



# TRUST TOPICS

## Doncaster Civic Trust Newsletter ©

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Handley Cross Restored



### Greetings from Askern Spa

The rear view of Burghwallis Hall  
in Edwardian times (above) and today (below)



Member of



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## Anglo Saxon Cross Pendant

In the July edition of Trust Topics we told you about the Anglo Saxon cross pendant that the Museum was hoping to purchase. It had been discovered through metal detecting in the Stainforth parish. Both the Trust and the Friends of the Museum had offered £225 each towards the purchase cost of £900 and at the time of the last article we were waiting to see if the Victoria and Albert Museum could match this. We are pleased to say that, yes, the V and A were able to provide the rest of the funding and the cross is now owned by Doncaster Museum.

On Saturday 16th November the Trust's Executive Committee was invited, along with others, to a private viewing of the cross before it goes on permanent display. Several of us were able to attend. In a room in the art gallery, we all listened intently as we were told how the cross had been discovered. Andrew Wilson, the young man who had found it, described how he had taken his metal detector out one morning to explore some land between South Bramwith and Stainforth. He wasn't successfully initially, and soon it began to rain heavily. He was a bit fed up because he was covered in mud after the deluge and was about to pack up for the day, but decided to try once more. Almost immediately he found the cross. He picked it up and took it home. He cleaned it with soap and water using a toothbrush. It was intact and he thought it looked Victorian. He took it to the Museum and they thought it might be Tudor. A top expert was called in and only then was it realised that it was in fact Saxon probably dating from the 8th or early 9th century. It is silver, rare and unique. Here is a description previously printed in July:



*"Its charm and importance rests in its relatively simplistic but effective design and execution. It is a functional, devotional piece, exhibiting characteristic artistic and manufacturing skills of the artisan craftsmen of the period and more importantly is an example of an important artistic style present on the European mainland within the Carolingian empire which influenced Anglo Saxon arts and crafts as well as being desirable to Anglo Saxon consumers. It is a unique and rare piece of continental jewellery, for which there are few enough examples in Britain and none previously known from Doncaster or represented in the collection".*

Peter Robinson, the Museum's enthusiastic archaeologist, then thanked the two organisations, including the Trust, for rescuing the cross after it was declared treasure trove. He said the cross wasn't English but was probably made in northern Europe. Peter brought the era to life by outlining scenarios as to how the cross came to be in our area, but in reality no one really knows. He also suggested that perhaps there may even be an Anglo Saxon settlement awaiting discovery to the east of the town.

The morning gathering of land owner, discoverer, archaeological experts, and financial rescuers was very enjoyable. We sat round a large table, acquired from a railway company, with tea and biscuits as we listened to the speakers.

Afterwards we made our way to look at the cross, in its case. We were amazed that there seemed to be no damage. A few other Saxon items were displayed too, but this was an era poorly represented in the Museum until now.

We are so pleased that we have helped to rescue a unique part of Doncaster's history. It will be going on permanent display soon. Do go and see it.

**The Executive Committee**

## **Members' News**

### **Final Event of the Winter Programme 2014**

**Thursday 17 April 7.30 pm at St Peter's RC Church Hall, Chequer Road**  
**Members' Social Forum, with cheese and wine (or soft drink) and a guest speaker**

## **Subscription News**

At the AGM the Executive Committee put forward two proposals, both of which were passed by the members.

Firstly, it was proposed and agreed that the annual subscriptions would rise from £3 to £5 and that for two people living at the same address it would rise from £5 to £7. The main reason for the increase is the rising cost of postage. We regret that we cannot subsidise membership from our funds.

The good news is that this increase will not take effect until the beginning of our next Trust year, on the 1st September this year. The subscription for new members or outstanding renewals will remain the same until then. We hope you will understand our reasons for the increase. Even £5 and £7 is still well below the subscriptions rate of most other Civic Societies.

Secondly, we agreed to abolish Life Membership. Don't worry though! If you are already a life member this resolution will not affect you. Your membership will continue as before. Over the years we have been grateful to everyone who has paid for life membership which shows enthusiasm and commitment to our aims as well as showing that Trust membership is enjoyed.

Unfortunately, we have had some problems. Firstly we discovered that the constitution does not actually permit us to levy life membership. Of course we could have changed the constitution but after research we found that hardly any other Trusts have life membership any more. Those that do so now charge a hefty fee - £700 in one case. By comparison, our charge of £30 for one person has just not caught up with inflation. Overall we felt it would be simpler to not accept any further applications for life membership.

**Peter Coote, Membership Secretary**

## **The Tree Sub-committee**

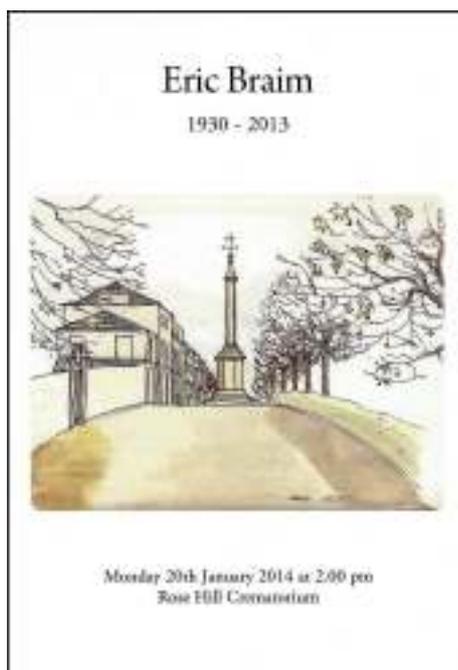
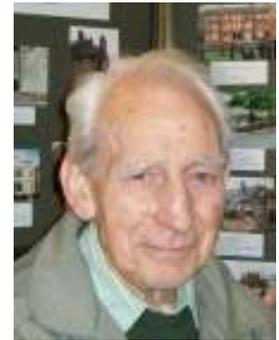
The Trust's Tree Committee is being revived under the Chairmanship of John Holmes. John needs a handful of committed members to help him manage the Trust's own tree-planting initiatives and also to deal with the requests that we regularly receive to fund other people's planting schemes. One of the team's first tasks might be to identify a local site for new trees to commemorate the work of our former secretary and Tree Committee chairman, Eric Braim.

**If you would like to be part of the team, please ring John on Doncaster 361944.**

## Eric Lawrence Braim – a life’s work for the Trust

Eric Braim, the Trust’s former Honorary Secretary, passed away suddenly but peacefully on 30 December 2013, aged 83. His funeral service, which took place on 20 January 2014 at Rose Hill Crematorium, was well attended by members of the Trust, particularly members of the Executive Committee, past and present.

The service was taken by Canon Willett, known as Father John, formerly of St Wilfrid’s, Cantley. He gave the following eulogy that had been a joint effort between members of the Trust and his family.



Eric was born in February 1930 and lived in Highfield Road, Doncaster with his father Lawrence Braim, an accountant and night-school teacher, and his mother Minnie Evelyn. An only child, he went to the local primary school and from there to Doncaster Grammar School which had just been greatly extended.

After his marriage to Betty in 1962, they lived in Royal Avenue, where they brought up their twins, Edwin and Elizabeth. They remember Eric as a “modern Dad, with his hands full”. In 1978 the family moved to nearby Lawn Road, which became home for the next 35 years.

As a young man Eric cycled and walked the locality, getting to know the buildings and places that would later be his passion. While still at school in 1946, he learned of the formation of Doncaster Civic Trust, and joined as a junior member. He was very proud of his membership card which showed he was member no.1. The Trust was to become his life’s work.

He was involved with the YMCA, becoming their football secretary. He liked belonging to things; he was “a joiner”. When the Junior Civic Trust was established, Eric became its co-ordinator, giving advice and encouragement to the young members. Several are still members of the Trust today and regard Eric as “the father of local architectural conservation”.

He became the Trust’s honorary secretary in 1963; a role which he undertook with distinction until he stood down in November 2010 aged 80, after a magnificent 47 year’s service.

After producing the first Doncaster Civic Trust Newsletter in 1970, he continued to produce a further 88 issues over the next 30 years. Many of these contained substantial articles based on his original research into Doncaster’s architects, buildings and significant spaces. Always accurate and very readable, these are of immense value to the Trust and the town today, forming a very useful archive for those undertaking local history and conservation projects, both now and in the future.

Eric was an expert on conservation, and very much a pioneer in his field. In 1972 he established the Trust’s conservation committee, which is still active over 40 years later.

He became a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, gaining admission the hard way by sitting its examinations externally, not at a school of architecture. Eric worked for the West Riding County Council in Wakefield and some practices in Doncaster before retiring early. He had also studied for membership of the Institute of Landscape Architects.

In the late 1970s, he studied for and received a Diploma in Conservation Studies at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at The King's Manor in York. Eric had immensely broad knowledge and the Trust was very fortunate to be able to rely on his well-qualified judgement and wise counsel over many years.

Of his many important campaigns, the most notable was fought in 1986 when he successfully challenged Doncaster Council in the High Court. The judgement established that a large part of Doncaster Common, mostly within the Racecourse, was Public Open Space and the public had a right to use it for recreation. He also succeeded in getting many threatened local buildings listed.

The house at 2 Lawn Road became a focus for the Trust's work, with Eric or his wife Betty always available for Trust business. It also became the venue for meetings of the Executive, as well as the Conservation Committee. After Betty passed away in 2011 and Eric was becoming less active in the Trust's work, the meetings continued to be held at Lawn Road. The Braims had always wanted to be kept in touch.

The last meeting of 2013 for the Trust's Planning and Conservation Sub-committee should have been held at Lawn Road on Monday 30 December but, sadly, Eric died peacefully that morning.

Such a loss to his family, his friends, the Trust and the town.

### **And a little more, from the Trust's present secretary, Archie Sinclair**

A very visible and lasting reminder of Eric's initiative, research and application is the series of 7 display boards which he titled "In Style". These show the development through the years of Doncaster houses and their architectural styles, particularly in the design of their windows and doors. The boards have formed the core of the Trust's displays at events over the years and are attractive, interesting and very popular. Eric followed these up with a further 5 boards on Edwardian Doncaster and Municipal Improvers. This valuable body of work has recently been digitised to safeguard it for the future.



The image above right shows Eric and I standing in front of a display of his "In Style" boards. It was taken by Geoff Bennett at the Local History Fair in September 2010. In his magazine, *The Bessacarr and Cantley Times*, Issue 159, Geoff published the photograph with the caption "Eric Braim is one of our heroes. He has researched and published an enormous amount of work on Doncaster's history". In the same issue, Geoff wrote in detail about the development of South Parade, the changes to road levels and to the Hall Cross. In his introduction he wrote, "These articles have drawn heavily on the work of Eric Braim, who is probably Doncaster's leading historian. Many fascinating articles by Eric have appeared In the Newsletters of the Doncaster Civic Trust over many years". Praise indeed.

Eric was a quiet and modest man, and would probably have been quite embarrassed by all the complimentary things people said about him when they learned of his death. But although he was a man of few spoken words, he wrote a great deal, often using the most precise and elegant language. Whether it was an extensive historical article for the Trust's newsletter, or a letter to the local authority objecting to some planning proposal, he consistently produced work which is the envy of those of us who try to follow in his footsteps.

We must now ensure that the body of work which he leaves behind is properly preserved and archived, as it becomes his legacy to future students of Doncaster's historic past and its buildings.

## A Visit to Burghwallis Hall



In November the Doncaster Ladies' Choir was invited to sing at a Christmas Fair for the elderly residents of Burghwallis Hall, a former country house situated to the north of Doncaster, which has been a retirement home for many years. My wife is a member of the choir and I was her chauffeur.

An Edwardian view of the rear of the house. The address is shown as "Askern Spa". Although Askern is several miles away, postcards such as this would be available for visitors to send home.

We approached Burghwallis from Owston along a narrow but straight road known as Abbes Walk which ends in the village. It was then easy enough to find the house, adjacent to the church. As we turned into the entrance we passed between some fine gate-piers before proceeding along a curving drive and up to the front door of the Hall. Situated within its own large gardens, it has the appearance of a manor house rather than a grand mansion. In front of the house stands a Cedar of Lebanon, a tree which always seems to enhance the setting of any country house. I looked around the outside of the building which is one of the most interesting, yet architecturally complex, in the area.

According to English Heritage the oldest part of the hall is probably early 16th century, although it has been much altered since then. The builder was probably John Anne whom we know owned the estate by 1521 and had probably held it for some years before then. At this time the main residence was at nearby Frickley. The family ownership of Burghwallis continued for over 400 years but the early years proved very difficult.

Today the house and environs are calm and peaceful but it wasn't always so. The Anne family were well known Catholics and, for parts of the 16th century at least, lived in fear of persecution. Their chapel was hidden away in the attic in a room which had clear views, on two sides, of the public road which at that time passed through the park. During alterations in 1907 a priest-hole was discovered which once had access from the attic chapel. Unfortunately, however careful they may have been, it did not prevent two members of the family, George Anne and his wife, being imprisoned for their faith in York Castle in 1593. Today, a more modern chapel is still here, where people can worship in peace.



This view, left, shows the prominent old chimney stack on the main facade of the house.

The appearance of the house in the late 16th century would have been an H-shape and you can still get some idea of that today. I walked round to the rear of the hall and found it most picturesque with its assortment of gables. It hasn't really changed very much since the photograph was taken for the postcard (top picture) in Edwardian times. It is easy to think that the whole building is Tudor, a perfect manor house of the time, but looks can be deceiving.

In fact it has had two major 'makeovers', once in the eighteenth century, and again in the nineteenth.

According to Dr. Miller's 'History of Doncaster' (1804), a wing was added to the hall in 1797, which still survives. You can see it on the left hand side of the picture below, marked 'Alterations and Additions'.

Originally it had two stories with a pediment above. The whole house was also rendered, sash windows were installed and a Doric porch was added. It had become an updated gentleman's residence of the period. Architect William Lindley carried out similar changes to Hooton Pagnell Hall at this period but there is no evidence that he worked at Burghwallis.



Alterations and Additions:  
Note the 1797 wing on the left with pediment. The Doric porch was placed on the main entrance.

Whoever the architect may have been it was soon to be radically altered once again. In 1820 Michael Tasburgh-Anne decided to make the house look more mediaeval. He stripped off all the stucco, exposing the original rough stone; he raised the roof of the new wing and put in windows of a 17th century style in the gable ends. The gables on the roof replaced the pediment. Kneelers (the level stones at the base of gables) were added to the earlier house. The splendid porch may also have been installed at this time replacing the earlier Doric porch.



The rear of the house today

If the date of 1820 is accurate for all this work, it is stylistically very early for such changes, which were usually carried out by the Victorians. It is also surprising that there were only 20 years between two major architectural changes to the house. After all this work you would expect the final appearance of the house to be disappointing, but in fact it is very charming and fits our ideal of a venerable old house in the country.

The Anne family remained at Burghwallis until 1942 when they sold it to the Bishop of Leeds. Since then it has been run by successive Catholic organisations as a retirement home, latterly and currently by the Catholic Diocese of Hallam. It is usually referred to as St. Anne's Residential Care Home. Internally its use has resulted in many changes for the comfort of the residents and no doubt to comply with regulations.



The Georgian wing today, with the gables which replaced the pediment

The character of the older part, at least on the ground floor, has been eroded although the entrance is pleasant and still retains a Gothic door. Some of the 18th century character remains in the wing.



The Georgian windows, which still retain their original shutters, look on to gardens, woodland and former parkland. I was unable to explore the upper floors.

On leaving I looked from the front door towards the trees and beyond to the mediaeval parish church of St. Helen. This is a quiet and peaceful spot in the countryside and, despite a modern wing to the house, the character and setting remain intact.

The front of the house today

**Peter Coote**

*This is very much an abbreviated history mainly based on previously published material. For further information please contact the Trust.*

## Out and About

The Trust has helped two other voluntary organisations in recent months. The Talking Newspapers for the Blind issues a 'magazine' to its listeners as well as the Talking Newspaper.

Peter Coote, a member of our Executive Committee, was interviewed for the magazine in December, answering questions on the history of the Market and Market Place. Information was given on the history of the Market Hall, the Corn Exchange and other buildings including the Red Lion. This is the second time the Trust has contributed to the magazine, at their request. The previous interview was about the High Street.

In November we were approached by The Friends of Firbeck Hall, who were seeking information on William Hurst, a local architect in the nineteenth century. Hurst carried out alterations to Firbeck Park for the owner, Henry Gally Knight in 1820. He also rebuilt the chapel at the same time. The 'Friends' were putting together a portfolio on some of William Hurst's work in the area. We were pleased to be able to provide the information they required.

You may be interested to read about another of Hurst's schemes in an article entitled 'A Long Forgotten Plan' in the next issue of Trust Topics.

## Local History Fair Saturday 17 May 2014

This year's Local History Fair will take place at Doncaster Museum, Chequer Road, on Saturday 17 May from 11 am to 4 pm. As usual the Trust will have a display and a variety of publications for sale. There will be a range of interesting stands from right across the borough.

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## Planning Matters

Welcome to our new look Planning Matters which we hope will make it easier for you to look at cases in which you may be interested. These are just a few of the many items that your sub committee has discussed in recent months.

### **From Cinema to House: Transformation in Thorne**

In June 2011 we perused an application for the conversion of a 1920s cinema to a house in Thorne which we thought interesting and ambitious. The project was completed in 2013. Only the façade was retained with a new house constructed behind. It featured in the Sunday Times magazine and was featured on Grand Designs on Channel 4 broadcast last September (as our last newsletter was going to press). It is really good to see a commitment to the community of Thorne.

### **Tickhill Conservation Area - work on an appraisal.**

We help Doncaster MBC regularly with appraisals of conservation areas as they are re-visited. Work on the re-appraisal had been completed by their staff (largely by one of our bursary students) and was an excellent document. However we were able to add more, in particular historical information, as well as suggesting some changes to how buildings were categorised. This is the area's largest and most complex conservation area and the work was time-consuming but rewarding. We were particularly pleased with the help given by the Tickhill residents that we met, many of whom were keen to tell us about their own historic houses. After further work by the MBC the document will go out to public consultation.

### **Land at the former Rovers Ground**

This was a new application for housing at Belle Vue. We were pleased to see that the scale of the buildings planned was similar to nearby housing, but overall we were disappointed by the designs and layout proposed. However this house-builder's offer was far more appropriate than the earlier multi-storey tower proposed some years ago, so we raised no objections.



### **26 Baxtergate - The Blue Bell**

A few years ago we published an article called 'Farewell Blue Bell' as this old pub in Baxtergate was proposed to be demolished. Fortunately this never went ahead, as the building is of some interest.

It has a 'deco' art stone surround which is part of the original building designed by T H Johnson in 1931. The application was just for a new sign but we asked that the original façade be retained.



### **Demolition Plans in Town Centre - and Publicity for the Trust**

In the last Trust Topics Archie Sinclair outlined the threat to Doncaster's buildings due to the creation of the new Civic and Cultural Quarter. The main concerns were historic properties such as The Hall on South Parade and Nether Hall, but these are not the only buildings affected. In October we considered the proposals for the demolition of four of the Council's buildings. We couldn't really object as such as they were notifications and not planning applications (They are not listed or in Conservation areas, with one exception). These were the Civic Theatre, the old Council House, formerly Coal House, Scarborough House and partial demolition - the rear portion - of the former Girls High School. The matter came to the attention of the Press and our views were sought.

Trust Chairman John Holmes made the following points:

In principle we had no objection to the proposals, although the façade of the High School must be retained. As for the Council House and Scarborough House we were mainly concerned about ugly gaps being created if there were no replacement buildings. The Trust does not want a repeat of the vacant cinema sites on Hall Gate. Lastly we felt that demolition of the Civic was premature as some smaller groups might want to use it.

We got some good publicity from this response and the following week there was a letter from a reader supporting the Trust's views. A more recent newspaper article indicated that the agent concerned is actively looking for new uses for the land.

**Windows are Important – the former Yeoman's in the Market Place**



We consider major applications but sometimes it's the smaller ones that affect the character of an area. In this case the upper windows at 8, Market Place were wrong in lots of ways - they were pvcu, they were top-hung casements, not sliding sashes, and the number and size of the panes were incorrect. They had already been installed and the company wanted to retain them. We thought that they were ruining a Georgian building, so we objected and the application was refused.



**Another pub closes.....The Park**



Pubs are closing all over the country and one of the latest in Doncaster is the Park Hotel on Carr House Road, built in 1923. This is a prominent landmark building facing a conservation area and we were pleased to see a proposal for its retention as a restaurant and shop with flats above.

But it needed to be done properly. Was it really a good idea for residents to access their flats via a fire escape? We thought not and objected, as well as adding suggestions for landscaping and improving the signage. Some amendments have since been made.



In our monthly meetings we look at far more applications than these although in most cases we raise no objections. We try and ensure that any objections are well thought through and succinct and that has led us to be successful in 2013 with most, though not all, of our concerns.

**The Planning and Conservation Sub Committee**

## Doncaster's Urban Smellscape

Victoria Henshaw Thursday 19 September 2013



We had a pretty full house for the first talk of our winter programme. Our speaker was Victoria Henshaw, once Doncaster's Town Centre Manager, but now, after a spell of consultancy and further study, she had become Dr Victoria Henshaw, Lecturer in Urban Design & Planning at the University of Sheffield and the author of the book 'Urban Smellscapes'.

Victoria thought that smell was an important component of the urban environment, and that "smellscape" could be likened to "landscape", with "smellmark" being a significant point in the smellscape, like a landmark. In town centre management the focus had been on pedestrian and vehicle movement, and smell was never considered.

However, she had considered the role that smell played in our appreciation of the urban environment, or townscape (another 'scape). Victoria had been working on the topic for over 3 years, and had chosen it as an interesting and unusual subject for her PhD study. Smell was not considered an important sense; compensation for its loss ran at between 14 and 19 thousand pounds. You would get less for the loss of taste, but much more for the loss of sight or hearing.

We heard how early environments would have been very smelly. There were no sewerage systems in the pre-industrial city. Streets would have to carry away animal and human waste, together with the waste from slaughter and butchery operations.

After the Industrial Revolution, poor air quality resulted from coal-fired factories and dwellings, leading to smog and to respiratory illnesses. Interventions for the sake of public health brought in sewerage systems, pavements and municipal parks. The modern city's air quality problems were all about the pollution from congested traffic, the high-rise buildings and the need for good air flows.

There were no universally liked or disliked smells. Bread baking was rated the best smell. Body odour was voted worst by 55% of people, but 9% said they liked it! Vomit and cigarette smoke were close behind BO in the "dislikes".

Smells were now better managed. Smoking had been regulated out of buildings, cooking smells were extracted via flues, and stale air was filtered and cooled by air-conditioning systems. Streets were often now paved in harder, washable materials. Nicer smells were often masked by traffic, often diesel emissions. Efforts were sometimes made to "scent" an area, usually an indoor shopping centre, using the aromas of coffee or bread. Another scheme shown involved siting a jacket potato promotion at a bus stop. Would this become a "smellmark"?

One of the criticisms of today's town centres is that they are all the same; "Clone Towns", with all the same retailers, and all the same smells, like KFC. Victoria had done a Smell Walk in Doncaster Town Centre with 52 people, individually. Beginning at Danum House (ex Co-op Emporium) the walk took in The Colonnades, Priory Walk, Silver Street, Copley Road, the Markets and the Frenchgate Centre. If you like a place you tend to like its smells, Victoria said.

The walks revealed all kinds of things: pubs which used to be secret places were now open to the street; the Fish Market was a real experience, even for those who didn't like the smell of fish; you could eat your way around the world in Copley Road and enjoy global aromas; the strong perfume (they seem to call it *fragrance* now) of Lush in Frenchgate – was it good or not? It was certainly strong; and the bad smell of alleys was usually put down to their night-time use as urinals.

And finally, the smells we remembered: De Mulder's bad, Hodgson & Hepworth's coffee good, Nuttall's Mintoes/Parkinson's, too sweet? Not nice? Smell did seem to be a matter of taste. **AS**

# The Back Page : Handley Cross Restored



Handley Cross photographed in March 2008

Trust Topics issue 34 carried an item about the house named Handley Cross, set in a large site off Cantley Lane next to McAuley School. The site was to be developed for housing, with 6 new detached houses, and Handley Cross would be restored as a large dwelling on a generous, well-planted site in the centre of the development.

The scheme is now complete and some of the new units are already sold. Handley Cross was built in 1924-5, and was listed grade 2 in April 2005. It appears to have been renovated very sensitively and carefully by Duchy Homes, the developer.

Trust Topics issue 35 carried a follow-up article about the house's architect, Leonard Rome Guthrie, and his design for the grand Winfield House in Regents Park, London, built in 1936. The article was entitled "The Guthrie Connection and the Ambassador's Residence" and parts of it, about the architect, have been used in the developer's sales brochure.



Handley Cross photographed in March 2014 with the development complete. The roofs have been re-laid in plain clay tiles, the render has been renewed, and the windows restored or replaced. The clay chimney pots are new.



Courtyard to north of house



House viewed from access road



Handley Cross with 3 of the new houses