



Planning Matters round-up

26 – 32 Longbrook Street (King Billy) student block – Planning officers opted to use their delegated powers to approve a raft of changes to the approved drawings, ignoring the representation of the Trust as well as requests by Cllrs. Michael and Kevin Mitchell, and inexplicably reneging on the 2017 minuted assurance given to Planning Committee by the Council's erstwhile Principal Project Manager (City Development), that should the developer subsequently request to make changes at street level, such application would be taken back to Committee for elected Members to decide.

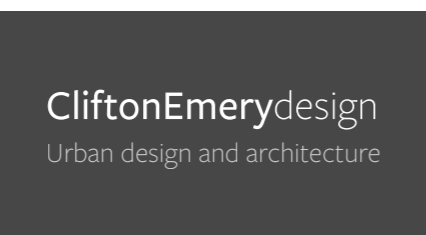
67 – 69 Longbrook Street – block of flats on land still lawfully rear gardens, but used as

commercial car park, approved despite its sensitive location in a designated conservation area and again without involvement of Planning Committee.

47 Union Rd – déjà vu! Despite losing his appeal against the refusal for a 10 bed student block in the garden of this large student HMO, the owner submitted a new proposal for a 6 bed student block. Determination deadline was 31 Jan., but remains pending.

68-72 Howell Road (Maximum Motors) – 26 bed student accommodation block. Appeal against refusal still pending, but a decision expected imminently.

Disappointingly, as we go to press, it has been announced that the appeal has been allowed - see the Trust website for details



ABOUT St James

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Victoria Street Co-Living plans revised

But whack-a-mole attempt fails to cut the mustard

Six months after the published deadline, the decision over the proposed 101 bed development of the combined site of a former garage and Victorian villa with its garden setting was further delayed when revisions were submitted in a last ditch attempt to avoid refusal.

In January the City Council's Urban Design and Landscape Officer added his weight to the overwhelming number of public objections in a highly critical evaluation. Both he and the Police Designing Out Crime Officer threw doubt on the suitability of any co-living proposal on the site and the idea of a different typology was promoted.

With blinkered determination and continuing total disregard for the views of the local community, this advice was ignored by the developer and despite revisions that amount to minor tweaking, the design and use of the proposal still fail to conform with planning policy including several specific Neighbourhood Plan policies. The Trust thanks the many local residents who have urged the Local Planning Authority to refuse the application.

Tree Management

Sadly, a mature Robinia tree in Powderham Crescent garden has been cut back to leave a monolith for conservation. Many of the branches were looking dead and were found to be rotten when cut off. The main trunk has been left as a tall monolith and was specifically cut to leave some new leafy twigs at the top. Hopefully, more new growth will sprout in the future.



Version One: Does not achieve 'high quality design that respects the scale and character of existing and surrounding buildings'.



Version Two: Does this?



Another Robinia in the garden had to be fully cut down in 2018 so residents are pleased that a substantial amount of the latest casualty remains. The Crescent and its garden were laid out in the early 1880s making the mature trees over 140 years old. An online search said Robinias have a life span of 60 to 100 years old so this one will be continuing into a venerable old age.

Long-awaited CCTV offers Reassurance and Deterrence

The Trust is delighted that after a decade of repeated attempts to secure CCTV coverage of Queen's Crescent Garden (QCG), a state of the art camera has finally been installed, with superb quality and field of vision. Linked to the City's 24 hour live monitoring system, it offers reassurance to all using the Garden and acts as a further deterrent to the antisocial activity which is already declining following the great efforts of our volunteers who ensure our precious community space is well-cared for.

Ever since 2014 when the Trust was set up and was preparing to take legal responsibility to facilitate the community's QCG project, it has sought to secure CCTV. We have enjoyed the support of our city councillors and the police, and even for a time the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Beset with difficulties, the final breakthrough was initiated by Insp. Simon Arliss who, until his recent retirement, led the neighbourhood policing team covering the city centre and adjacent areas. (See article on page 3)



ILLUSTRIOUS INHABITANTS OF LONGBROOK STREET

Acclaimed ecclesiastical sculptor Harry Hems, whose former workshop is now the popular restaurant Harry's, lived in this house just up the road at 82 Longbrook Street from 1885 until his death in 1916.

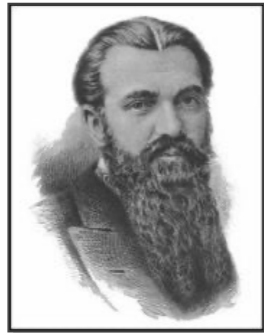


Previously known as 9 Park Place, this was also the childhood home of another – perhaps less well known – distinguished Exonian, William Clifford (1845-1879).

Clifford, a child genius, became a pre-eminent mathematician and in 1872 was appointed Professor of Mathematics and Mechanics at University College London and in 1874 a Fellow of the Royal Society.

He developed what became known as “Clifford algebra” later used by Einstein in creating the theory of relativity. Also a philosopher, in 1876 he published an essay “The Ethics of Belief”, a rallying cry for free thinkers, which established Clifford’s principle: “it is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence”.

An inveterate hard worker he suffered a breakdown in 1876 from which he never really recovered and continuing to suffer from fragile health he later went to Madeira where he died of tuberculosis, aged just 33.



Farewell and Welcome!

It was fitting that the CCTV camera was installed before Insp. Arliss’s retirement as his overall support and encouragement for the work of the Trust has been exceptional. His approachability, understanding and willingness to assist in resolving a range of issues has been greatly valued and we thank him on behalf of the community, sending best wishes for a well-earned retirement.

Responsibility for the demanding city centre area is now shared by two officers, Inspectors Nathan Johnson and David Turner, with the intention that this will allow time for greater engagement with the community. St James falls within the responsibility of Insp. Turner with his team comprising PS Matt Clarke, PC Richard Jephcott and PCSO Paul Fudge.

Trust Directors have already had the pleasure of meeting Insp. Turner, who has shown an eagerness to continue the very positive relationship, and we were pleased to extend a warm welcome to him on behalf of our community.



A message from Inspector Dave Turner:

‘It was really nice meeting the volunteers of the Exeter St James Community Trust. It was clear that you have a real passion and pride in your local area, which is so nice to see. I am looking forward to working with you in the future, to tackle any issues that your community raise, and to help keep St James safe for everyone.’



Uni host garden party

A sunny Sunday afternoon in the middle of May saw the University treat Powderham Crescent to a fun time of music, food and games as a thank you for being good neighbours to our student residents. Held in the crescent garden a particular highlight was the entertainment provided by the University Brass Band offering up a cheery soundtrack to proceedings. Initiated and organized by the Community Engagement Team a thoroughly convivial afternoon was enjoyed by all.

Invitations were also extended to several dignitaries including our local police team and councillors. Guest of honour was the Lord Mayor, Cllr. Kevin Mitchell who, challenged to a game of giant Connect 4 by a group of students, managed single handedly to outwit his adversaries and emerge the winner.



Community event held at Powderham Crescent by Uni students

Students on the Move

The ‘Students on the Move’ scheme provides a series of University-paid refuse collections for students during June and July. The scheme was first piloted in 2009 because students living in the community expressed concerns about rarely finishing their tenancy contracts on the correct bin collection day. The scheme helps address this gap by providing two extra refuse collections per week (on Monday and Friday) throughout June and July.

So, if you see any waste that appears to have been left out on the wrong day during June or July, it may have been placed outside deliberately as part of the subsidised scheme. If you have any queries about an address (and are unable to make contact with the occupants) feel free to pass details to the University’s Community Engagement Team communityengagement@ex.ac.uk The scheme also pays for two ‘community clear-up’ days for twelve streets in the St James Ward. These will occur on 15th June and 20th July. Participating streets will receive an information leaflet closer to the time and the clear up days will be for all residents, including local people.

Exeter’s Lord Mayor

Cllr Kevin Michell, who has represented St James on the City Council for many years, has greatly enjoyed his year as Lord Mayor of Exeter, and is even more delighted to have been re-nominated to serve a second term. The Lord Mayor is a ceremonial role and Kevin will be non-political during his time in office, but he will continue to carry out ward work on behalf of residents.

Kevin says, “Over the last year I have had the great privilege to attend a wide variety of events, meeting individuals from all walks of life, all backgrounds, all faiths and all ages. It has been wonderful to promote local businesses, support our affiliated military, attend many cultural and arts events and say a huge thank you to those who work within our public, voluntary and charitable sectors. Some of the more community-based events have been the most special.

I have continued to work full time as an oncology nurse during the past year and have

raised the profile of my chosen charity the FORCE Cancer Charity, whilst raising money for our project which is for the refurbishment of the Oncology Outpatients Department.”

During his second year FORCE will remain Kevin’s chosen charity but will be raising funds for their new ‘Let’s Face Cancer Together’ campaign which provides tailored support for those living with a Non-Curable Cancer.



Devonshire Place Orchard continues to thrive as a lovely peaceful green space in a densely built up area.



Recently Exeter City Council have refurbished the much used play equipment and the swings.



Fun A Day Challenge

For the second year running, the Fun A Day challenge yielded a wealth of creativity from local residents, culminating on a vibrant two-day exhibition at the Positive Lights project in Sidwell Street in March.

Although not a residents’ association event, it was organised by Bury Meadow Residents’ co-chairs Stephen Fisher and Ali Lucas, with many members of the association contributing artworks and other pieces.

The Fun A Day concept is simple: pick a project, do it every day throughout February and record it. Adults and children drew, painted, sewed, baked, photographed and wrote to complete the challenge, lifting spirits, celebrating life and bringing a little colour to the dog days of winter. Imaginations ran riot, and the show welcomed a large number of entries.

“It’s been a fantastic way of bringing people together, and we are thrilled by such a wide response to the challenge,” said Stephen.

