

Altrincham and Bowdon Civic Society

The Civic Society exists to promote appropriate standards for the development of Altrincham, in order to create an environment which is pleasant, attractive and thriving for its citizens to live in and enjoy

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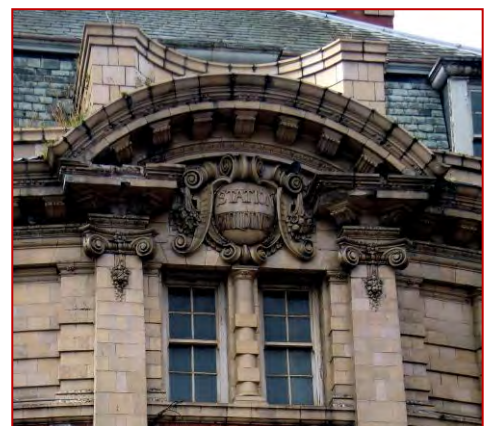
Newsletter - Autumn 2010

As many of you will have seen from the press coverage in the *Sale & Altrincham Messenger* and *Trafford Metro News*, the Society has had a very busy 18 months since our last newsletter.

Our committee, which is made up of people from all walks of life, including several local historians, meets regularly to discuss all aspects of civic life in Altrincham and Bowdon. We have been active and influential in a number of recent projects in our town. We also became a member of the newly formed Civic Voice at its inception earlier this year.

Station Buildings (Stamford House)

The continued deterioration of this wonderful Edwardian building has been a constant concern to the Society over the last 20 years and we know this is a subject dear to all local residents, many of whom regularly write to the local press complaining that 'nothing is being done' to bring it back into use. In recent months the Society has been in regular contact with the owner, Petros Development Company Ltd. The committee is pleased that after the Society's encouragement, plans which outline the proposed redevelopment of this site, are now with Trafford



Station Buildings was designed by Manchester architect, Charles Heathcote.

Council. We reluctantly accept that a residential conversion of the original individual offices is the most likely way the building will be conserved. However, we have expressed our concerns at the design of the replacement building in the courtyard in both the style and the materials, being clad in zinc. Access for deliveries to this new retail building by the Interchange, also seem inadequate.

Discussions continue about these plans between Trafford, Petros and the Society and we are all hopeful that the regeneration of this gateway building for residential and retail use will take place in the near future.

Altrincham General Hospital and St Anne's Home

Another long running saga that may soon reach a conclusion!



St Anne's Home as it was in 1938, with its mix of Victorian domestic and purpose-built hospital buildings. It could be restored to look like this once again.

The committee has been closely monitoring the progress of Trafford NHS Healthcare Trust's efforts to find a buyer for both sites who would provide a new or refurbished General Hospital for the town and make sensitive use of the St Anne's buildings and grounds. For some years the Trust insisted that both sites came as one package and this seemed to create many barriers against the project ever coming to fruition. With a change of personnel in the Trust came a more realistic approach and earlier this year St Anne's was put out to tender, with many

quite specific restrictions on its potential use, in order to respect the nature of the Conservation Area. The chosen developer is P. J. Livesey, who will only be able to complete the purchase once planning permission is obtained. They are proposing to refurbish the 19th century buildings for residential use and with possibly some new build in the grounds. The plans are very much in the initial stages and the committee is actively engaging with the developer to make sure our concerns about sensitive restoration and low density development are incorporated in the designs. They have assured ourselves and Bowdon Conservation group, who are a leading on St Anne's Home, that the mature beech tree and the woodland wildlife habitat will be protected and retained.

The Trust also invited bidders for the new General Hospital and a shortlist of three developers was drawn up. Members of the committee met with all three developers

on several occasions and discussed their plans and made many suggestions for improvements, which were duly taken into consideration. The committee understands that one applicant has now been chosen, but that the decision of the Trust needs to be ratified by the Strategic Health Authority, who will meet to discuss this in November, having put back their decision originally planned for July then September, in order to have more time to consider the applicant's proposals. The choice is between having a new hospital built either as part of the long- anticipated Altair complex (Nikal) or at the vacant site on Railway Street (Citybranch Ltd). The old AGH site will be redeveloped with mixed use, with the original façades on Market Street and Regent Road being retained.



Altrincham General Hospital as it appeared in 1914, following the extension on Regent Rd to the original 1870 building, designed by local architect Peter Pons.

Altrincham Interchange

Committee members have sat with the Friends of the Interchange and the Core Steering Group as part of the pre-consultation process of the £19 million redevelopment of the Altrincham bus, train and metro interchange. Although the Society welcomes the redevelopment, we have expressed our concern at the demolition of the original 1881 pedestrian bridge and its replacement with a new diagonally placed bridge. We consider the case for demolition does not stand up to scrutiny and that options to retain it have not been properly explored. A new bridge is only required to join platforms 3 and 4 and so the current bridge could still be retained, with both bridges linking to the proposed Altair development. The full public consultation will close on 25 October 2010.



Altrincham Station's original 1881 pedestrian bridge is due to be demolished under proposals.

Shaw's Green

After a long and very vocal campaign, the Society leading other local groups and residents, successfully challenged Trafford's plans to sell this green open space for car parking for the adjacent Springbank House office block extension. Since completion of the building work, Trafford have replanted the green with annual bedding plants and the developer has a commitment to provide funding for 5

replacement trees and several shrubs, which were destroyed during its temporary use as a construction site. Planting will be carried out in late autumn this year, to ensure the health of the specimens chosen. The pre-existing magnificent hawthorn tree has survived the building work which surrounded it for many months.

Tree Planting Schemes



Tree planting on Lloyd St has lifted the drab elevation on Lloyd St.

The Society has successfully lobbied for extra trees to be planted in 'barren' parts of the town and we, individual members and local groups provided substantial funding for a tree planting scheme. So far trees have been planted along Lloyd Street near Sainsbury's and the bridge and in Albert Street, New Street, George Street, Market Street and Central Way. They have brought visual and environmental benefits to the town. Members

of the committee will be working closely with council's Tree Unit to identify further locations for the planting of more trees later this year in the town centre.

The Regeneration of Altrincham Market and the Surrounding Area

The Society sees the market as a key part of the regeneration of Altrincham as a whole, being an attraction in its own right. Management Committee Members have contributed on a regular basis to the Marketing and Events and the Environment and Infrastructure Groups, working with council officers and market traders, gradually bringing vitality back to market and improving it as a venue.



Heritage of the Altrincham Area



The top floor of Oakfield House on Oakfield Rd housed a roller skating rink in 1911, as seen in a digitised postcard from the Altrincham Area Image Archive.

Last year, the Society applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant of £50,000 to encompass projects which include a Heritage Trail for the town; an historic plans interactive web site; an oral history project; a treasure hunt in conjunction with Rotary and the digitisation of many local photographs and postcards held by both groups and individuals. This was approved in March and work has begun, with completion expected by the spring of 2012. For further details on the projects see altrinchamheritage.com