

TRUST TOPICS

Doncaster Civic Trust Newsletter ©

Issue No. 69

June 2020

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Our Peaceful Georgian Town

For a while the lockdown appeared
to have some beneficial side-effects

Member of



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Doncaster Town Centre in the 1970s

Shops and traders in some well-known buildings

Hall Gate



Barker & Wigfall's (left) & Rayner's (right)



Pickering's (just, left) & John Justin (centre) with the Prudential still in occupation apparently(?)
High Street



Francis Sinclair (left) & Bate's Restaurant (right)
High Street



Saxone (centre) & John Peters (right)



Jones (left) & the Subscription Rooms (right)
for sale prior to its refurbishment



Legard's (left) & Carter Longbottom & Sons (right)



Dollond & Aitchison



Ratner's (left) in the Clock Corner building & the Midland Bank (right)

Baxter Gate



Leicester Building Society (left) & Legard's (right) in the restored former Parkinson's Building



Binns occupied the former Woolworth's and Owen Owen stores in 1977 on the newly- paved Baxter Gate

All the images were taken from slides by the late Eric Braim

Eric's was the Trust's Secretary for over 40 years before standing down in 2010. He was keen to record Doncaster's historic buildings and their condition, whether good or bad. Here he captured the excellent refurbishment of the former Parkinson's shop as well as the "before" image of the Subscription Rooms in a very sorry state.

The Trust's Involvement

Although most of the names may have gone, it is pleasing to note that after nearly 50 years all the fine buildings in these photographs are still standing. Many of them were the subject of Trust campaigns to save them from demolition or alteration. Indeed the listing of the Subscription Rooms and the rescue of the 1840 shop frontage to the former Carter Longbottom & Sons are just two examples of our efforts. Most are now listed and all are situated within conservation areas.

It is vital that we continue to promote the town's heritage and work to preserve its historic character. As retailing in town centres continues to contract, the Trust must try to ensure that any changes to important buildings, to keep those buildings in full use and our town alive, are carried out sensitively.

Members' Page : Life under Lockdown

Things were going so well. We had just had two good and well-attended talks at the Deaf Trust in January and February. All our committees were thriving, with some new faces and good ideas.

As the news started to emerge about the Coronavirus, we realised that we were going to have to make changes. Indoor meetings of large groups of people were to be avoided which we knew would affect our well-attended speaker events in particular.

We thought that the wise thing to do was to cancel our planned events at the Deaf Trust. When I rang their office on 16 March 2020 to do that, I learned that they were starting to contact all their users to tell them that all their buildings would be closed to outsiders to protect both their students and staff. So we were losing the venue for both our talks and our committee meetings.

We cancelled the events planned for March and April, and were faced with finding a way to hold our committee meetings: a Planning & Conservation Sub-committee every 4 weeks, and an Executive Committee every 2 months.

The Planning business now runs on computers. The Council's planning applications went paper-less about 10 years ago and that made us buy a lap-top computer. Since then the Chairman of our Planning & Conservation Sub-committee has selected a number of key new applications for each meeting. These have been presented to the members with plans, images and text from the applications, projected on to a screen. Decisions have been taken and actions agreed.

The difference now, post lockdown, is that members receive their agenda by email. This lists the chosen applications, and the other information like plans and images is attached to the email. Members can then view the information that would have been presented in a meeting on their own computers. Some commentary about each application is included in the agenda to help explain the proposals, along with any recommendations for action. Members respond to the Chairman and I then submit any agreed objections or representations to the Council. Minutes are sent out by email and now include any communications about the proposals. We have held 3 "virtual" meetings like this since 16 March 2020.

The Executive Committee is quite different. It has to deal with matters of policy, strategy and finance, or how the Trust runs itself. For our virtual meeting on 07 May 2020, we sent out an agenda and 4 attached papers, and then received members' views. These were included in the minutes, which were circulated.

Communications are now almost all by email, but a few members do not use computers. So for them we use Royal Mail or "snail mail" as it is rudely known. Without everyone having access to a computer we decided that using Zoom or video-conferencing was a non-starter for our Executive Committee meetings as it would exclude some people, and we considered that unacceptable.

We think or hope that we can continue to run the Trust's business adequately throughout the pandemic. However, we know that our members have missed events, and could miss more if we don't re-start in September with our next Winter Programme. As things are beginning to return to normal, slowly and carefully, we dare to hope that, by September, the Deaf Trust has re-opened, members feel safe to come out to meet, and safe-distancing has been reduced to a chair's width.

We'll just have to be patient, and not patients. Take care. Stay safe.

Archie Sinclair

A walk round Edenthorpe Hall and Estate

This self-guided walk should have followed the articles on Edenthorpe Hall in issues 66 and 67. However, it has had to be held over until now because of a shortage of space

This 45 minute walk starts at the end of Mere Lane bridle-path at its junction with Thorne Road, adjacent to Clifton Garage, opposite the TESCO store in Edenthorpe.

Mere Lane is sign-posted “Bridle Way” and this is where we start.



Walk a few steps along and you will see a private road marked “Long Plantation” on your left.

This private road reflects the creation of a number of Yew Plantations by Robert Swyft in the 17th century in his role as Kings Bowbearer.

Long Plantation runs from behind the properties in front of you to the roundabout at the end of the slip-road to the M18. Swyft would have been expected to provide native yew trees for longbow construction.

Walk a few paces along Mere Lane and you arrive at Woodside Cottage.

This is actually 2 cottages knocked into one. Originally there were 4 cottages on this site built in the early 1600's for the grounds staff of the Manor House. No dates are available for when cottages 3 and 4 were demolished but the last 2 (numbers 1 and 2) were bought around 1950 and made into one property.

Go through (or round) the steel gate past the new dwelling on your left named “Tristrop” in remembrance of one of the areas medieval names.

This house stands in what would have been the rear gardens of the 4 cottages above. The tenants would have each enjoyed a large rear garden so that they could grow their own vegetables and keep one or two animals. A further 400 yards brings us to the eastern end of Cedric Road.

On your left slightly further up Mere Lane is “Farm Cottage”.

This was originally named “Gardeners Cottage” and was the home of the Head Gardener of the Estate. In the late 1800's, after the 4th Baron Auckland bought the estate, a gasometer was built adjacent to the cottage which stored methane from farm manure.

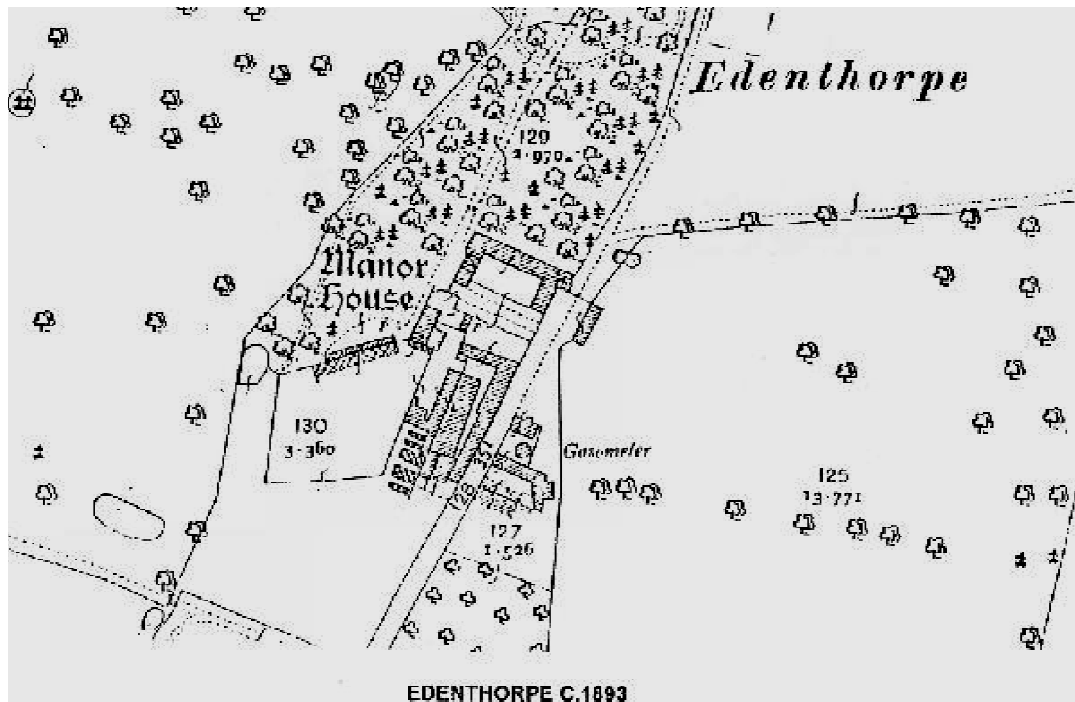


Woodside Cottage



Farm Cottage

The gas was piped across Mere Lane to the farm buildings where it was used to heat the greenhouses on what is now Farm Close.



Turn right into Cedric Road.

Immediately on your right is “The Old Fire Station” (all green woodwork). This was constructed to house a rudimentary fire engine in case of an emergency on the estate. Walk a little further and turn left into Farm Close.

On your left hand side is now the Manor House, built in 1606.



If you look above the door you will see the date engraved into the timber lintel. The oak beam that runs from gable to gable supporting the floor in the pitched roof is alleged to be the longest oak beam in Europe. In the cellar is a bricked up doorway of a tunnel that allegedly ran to the Hall; how much remains of that underground structure after 250 years remains to be seen. All the outbuildings that surrounded it – including the manure-heated greenhouses - were demolished in 1964 and replaced with the houses you now see to your right and beyond.

Returning to Cedric Road, cross straight over and on your right is the old Coach House.

Next to it is a 3-storey building “The Granary” but its original purpose was as a general warehouse for the Hall. Behind this building stands a row of houses “Sunny Bank”. Originally built around 1870 as storage, workshops and a dairy for the Hall, in 1924 they were converted into 5 houses and have been modernised by their owners several times since.

Continue along the footpath with the Park Social Club - named after the large green in front of the old Hall – to your right.



Go through the bollards and as you continue along the path you will see through the shrubbery on your left the yellow brick of the East Wing of the Hall.

This map from 1930 will help.

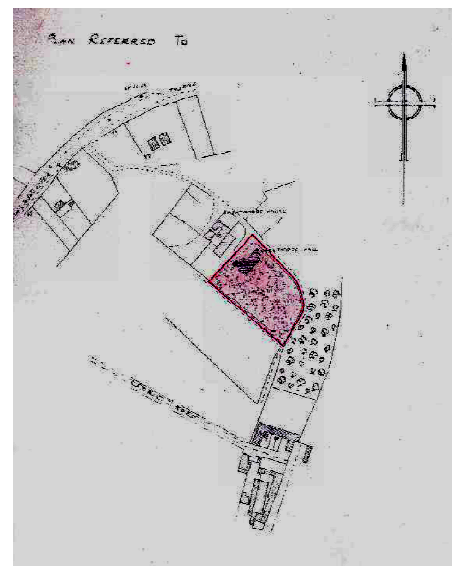
This footpath ends with bollards marking the eastern end of “The Drive”.

Walk past the school entrance and turn left along the fence line into Grove Hall Close (all grass, beware of dog poo).

At the pedestrian entrance gate to the school, turn and look over the playground towards the collection of single-storey yellow-brick flat-roof classrooms.

Above their roofline you will see the stone frontage of the East Wing of Edenthorpe Hall.

The photo below of the Hall in its hey-day will help.

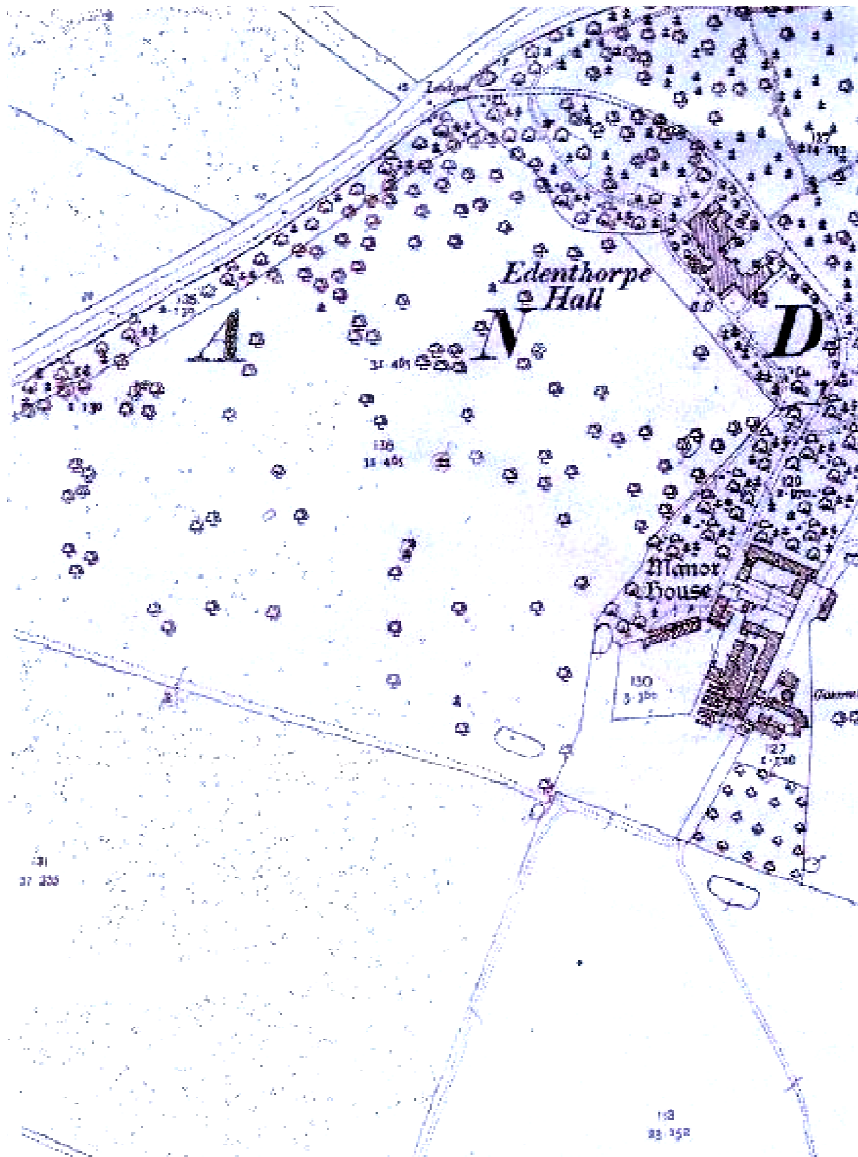


The foundations of the centre section and the west wing are below the playground in front of you.

Sadly, that's all that remains of it!

Walk back to The Drive and turn left. This road is named after the drive that provided access to the Hall from Thorne Road. As the next map shows, it would round the front of the Hall to join another road from the rear.

This map (below) shows the relationship between the Hall, the Manor House and the entrance from The Lodge on Thorne Road. The “AND” in capital letters across the map is a reminder that at this time the area was still in the parish of Kirk Sandall. One route for staff and tradesman and the other for the owners and their guests!



Walk up The Drive, bear left onto Gurth Avenue and at the junction with Eden Grove Road turn right and walk up to Thorne Road.

At the junction with Thorne Road, where the Cenotaph now stands, stood the original gatehouse “The Lodge”.

After 1920 it was used as a shop and Post Office with different proprietors; “Swales and Hepworths” and “Bridgewaters” to name but two.

The road layout has changed slightly since the map was drawn with the original drive entering Thorne Road on the far side of The Cenotaph.

The Lodge was demolished in 1956 when the current row of shops was erected and the junction with Thorne Road made into a T-junction.

Turn right along Thorne Road and you will shortly arrive at your starting point.

If you fancy a coffee and a cake I can recommend Jimmy Pigg’s Café next to TESCO for a pit stop!

(This article was written in the days before the lockdown and social distancing, and the café may not open at the present time.)

Steve Kimber, Doncaster Civic Trust
(with thanks to Andy Ward for help with the pictures and maps)

The Hall, 15 South Parade, Doncaster, has been sold once again

Previous issues of Trust Topics have featured the current plight of The Hall, or Denison House, 15 South Parade. Built in 1798, it was designed by William Lindley and is listed grade 2.



We last covered the saga when the building had been bought by Hilongrove and the company had erected some very nice pictorial site hoardings promoting their residential conversion scheme, left.

That was in September 2018 but, since then, nothing. That is until it was put up for auction by Strettons on 28 October 2019 with a guide price of £200,000 plus. It failed to sell.

A little later Strettons announced that it had been sold after the auction for an undisclosed amount. According to *nethouseprices.com* it was sold on 17 January 2020 for exactly the £200,000, no plus.

We know that the building was bought in 2015 for £323,500, so that's a loss of £123,500 plus the commissions, so far. And people think that development is easy, just a licence to print money.

Not at this time or maybe not in Doncaster? Meanwhile, the fine building continues to deteriorate.

Bingham's Gates

The cover of Trust Topics issue 62 in 2018 featured an image of the rusting steel artwork that had been included in the design of the gates to H Bingham's engineering works on Wheatley Hall Road. The site is now being developed for housing.

We were very taken by the clever design of the two steelworkers shown on the gates, and thought it would be a shame if they were just scrapped.



The daughter of the craftsman who had made the artwork thought the same. Susan Stephenson approached the developer and asked if her late father Stanley Copley's works could be saved. Stanley had been with Bingham's all his working life, but Susan had none of the many things he had made. Unfortunately, one of the panels had pieces missing and was considered beyond repair. However the other, above right, was in a much better state. It was cut out of the gate, shot-blasted and re-painted by the developer, Harworth Estates.

Their Associate Director, Duncan Armstrong, presented the restored artwork to retired primary school teacher Susan Stephenson on the site in October 2019, left.

She told the Free Press that the artwork would have pride of place in her Bessacarr garden. Photo & information: Doncaster Free Press 17 Oct 2019

Planning Matters

With each edition of Trust Topics we bring you details of a few of the cases we have reviewed, usually affecting listed and historic buildings or buildings in conservation areas. We also look at other applications of interest, including large development proposals.

We have continued to comment on planning applications although we have been unable to meet since March. Instead we have operated by using e-mails and telephone calls (Zoom does not work well with plans). We are pleased to say that all matters have been dealt with successfully. Here are a few cases we reviewed before and during lockdown.

Former Primitive Methodist Chapel, Balby



Photo: The Demolition Register

Some members will know of our involvement in this case. The chapel was built in 1868. Sadly, by 2008 it was no longer required as a place of worship. It was sold but has been empty ever since. In 2016 we perused an application for conversion to 10 flats together with an extension to the rear of the building. We were very happy with this proposal but it has never gone ahead.

Then, in March this year, the owners notified the Council that they planned to demolish the chapel, and asked if prior approval was needed for the method of demolition or site treatment.

They said that it had been for sale for 10 years and that conversion would be difficult. However, they stated they would be willing to include parts of the church in a new building. The Free Press then approached us for comment. They had already printed an article stating that the Council had given permission to demolish it. In fact no application had been made. It was not listed nor in a conservation area, and no permission was required, so we could not object. The demolition was "Permitted Development". We issued a press release which clarified the situation and also included the following:

The Trust hopes that the applicant, who has stated he is willing to retain parts of the building, will devise a new residential scheme which can incorporate the church's decorative front elevation. This is in an attractive Romanesque style and would be a rare architectural landmark on Balby Road.'

We also approached the Conservation Officer with a copy of our views. Saving the front elevation seemed a good solution but it could never be enforced, only recommended.

However the owner of a Yorkshire website called The Demolition Register, wanted the whole building preserved. He approached the Victorian Society who applied to Historic England who quickly listed it Grade 2 in May this year. We were then approached by the press for our views on the listing, which were again quoted in full in the Free Press. We said:

'Doncaster Civic Trust is very pleased that the Victorian Society notified Historic England about the Chapel's imminent demolition. Historic England then investigated the history and architecture of the Chapel in detail before recommending the Government to list the building. This means that the entire building is now protected from demolition or alteration without listed building consent. Its future is secured and any proposals for the building will be carefully considered in the light of the listing'.

Even though we did not apply for the listing we were pleased that the press wanted our views. We were also very interested to hear from one of our members that an article on the chapel had appeared in Private Eye. It was slightly inaccurate but gave its plight national publicity.

We hope that work can now proceed on the conversion to flats and we look forward to that. We certainly don't want to see it left unoccupied for another twelve years.

Wonderland Awaits, 26 French Gate

Only a few of our considerations result in objections. Sometimes we are pleased to see applications. This was certainly the case for Wonderland Awaits, a vintage-inspired alternative shop. The application was for 'living above the shop' and retaining what appeared to be a 17th century staircase that was previously unknown.

Crown Hotel, Bawtry

This application was very similar to one that we objected to several years ago. It appeared to have been revived. The Crown was keen to modernise but they wished to erect unsuitable canopies over the ground floor front windows. These would be detrimental to the character of this listed coaching inn. A proposal to create a raised outdoor seating area would result in an unsafe single deep step around it. There also appeared to be no 'access for all' in its design.

Millstone PH, Tickhill

We reported on this application in the last issue. The owners wished to convert it into a store on the ground floor with flats above. We were one of the many objectors that included the Town Council, but there were supporters too. As it was a controversial application, the Planning Officer referred it to the Planning Committee with a recommendation for approval, but at the end of May it was refused. The Committee's reasons for refusal listed a lack of proposed landscaping, and the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles within the site, but not any policy grounds. The applicant has already submitted a new application with additional evidence on traffic movement and landscape design by specialist consultants. We shall be reviewing it at our next meeting.

Walton Lodge, Bawtry Road, near Rossington Bridge

We sent in an objection to an outline proposal to build nine houses in the grounds of this property which is situated just to the south of the golf course. We had many concerns including remoteness of the site from all amenities, that it would spoil the character of the area which is essentially open countryside, that the development would be in isolation and that an approval could lead to another application for higher density housing.

Braithwaite Lodge

We reviewed an application for a new farmhouse outside Braithwaite village which would involve the demolition of the Lodge, a building which had been greatly altered but appeared to be 18th century. Its removal did not require permission and anyway we had no objections to any part of the scheme. Intrigued by its unusual design and possible history though, we notified South Yorkshire Archaeological Service to see if they were interested in examining the building, perhaps during demolition. They replied immediately stating that they were interested and suggesting a date of 1783, the time of the enclosures.

The Pocket Sports Bar, Mexborough

We felt that this proposal for a digital advertisement was an unnecessary intrusion into the Conservation Area, close to a key unlisted building, as well as being a distraction for passing motorists on the by-pass. They already had a static advertisement.

The Planning & Conservation Sub-committee

The Back Page : News from the Exec.

Since the last Trust Topics we have continued to hold Executive Committee Meetings, latterly with a variety of communication methods.

Heritage Walks

The season got off to a good start with two private walks but a third walk was cancelled due to the pandemic. The Civic Day walk in June was also shelved.

Education Programme

We remain open for applications for our Student Bursary. Before lockdown we had agreed to implement a mentorship scheme for the students with Rachel Berry covering architecture and Jeff Prior covering planning and urban design.

We had also reached agreement with James Copp, the creator of the Settlement Game, that the Trust could operate the game in schools under licence for a small fee.

The Education Chairman then reported in May that all our Education projects involving schools including the Settlement Game and a collaboration with Historic England were suspended. He reported that it was too early to make plans for another round of the design challenge normally held in late autumn but would continue to monitor the situation.

Further Projects

We were very pleased with an offer from film maker Mark Waterhouse to embark on various projects which we discussed at a small committee meeting in March. We were keen to commence with his ideas for a virtual Town Trail. Fortunately, development of the trail has continued during lockdown. Financing was agreed. Mark also submitted a paper outlining the next stage of how the Trail could be developed further.

Activities Sub-committee

Although we mapped out a list of possible speakers for the winter season earlier in the year we regret that we have not been able to proceed and no events are currently planned.

Talking Newspapers for the Blind

The Trust and Mark Waterhouse gave permission for the Talking Newspapers for the Blind to use the voice over from the Trust videos for their talking magazine. This has since been sent out by the TNB who expressed their thanks.

The Trust Assists

In March we agreed to give limited sponsorship to Richard Bell of the Sand House Charity for help, firstly, with the purchase of equipment to enable people to view virtual reality images of the Sand House and, secondly, for a 2-week run of the Sand House Play at Cast in the autumn.

The Executive Committee

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