. It will result in the building's profile being elevated within the corridors of power at the major funding institutions.

The Coventry Society is planning a visit to the Charterhouse this summer for members to learn more about the works taking place and view this fantastic building and its gardens.

NMA

At the January meeting of the Coventry Society, we had an interesting talk by Jim Brown about the National Memorial Arboretum. With over 250 memorials in a 150 acre setting the NMA is an inspiring and fascinating place, with hundreds of interesting stories. It is set in the heart of the Midlands at Alrewas near Lichfield. But the NMA is more than just a military memorial.

There are memorials to lots of civilian services as well as military services, including the Police, Ambulance, Fire Service, Bevan Boys, and charities such as the Rotary Club.

Although there are some paid staff, the NMA survives through the effort of over 150 volunteers, who between them contribute over 3000 hours of voluntary effort every month.

Contacts

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If Twitter is your thing, you can follow us at <https://twitter.com/#!/CovSoc>
We also have our own page on Facebook. You can also follow us there at <http://www.facebook.com/CoventrySociety>

Hazel Lynn

It is with great sadness that we report the unexpected and untimely death of Hazel Lynn, one of the longest standing members of the Coventry Society. Hazel has been a member of the Society for over 40 years.

She was our Membership Secretary and a long standing member of our committee. We will all miss her cheery welcome to members as they signed in at our meetings.

Hazel died on Monday January 28. Her funeral is on Monday February 11 at 10.30 am at Canley Crematorium. Our condolences to Hazel's family and friends.



Hazel was pictured at the recent annual meeting of Civic Voice in Coventry

St. Marks

The Coventry Society is pleased to learn that the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport has supported our case to amend the listing details of the former St. Mark's Church on Stoney Stanton Road.

The Church was already a Grade II listed building but the society noticed that the listing details of the building made no mention of the wonderful mural on the east wall, which was created by German émigré artist Hans Feibusch in 1963. Over the past few decades the work of Feibusch has been recognised as being of national importance.

We therefore asked English Heritage to amend the listing of the building to acknowledge the importance of the mural. We also asked for the description of the building to be amended as it was still described as being the hospital Outpatients Department.

Last year we opened up the Church as part of Heritage Open Days and we hope to repeat this in September of this year. We are still concerned about finding a sustainable future for St. Mark's Church and will continue to work with Coventry Diocese to this end.