



TRUST TOPICS

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Contents

Page 2

The Show Goes On
The Girls' High School

Page 3

End of Stone Age?
Forthcoming Attractions

Pages 4 & 5

Who Lived There?
7 Hall Gate

Pages 6 & 7

Planning Matters

Page 8

The Back Page
60th Anniversary Buffet



Image courtesy of Frank Whittle Partnership

Racecourse Hotel

Good Enough for a Gateway?

Page 7

The Show Goes On

This issue of Trust Topics is the first of these newsletters not to be edited and produced by Philip Mottram. In 2000 he offered to create our new style magazine and edit it for a limited period. In fact Philip has produced 29 issues in the six years since the Millennium, and the Trust is very grateful for this outstanding work. We have been fortunate to have someone with all the varied skills needed for the job within our own committee.

Philip and Trust Topics will be a hard act to follow, but the show must go on. I have offered to take on the role of editor and producer, on the condition that other people do generate material for the newsletters.

For this issue Eric Braim has written about 7 Hall Gate and its occupants, and Peter Coote, who is now chairing the Planning and Conservation sub-committee, has written about the applications which have been discussed.

It is intended to continue very much in the format which Philip had created, and which members have enjoyed. After all, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". So I have tried my best to achieve a seamless change of editor.

My thanks to the contributors, and I would welcome suggestions for articles, members' letters or even their own pieces. My details are on the back page.

Archie Sinclair (Chairman)

Doncaster High School for Girls 1910

Spot-listing bid



For some years now many local people have been concerned about the possible fate of the Girls' High school on Waterdale. Developers are in the process of producing redevelopment proposals for the Waterdale area, including the school.

We have written to English Heritage requesting that they consider listing the building because of its architectural character and its importance to the street scene. P.C.

“STONE AGE” STINGS TRUST INTO ACTION

This 1980's headline in the local paper was reporting on a press release by the Trust on stone cladding. We were very critical of the then current fashion for cladding decent brick houses in stone. The worst of these was the process of covering a building with buff-coloured render, which was then cut away to form an appearance of courses and individual stones. It was not a convincing result and before too long the render had the brickwork “grinning through”.

The solution has been to take off the failing cement render and gently remove any left behind. When the brickwork is re-pointed, the original appearance is restored.



50 Thorne Road, on the left, now restored



the decorative doorway

Recently, 50 Thorne Road, also known as 2 Rutland Villas, has re-emerged after about 25 years under its stone cladding. It now complements the other half of the pair of semis, which has always been brick.

The craftsmanship in the decorative brickwork around the front door is a very good feature. It's amazing that anyone would have wanted to hide it.

Congratulations to the owners for some attractive conservation work.

Archie Sinclair

Winter Programme

It was decided to postpone January's talk on The Sand House because of the gale force winds. Apologies to anyone who made it to Hall Cross School.

Members enjoyed hearing from Amanda Neilson about “Mr Straw's House at Worksop” on 15 February. There will be a review in the next Newsletter.

Thursday 22 March 2007 at 7.30 pm will be the final event of the series: Grace Pacey on “Tapestries”, at Hall Cross School, Thorne Road.

Who Lived There? (no. 3): 7 Hall Gate



Hall Gate in 1920

No. 7 second from the right
with balcony

Hall Gate was outside the confines of the medieval town which was enclosed by a defensive ditch. An assessment of 1709 records that 60% of Hall Gate's inhabitants were classed as poor. The town prospered in the 18th century and the defensive ditch was filled in – Hall Gate developed into the town's principal residential street.

No. 7 is a fairly typical example of the new architecture. It was already in existence, occupied by a Mrs Hall, when, in 1768, the Corporation decided to build the adjoining house, no. 8. The Corporation let no. 8, in 1770, to Mrs Davenport, widow of W. Davenport Esq. of Bramhall, Cheshire.

7 Hall Gate came into the possession of Sir George Cooke, the 7th bart., of Wheatley Hall. From 1777 to 1793 the house was occupied by Miss Priscilla Cooke, younger daughter of Sir George Cooke, the 5th bart. and cousin to Sir George Cooke, the 7th bart.

From 1793 to 1802 the house, which according to the Window Tax had 24 windows, was occupied by Miss Ann Reresby, a great grand-daughter of Sir Godfrey Reresby of Thrybergh Hall.

Sir George Cooke let the house from 1802 to 1811 to William Berry, probably the same William Berry who died at Stamford on 27 November 1823, aged 70, on his way from London to Ripon. He was formerly of Doncaster and a Captain in the 11th Regiment of Foot.

The Rev. William Ellis opened his Classical and Commercial Academy at 7 Hall Gate in 1811, with accommodation for about 30 young gentlemen as boarders. He moved to Rawmarsh Hall in 1832.

Robert Storrs, surgeon, was the next occupant of 7 Hall Gate. Born in 1801, he was a pupil at the Doncaster Dispensary and in May 1823 was made a Licentiate of the Worshipful Company of Apothecaries and in March 1824 was admitted as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons. In July 1824 he commenced practising the various branches of his profession from premises in French Gate. He was appointed medical officer to the local Poor Law Union from its inception.

The 1841 census shows that 7 Hall Gate was occupied by Robert Storrs and his wife, their 9 children, a governess, 4 female servants, a male servant and two apprentice surgeons.



Hall Gate today

All the buildings in the 1920 photograph have survived, but three of the brick buildings have been painted.

No. 7 has retained its tall first floor windows, but is now painted and has lost its balcony.

A large rear projection, partly of stone, probably from an earlier building, contained kitchen, scullery and medical accommodation.

The Yorkshire Post of 8 September 2005 contained an article on Robert Storrs based on recent research at Sheffield University by Dr Milton Wainwright.

After attending several cases of childbed fever, many of which proved fatal, Dr Storrs came to the conclusion that he must have been responsible for spreading the infection. He took steps to prevent this happening by changing his clothes and thorough hand washing.

Dr Storrs published his findings in April 1842, both in the UK and America but they were ignored. It was several years later that a German Hungarian Ignas Semmelweis claimed that cross infection could be prevented by thorough hand washing. His theory was accepted in Hungary but resulted in controversy elsewhere.

Robert Storrs died in 1847, aged 46, from the Irish Fever, caught while working in the workhouse hospital. He left a widow and 12 children. William Cooke Russell, surgeon, took on the practice and lived at 7 Hall Gate.

Robert Storr's second son, also called Robert, was 11 years old at the time of his father's death. He was educated at York and trained with Mr Alan of York. In December 1856 he received the Diploma of the Royal College of Surgeons.

He joined Dr Russell in practice and in 1858 he was elected surgeon to the Great Northern Railway Plant Works Sick Club.

Dr Russell moved across the road to 50 Hall Gate, the house built by Joseph Lockwood, the sculptor. Robert Storrs moved back into 7 Hall gate after a short period in lodgings in Baxter Gate. He was a Town Councillor for the East ward in the 1870s.

Robert Storrs died in 1889, aged 53, from inflammation of the lungs. The local paper spoke of the great loss the town had suffered. Robert Storr's daughter, Frances Laura, married Dr P B McKay who practised from 7 Hall Gate. Hall Gate had become Doncaster's Harley Street; in 1895 there were 10 medical practitioners in the street. However, the number of residents was decreasing as commercialism expanded. No. 8 Hall Gate had a shop front inserted in 1920 and 7 Hall Gate became shops and offices in 1923.

Eric Braim

Planning Matters

Another Change

For many years now the Planning and Conservation sub-committee has met monthly under the chairmanship of Philip Mottram to consider relevant planning applications and other issues likely to affect the quality of the built environment. However Philip has been increasingly occupied with the project of renovating the Parish Rooms at Tickhill and consequently, and to our dismay, he decided to stand down as Chairman in October. With some trepidation I agreed to take his place. I knew this was not going to be easy as Philip has been so skilled at chairing and managing the team.

Well, I have now managed to complete three months as chair and I would like to continue in the tradition of telling you about some of the issues we have considered. There isn't space here to cover all the applications that have appeared on the agenda. I will be concentrating on the most important, thus reflecting on the major issues that affect both Town and Trust. I hope you find them interesting.

✚ We raised no objections in October for an application for 19 dwellings on the site of Stone Bridge House, Tickhill. This is a very sensitive site, adjoining the Mill Pond area. Because of the importance of this conservation area we had previously objected to an application for flats on the site, which would have been completely inappropriate. We see applications for new flats and apartments on a regular basis now.

✚ We objected to a development of this type at Kirk Sandall. This included 120 apartments and we were particularly concerned that the proposed tall blocks would be a conspicuous intrusion into an extensive area of open countryside. In this case we were only concerned about part of the application, but the whole scheme was rejected by the Doncaster Council.



✚ In November we perused an application from J D Wetherspoon to build new premises on the site of 10 to 14 Hall Gate. The plans included the replication of the original Georgian façade. The area around the former Odeon site has been unpleasant to look at for many years and some development here is to be welcomed. The Odeon frontage was extremely ugly but its demolition has resulted in a gap with unsightly scaffolding, and the adjoining historic properties have been severely fire-damaged.

We were pleased to see the efforts in this application to replicate these latter properties, but we did express the view that the new windows to Hall Gate must be timber double hung sashes as existing. It has to be said that there is an overall concern within the Trust that the loss of historic properties in a key conservation areas will erode its character, even if replicas are provided. Copies do not provide the sense of past or history in any way. However, in this case we recognise that the buildings are in too poor a state to be rescued.

✚ Also in November we were pleased to see an application to improve the Wool Market. This is Phase 1 and involves waterproofing the roof and replacing external cladding with roller shutters set back. These will have polycarbonate panels so they can be seen through. The market area is one in which the Trust has expressed views and concerns over the years, including publishing a booklet on suggestions for a way forward. The concerns about the Wool Market have been that it doesn't seem to be integrated with the rest of the market, but hopefully it soon will be.

✚ November also brought us a revised application for flats at 1 and 1b Church Lane Bessacarr. This was for 17 apartments in 2 blocks. We objected to this application as we felt it would be not only over-development of the site, but also an obtrusive feature detracting from the character of the conservation area.



✚ Our first meeting of 2007 was at the beginning of January.

We were interested to see an application for the formation of a sacred garden at the shrine of Our Lady of Doncaster, adjoining the Catholic Church on Chequer Road.

This would be surrounded by a fence and whilst we recognise this to be needed we have expressed the view that it would be oppressively high and should be reduced.

✚ We considered an outline application for residential development on part of the garden at Hexthorpe Manor, Old Hexthorpe. This is an ancient site and has never been developed. We were concerned about how much garden would be lost, loss of trees and impact on the Dell. Whilst some development may be appropriate this application proposed too much.

✚ We were extremely disappointed with the proposals for a new hotel and residential apartments on the Racecourse site. The building proposed will be high - too high we felt, mainly because the flats will be on top of the hotel.



We liked the idea of the three way articulation of the building around the corner, but considered the proposed design unsophisticated. Its all-rendered finish was disliked by the committee.

This will be a large building on a very prominent site. Here is an opportunity to build something of high design quality at an important point on both the road network and the racecourse.

If it is to be good enough for this gateway site, it needs to be better.

The Back Page

The Annual Buffet at St. Peter's Church Hall, Chequer Road, on 13 December 2006



A full house from members, and a display of the Trust's exhibition material.



As usual, Tina Anderson had been very busy with the gorgeous deserts, and, as usual, they went down well with the members.



For the Buffet, the Social Committee of Tina, John Holmes, Sue Barnsdale and Sue Burley was reinforced by husbands Malc and Colin – who also acted as our host for the quiz.

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