



December 2015

A photograph of Salisbury Cathedral in winter. The cathedral's tall, slender spire is the central focus, reaching into a grey, overcast sky. The building is covered in a light layer of snow. In the foreground, there is a snow-covered field. To the left of the cathedral, there are several red-brick buildings, also covered in snow. A large, dark evergreen tree stands to the right of the cathedral. The overall scene is a quiet, wintry landscape.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Celebrating our Heritage . Enhancing our Environment . Shaping our Future

Salisbury is a vibrant cathedral city, surrounded by the beautiful countryside and villages of South Wiltshire. People visit it or decide to live here because it is a welcoming community, working and trading in a marvellous historic setting. The challenges today are to maintain those attractive qualities and yet accommodate ongoing changes in population, lifestyle, and the economy.

The Salisbury Civic Society, founded in 1960, works to promote high standards of contemporary design in all aspects of the built environment within Salisbury and South Wiltshire, whilst safeguarding the historic buildings and landscape setting underpinning the area's special character.

Over the years, the role of the Society has expanded. Today, it is not only the principal local organisation and guardian for the built environment, but also celebrates and promotes the area's rich heritage & cultural life through a stimulating programme of activities..

Salisbury falls under two authorities, created in 2009, Salisbury City Council and Wiltshire Council. We are able to contribute effectively in many areas and are represented on several groups including the Salisbury Conservation Advisory Panel. We also have a good working relationship with Wiltshire Council, Salisbury City Council and Campaign to Protect Rural England. As a non-political organisation, the Society tries to maintain an independent stance on all matters.

Through a series of awards, talks, forums, open meetings, visits and our website we promote and provide information on the architecture, history and geography of the area.

Amongst the many activities of the Society we:

- Monitor and constructively comment on planning applications and development proposals
- Run an active and stimulating programme of events for members and the public
- Publish a Quarterly magazine for members
- Maintain our support for the projects promoted by the former Salisbury Vision
- Protect and celebrate the traditional chequer names
- Run a prestigious new buildings and conservation awards scheme
- Organise the annual Salisbury Historic Open Days and the Salisbury Blue Plaques scheme celebrating our outstanding built environment and heritage
- Promote the economic vitality of the region

Our aims:

- To celebrate & commemorate the area's rich heritage & cultural life
- To enhance & protect the built environment & landscape setting of the area
- To encourage & promote high standards of design, management & maintenance
- To provide a stimulating programme of activities for our members

We welcome new members of all ages and backgrounds.

This has been a busy and exciting past few months for the Society. Working with the graphic input of Alison Newton at Catalyst Creatives and the site building expertise of Brad Houston from Trevor Peters Design we have a new logo for the Society and a new website: salisburycivicsociety.org.uk. Thanks are due to Melanie Latham and Louise Rendell, without whose dedicated preliminary work the new website would not have been possible. Our 'Twitter' handle @salisburycivic and 'Facebook' page went live in October both of which are proving popular with users.

There's much to read in the December issue. Norman Parker's unveiling of the Spitfire plaque at the Capita Offices in Castle Street (p10). Judy Howles' reports on The Fovant Badges (p12) and Michael Drury's talk on the Major Repair Programme at the Cathedral (p11). Wendy English tells the story of the Vanner's Chequers (p5). Richard Deane gives an insight into the dedicated work undertaken by the Development Committee in his article on The Old Manor Hospital site (p17) and Neil Beagrie reports on our final event for 2015, the annual Open Meeting on 'Public Art and Forgotten Corners' (p4). Photography throughout is by Adrian Harris and Neil Beagrie

We will be continuing the theme of 'Making the Most of our City' through 2016. If the response to the Open Meeting was anything to go by people are enthusiastic about the idea of more public art in Salisbury. With a bit of energy, dedication and a sprinkling of luck we may succeed! We have in place a lively programme of events and activities arranged for next year and will keep you informed of forthcoming events which we hope you will enjoy.

Best wishes for a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.

Stephanie S-D

NEW YEAR PARTY and AWARDS CEREMONY

In the Guildhall on Thursday 14 January 2016 from 6.45pm

Members and their guests are invited to wine & light refreshments

The charge is £10.00 per head

An application form is enclosed with the magazine
or contact Philip Price on 01794 884631

Making the Most of Our City: Public Art



Congratulations to Richard Deane and colleagues for organising an inspirational and thought provoking programme for the annual SCS open meeting on "Making the Most of Our City". Thanks to all our speakers pictured in front of the displays (Peter Riley, David Bracey, Charlotte Moreton, and John Comparelli) for a brilliant set of talks: we learnt what architecture, art and engineering can do for public spaces.

Discussion between the audience and speakers focused on what could we do to make the most of Salisbury. A theme from all our speakers was the importance, when contemplating any form of public art

or water feature for Salisbury, of designing for the specific location it will be sited in.

David Bracey (Director, the Fountain Workshop) urged us to start with what we have and make the most of the existing water features in Salisbury – the rivers that run through the city centre and areas such as the Maltings – and to possibly use these to inform the design of fountains within the city to bring new life to existing areas.

David used the example of the Granary Square fountains at London's King's Cross Development to explain how the design evolved

and to look at how successful it had been.

John Comparelli (Tutor in architecture, University of the West of England) stressed the importance of imagination when looking at forgotten corners of the city such as the Gasometer and their possible future uses and illustrated this with some of the project studies by his architectural students.

Peter Riley (Curator, the Young Gallery, Salisbury) gave us the example of Edwin Young the Salisbury artist and benefactor whose endowment of £1.5 million (at today's prices) established the Young Gallery (now housed with the public library) and its public art collection.

With local government funding shrinking, there was a consensus that private individuals and developers could again be key future benefactors of public art and spaces in Salisbury.

Charlotte Moreton (Salisbury-based painter and sculptor) showed us that good public art is about our hopes and aspirations. Award winning Salisbury community projects such as the Milford Bridge project or the Solstice Park sculptures created by QinetiQ company apprentices as part of the Salisbury International Festival were just two examples.

The audience was left buzzing with ideas and future ambitions for Salisbury.

Neil Beagrie

Celebrating and preserving the old chequer names

These words, 'This is VANNER'S CHEQUER' surmounted by 'St Edmund's Community Association', can now be read on two plaques, on Salt Lane and Bedwin Street.

Bound from the thirteenth century by St Edmund's Church Street, Bedwin and Greencroft Streets, and Salt Lane. Each adjoining home and business owned part of this central space for growing vegetables, or keeping livestock. Richard Vanner, a tailor, lived here in 1667. The name appears again on the 1716 City map.

I hope very much that they are only the first of a score of such plaques, celebrating our City's chequers, which were produced by the design of the Mediaeval town planners: parallel streets, North-South and East-West producing blocks of buildings. I love the old chequer names, which we use daily - the Cross Keys Chequer (for shopping), Three Swans (Surgery), Three Cuppes

Lane, (off St Edmund's Church Street). Let's try to reintroduce the names of those chequers which are now not in common usage. For example Marsh Chequer, surrounded by Trinity Street, Love Lane, St Ann and Brown Streets. This one is exceptionally important, because it still retains the original gardens, each property owning one. It featured as a venue in one of the Civic Society's Heritage Open Days and we were able to see the charming warren of gardens with flowers, and produce, though no pigs or hens, scattered higgledy piggledy over the central area.

The triumphant installation of the Vanner's Chequer plaques was preceded by many a hurdle. The name had not been used for many years, one resident, who was born here nearly 70 years ago never having heard it before! However, Bargate, the developer of the new properties built within the chequer marketed these as 'Vanners Court', and I had the idea that although houses fronting Bedwin Street and Salt Lane would naturally carry those road names, the new properties built inside the chequer could carry the word Vanners in their official postal addresses. This proposal had strong support from the Civic Society, the St Edmund's Community Association, our councillors on both City and County Councils, and local historians. Many letters, petitions and meetings followed, but WCC were not able to do that, but happily agreed to pay for a plaque explaining the history. We later realised that since the development was in two separate halves, we would need two plaques, which WCC agreed to provide. I was asked to suggest wording, the plaques were ordered, and representatives from the County, the St Edmund's Community Association and I met to select suitable sites. In looking for the positions most likely to attract the interest of passers-by, we settled on walls abutting the entrances to the Chequer from Bedwin Street and Salt Lane.

All that remained was to invite the co-operation of residents when they moved into the new development, and I took on the job of explaining that we wanted to perpetuate the history of the chequer, for the enjoyment, interest and education of citizens and visitors alike. To my horror, they held a meeting and decided to refuse any plaques, on the grounds they may encourage people to walk into the chequer, snoop at the houses and park there. How could they say that, I wondered, since the planning application had included a footpath running across the chequer? I phoned the Planning Dept. Could they confirm that permission for a footpath existed? Eventually, I asked for the name of the head of the

department, intending to write to get an answer only to be told "You can certainly write, but it might be two or three years before anyone would have time to find the answer. " I gave up....

By then, I had already taken delivery of the two handsome plaques, but now had nowhere to place them. I knew that planning permission was not needed for a plaque on a new house, or one that was not listed, but that Listed Building permission would be needed for any other. I, and concerned others, identified two possible new sites, not too close to the entrance points.

The owners of the relevant houses, were happy to agree – blessings upon them! We anticipated a delay in getting Listed Building permission for the Bedwin St one, but wanting at least one to be placed during this summer, we asked a professional stonemason to fix the Salt Lane one. Even while he was fixing it to the wall, the stonemason was reprimanded by a couple of residents. I invited all those who had been actively involved in our campaign, and kept my fingers crossed that the plaque would not be vandalised by some enraged resident overnight. After such a long haul, we definitely felt we had something to celebrate, the Mayor was gracious, the sun shone, and we celebrated on The Greencroft.

Alan Clarke, who masterminded our Civic Society plaques for some years, applied for Listed Building permission for the Bedwin St plaque: this is complicated: the computer system of application requires full details of the interior ground plan of the house. In October, the plaque was installed, and Revd David Linaker, Rector of St Thomas and St Edmund`s, came and blessed this finishing touch to the whole new development. The area has seen many changes during its 700 + years, and we assume this incarnation will survive for the next century. After that....who knows?

It has been a prolonged and frustrating learning experience, but has given me an insight into WCC and Salisbury City Council, and the psychology of the Territorial Imperative at work. I hope you will come and see our Vanner`s plaques, and most of all, that you will support the campaign to get plaques fitted on other chequers, before the old names are lost forever in the rush to develop these valuable pieces of City Centre land.

Wendy English

Naming the Chequers

The grid pattern with which Salisbury was laid out in the C13th created a chequerboard pattern, helpfully with quite an accurate relationship to the principal points of the compass. The resulting blocks of buildings, which approximated to square or rectangular shapes, came sensibly enough to be known as 'chequers', and acquired names probably fairly early in their existence. The question of how to put these names more firmly into public consciousness is not a new one, and has been raised within the Society at various times since its foundation. Moves are now finally afoot to do something about it, though the project remains at an early stage. Discussions at the Development Committee started off with the idea of conveying some information beyond just the name, perhaps by having a plaque that for instance said 'NW corner of the Three Swans Chequer, which took its name from a local inn', or alternatively omitting the origin and just giving the position within the chequer. In the end it was decided to go for simplicity, and just aim at plaques that gave the chequer's name, and nothing else. In most cases this would result in four identical plaques per chequer, sited at the corners, and placed on buildings.

Plaques that bore nothing but names would need to be designed to avoid any confusion with street name plates, so it was decided to go for round plaques. They should avoid the black/white colouration of street name plates, and the blue/white one of the normal Society plaques, so probably green and white, though no final decision on exact colour has yet been taken. If the whole thing goes ahead, decisions will be needed on one or two other points, such as how to treat the occasional corner where there is now no building, but a car park instead. There are 20 historically named chequers, giving a theoretical total of 80 plaques, though in fact the maximum would be 78, as Barnard's Cross Chequer, in the SE part of the city, has lost two of its corners to the ring road.

The Vanners Chequer plaques, separately covered by Wendy English, raise two further questions: the obvious one of the need to avoid any current duplication, and a further one of whether there are more opportunities for much wordier plaques of the Vanners type, with a danger of possible duplications in the future. A separate project, referred to elsewhere, ought to ensure that one corner of Marsh Chequer will need no additional naming exercise. Another issue, raised when the Society's idea was put up for discussion by the Salisbury

Conservation Advisory Panel, is that of the need to avoid undue clutter on buildings. Some meeting points of chequers, such as that at the SW corner of the Salt Lane car park, are already so compromised in one way or another that four neatly designed chequer name plaques are likely to represent an improvement. In other cases, where high quality buildings stand at each of four corners, careful judgement will be needed to ensure that the generally accepted principle of publicising chequer names does not come at a visual price.

The size of plaques will need to represent a balance between avoiding undue clutter, while still making the name legible. Alongside organising plaques, there may be opportunities to identify redundant boxes and signs which could come down, as a counterbalance to putting new plates up.

Listed building consent will be needed in many cases, but there is no charge for this. In every case the owners of the relevant buildings will need to give permission, and it can't be taken for granted that they always will. The Society has established that Wiltshire Council has no qualms about the project, making academic the question of whether they have any relevant controls over such things, and the City Council seems likely to be supportive. The costs involved are

those of having the plaques made, and getting them put up, and initial indications give a very approximate figure of something approaching £20,000 for a total of around 75 plaques.

The next stage is to see how realistic it would be to raise this kind of money. Both Wiltshire Council and the City Council have grant schemes which may well help, and there may be other sources yet to be identified. The ideal scenario would be to get funding for all the plaques at once. It would be possible to carry out the project in two or three phases, as money became available, but this would run the risk of initial enthusiasm subsiding, and never getting more than halfway with the idea.

The Society is still some way away from starting to order chequer naming plaques, but what they should look like, and where they should go, is now reasonably well established. If the finance hurdle can be overcome, the long-contemplated idea of making these historic names much more visible should finally be translated into action.

Richard Deane

Unveiling the Spitfire Plaque

On 15th September the Salisbury Spitfire Production plaque was unveiled by Norman Parker, an engineer who had worked on the Spitfire production at High Post. Amongst many present were the Mayor, Andrew Roberts ; Wing Commander James Ankers; General Sir Jack Deverell, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire; Dame Rosemary Spencer, President of the Salisbury Civic Society and Society chairman, Peter Dunbar. After the unveiling, Norman Parker gave a talk describing the production of Spitfires in Salisbury. Tea was generously provided by CAPITA.



Salisbury Cathedral and the Major Repair Programme

Michael Drury gave a fascinating account of what was involved from the start of work following the 'Save our Spire' campaign to the present. The major repair programme to the cathedral commenced in the early 1990s as work on the spire was reaching a conclusion. It started between the south transepts, where scaffolding was already in place to provide access to the tower and spire, scaffolding being a major cost factor in a repair programme. It was originally intended to work anticlockwise

around the building, but work on the west front was brought forward as its funding had formed part of the Save our Spire Campaign, and so work proceeded clockwise. We learnt how many interested parties are involved now , from English Heritage (as it was then) and conservation bodies to ecclesiastical interests , not to mention the architects, engineers, stonemasons and conservators carrying out the repairs. In 1991, the Cathedrals Measure was introduced prior to which Dean and Chapters had had a freer hand. A policy for conservation and repair was drawn up in 1995, so that the architect uses record drawings made by an archaeologist to inform decisions on the repair programme. We learnt that the west front porch was painted in medieval times and known as the blue porch, although evidence of paint fragments suggests that in the end, it was mainly red! We were also shown examples of how the masons made new stone carvings by making clay models based on less eroded details that remained. It was also heartening to learn that there are still apprentices in the works department. All in all it was a valuable insight into how much work is involved keeping the cathedral in good repair and the high level of skills involved.

Judy Howles



The Mystery Visit - July

A regular participation of about 25 CS members shows the popularity of the Mystery visit. Participants are told where to rendezvous, and then given instructions to the first destination. It is satisfying for the organisers when completely wrong guesses as to the destination are made!

On this occasion the steps were: Blandford Rd., then a "staging post" at Pimperne, where it was finally revealed that the first stop would be the Royal Signals Museum at Blandford - hence the need for our photo-ID details being required.

We had an excellent session there. We were shown all the major developments in communication during the world wars, from runners on foot and pigeons, to the sophisticated IT used today.

After this we had a colourful drive to Tarrant Monkton, where, after splashing through a small river, we arrived at a charming pub, The Langton Arms, where we enjoyed excellent sandwiches.

In the afternoon we drove on to Wimborne Minster, which houses the historic chained library and gave us an interesting tour of the Minster itself - more very real interest!. After all that, we found our own way home, and we hope everyone enjoyed the day out.

Grateful thanks to Wendy for her considerable effort organising it so efficiently.

John English

Fovant Badges - September

It was a pity that it was a select few who heard Tony Phillips's interesting talk on 'Fovant Badges Their Origins In WWI And Their Maintenance And Restoration'. We learnt that not all the badges date from that period; 3 are more modern, the most recent being cut by the Royal Corps of Signals in 1970. He told us how at the outbreak of war the British army was only one tenth the size of the German army, men had to be recruited and trained quickly. To achieve this a number of camps were set up using prefabricated huts of which the Fovant camp was one.

It was difficult to imagine the rural area along the A30 today as an army camp which stretched intermittently for 7 miles, housing around 20,000 men. Very little remains today other than the badges, although there are a few pointers if you know where to look. The front steps of a bungalow outside Fovant were once the steps to the garrison cinema and one can trace the route of the old railway spur from Dinton to the A30. The first badge cut was that of the London Rifle Brigade early in 1916. The camp contained a

hospital for convalescence. The overriding feature of the camp that winter was mud, but one soldier remembered that climbing up onto the drier chalk to cut the badges was a relief from the muddy conditions. However, as there was a rifle range at the foot of the hillside the volunteers constructing the badges had to come down before 7.00 am when firing started. Much of the work was therefore done in darkness.

We learnt how the badges have evolved, how their number decreased from 20 to 9 by the beginning of WW2 with three more added later, and how they are still maintained by traditional methods. Chalk is added to the trenches cut as cap badge images, initially taken from 'borrow' pits nearby on the hillside but now brought in. The steepness of the slope means movement of soil down the hillside is an issue, which creates 'eyebrows' over the badges unless tackled; as is washout of the chalk by rain.

By 2001 the badges were in such poor condition that a major rescue operation was needed, and sufficient funding was attracted to restore eight badges in the

group on Fovant Down, though the YMCA badge had to be left to fade away. The Australian government generously contributes to the annual maintenance of the Australian badge and the other seven extant on Fovant Down, but by agreement with the government the map of Australia nearer Salisbury has been let go. Another important contributor continues to be the Daily Mail. The badges were made Scheduled Ancient Monuments in 2001, which safeguards them from being ploughed up or otherwise deliberately damaged. Each year, two or three of the eight badges are chosen to be topped up with chalk by contractors, with the annual cost of maintenance being around £35K.

The Fovant Badges Society was founded in 1963 raising funds for restoration and maintenance, with the annual Drum-head Service being the flagship event.

With a new centenary badge of a poppy due to be cut in 2016, the future of the badges appears assured.

Judy Howles

A warm welcome to our new members

Pauline A Oliver, Nicolette Beardsmore, Nico Villeneuve, John and Yan Mackay, and Richard and Sheila Owen.

Also to our new corporate members , Salisbury Cathedral Close Preservation Society.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT DECEMBER 2015

As a very active and successful year draws to a close, we can look back with much pleasure over a programme starting with the New Year Conservation Awards, through many Lectures, Visits and participation events such as the Historic Open Days, this year attended by over 200 people; and that with it falling upon the same day as Salisbury City Council's Heritage Day. We are in touch with SCC to ensure we complement each other next year rather than be rivals!

The recent Open Meeting at the City Hall was extremely stimulating and very well attended on the subject of Art in Public Places and we will push forward our enthusiasm for supporting ideas as they come forward.

The Society is warmly appreciative of the time and dedication of all the Committee Members who plan and prepare these multiple events. If members wish to join a committee to assist and contribute, you are most welcome to let me know.

Stephanie Siddons-Deighton has been brilliant in masterminding and steering the development of the new Civic Society web site which went live in November and will add much to the awareness and enjoyment of the Society.

We have seen a small increase in Membership and wish that trend to continue and we welcome The Salisbury Cathedral Close Preservation Society as a Corporate Member, so making our two Societies more active together whenever common interests apply.

We approach the New Year of 2016 with some anxiety as the "push" for ever more housing from central government and Wiltshire Council is leading to some wholly inappropriate sites being promoted which will keep us engaged in fierce opposition as with the Britford Lane riverside

site and the continuous spread of estates of mediocre housing around the City boundaries without the necessary supporting infrastructure.

The emerging “Masterplan” for the Cathedral Close will no doubt move towards a more specific set of design and use proposals and only then will the Civic Society have a basis to give comments of any real usefulness. I have attended a meeting with Richard Deane to receive views from the Dean and Chapter representative on how the Plan is progressing in the consultation stages.

Finally, the latest briefing about the Maltings/Central Car Park development plans from Stanhope to the Area Board Meeting, which I attended as an observer, gave encouragement in that both the southern end of the site where Sainsbury’s store and other retail units are located (now owned by Henderson Fund Management) will now form a single phase development with the car park area and coach park to the north, instead of two phases previously indicated. That will make for comprehensive development but still leaves two very big questions: when will an architect’s design plan for the development emerge for comment and where and when will the Library move to in order to create the strong pedestrian link to the Market Place? I think we are likely to be waiting another five years – how sad is that? I hope I am proved wrong.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and healthy New Year in 2016.

Peter I Dunbar
Chairman

Historic Open Days by Judy Howles

The focus was to the west of the city centre, the theme being 'Go West- Award Winners and Hospitals' Around 200 people in total enjoyed the visits and the weather was kind to us.

Working outward from the city centre; Pembroke House, part of the former Salisbury Infirmary was open on Friday and Saturday and proved very popular. The residents had put together a display of the site through the years - not just in its days as an infirmary but also before the infirmary itself was built. Delicious home made cakes were available to purchase. At St. Paul's roundabout, both the church extension and the SP2 community building were open in the afternoons.

Moving westwards to Wilton Road, a number of buildings which were either part of, or on the site of, the Old Manor Hospital were open. The Quaker Meeting House was open in the afternoons and the Quakers arranged a very interesting talk by Roger Harrison about the building in its hospital days but also about how attitudes and ideas about mental health had changed over the years.

The Salisbury Medical Practice incorporates the former ballroom of the Old Manor and a blue badge guide and a member of staff led groups on Thursday and Friday around a modern purpose built medical facility.

Opposite, no. 4 The Paragon, a private house, was open to the public each day, which for many was the highlight of the event in seeing how an early Victorian house could be rescued from dilapidation and institutional use and restored to residential use once again. Many thanks to Nick Ludlow for generously opening his house to the public. Blue badge guides led this tour following on from a visit to Salisbury Manor Care Home. This also incorporated the shell of a building from the Old Manor days, but having been rebuilt and considerably extended to form a bright modern care home.

Finally, The Foyer, a modern building providing supported living accommodation for young people on the site of the former Orchard House of the Old Manor was open on Thursday and Friday where staff were on hand to explain about the purpose of the building and its energy saving features.

Feedback from participants in the event has been very positive. Many thanks to the blue badge guides: Margaret, Shirley and Kathy, and also to the owners, residents and staff of the 'open' build.

OLD MANOR HOSPITAL SITE WILTON ROAD

Ever since Salisbury's Old Manor Hospital closed in 2000, a remarkably tortuous tale has unfolded across its substantial acreage of land. Formerly, according to one account at least, the largest privately run mental hospital in Europe, it passed into the NHS in 1954, and eventually, as with all such institutions, changing perceptions of mental

health care saw it reach the end of its natural span. In the early 2000s, three new buildings, one at the east end of the site and two on its southern boundary, were deemed to be all that were needed to continue the hospital's original purpose, and the rest of the site was effectively abandoned. This included two listed buildings, Finch House and Avon House, whose current state is testament to the thoroughness of the abandonment.



The numerous proposed initiatives that passed across the increasingly glazed eyeline of observers in the following years, with theoretical but apparently entirely unpractical propositions for using the site, do not justify any detailed attention now. A plan by Wiltshire Council to take the site on for the care of elderly people, including dementia care, foundered, as did a proposal for a Morrisons supermarket. The current phase began in late 2014, when the vacant land, and the two listed buildings, were purchased by the Quantum Group, Bournemouth-based developers who own the Cross Keys shopping centre in Salisbury. Among other things the company runs care homes, and builds properties for the retired. The purchase price was apparently £4.1 million. During 2015 the company presented its ideas for the Old Manor site to the Civic Society, revealing an approach that divided the site into five distinct areas, to be the subject of a phased approach. The ultimate aim is 186 retirement apartments, plus communal facilities and a convenience store type shop by

the main entrance from the Wilton Road, west of the main surviving building, Finch House. Care will be available to residents, but with no specific dementia care provision. The first phase, which includes the convenience store and 71 retirement flats, was the subject of a planning application in October 2015, with the other four phases apparently due to follow at intervals of very roughly a year. Finch House, together with the other listed building on the site, Avon House, will be retained under later phases, but a terrace south of the latter, which has been identified as important to the history and character of the site but is not listed, is shown in the indications of future phases as being demolished.

Following two visits by the Quantum Group's architect to committee meetings, and the Society sending comments to Quantum based on what it had been shown, the submission of what is a major application for the city ended with two representations going to the council planners. The first dealt

with landscape matters, and expressed considerable concern that all of the existing mature trees on site, which made such a significant contribution to the character and landscape setting of that part of the Conservation Area, were due to be removed. The species proposed for the replacement planting would never reach the same stature, and the character of the site and the street scene was likely to be jeopardised. These comments were sent to Quantum as well as to the planners, and appeared to be the main reason for revisions then being made to this aspect of the application.

In response to the revised proposals the committee's landscape architects felt that they would start to create a stronger structural framework for the development, but that there were still significant issues to be resolved. Amongst these were the fact that the use of spreading tree forms across most of the site was precluded by the amount and scale of development and even where there were opportunities for planting other

than fastigate and upright trees, as along the Wilton Road boundary, they seemed to have been missed. It remains to be seen whether any further modifications ensue.

The second representation dealt with the design of buildings. With a fairly intensive use of the site dictated by the price paid for it, and the major costs entailed in rescuing its listed buildings from years of neglect, the Society saw little point in arguing for a radically different approach which might have corresponded more with the mostly low-level, spread out character of the former hospital. It accepted that the phase 1 layout had already been the subject of discussions with the planners, and concentrated on the detailed design within that layout. An out and out neo-Georgian approach seen on the first visit from the Quantum architect, and not much liked, had been changed, but still with elements left behind which seemed to add nothing to the design. The Society's comments are set out in full below.

'Blocks A & B (matching pair on S side of phase 1 site) This works well at first and second floor level, with large and well-proportioned windows set within simple brickwork. The ground floor, however, moves away from this subtle hinting at the classical tradition into a more heavy-handed adoption of classical precedents, through the use of rusticated render, something accentuated by the pediments on the outward facing elevations, and the entrance porches on the inner ones. Above the second floor, the bulky eaves course and the mansard roof above it have a similarly detracting effect on the simplicity of the middle zone. Furthermore, question marks have to be raised as the final visual effect of the upper storey, given that it is shown with solar panels which will require access, and therefore a possible need for guard rails and perhaps other clutter.

A fourth floor is no doubt needed to obtain the number of units required to make the scheme commercially viable, but

could be achieved more subtly by a lighter-coloured and flat-roofed story set back behind the facade line. This could then be given a parapet, and the solar panels and any other rooftop additions could thereby be hidden.

The overall effect of these blocks is one of heavy-handedness and a lack of elegance, achieving neither the classical distinction which the neo-Georgian approach is capable of when done well, nor the simpler distinction of a well-conceived out and out contemporary approach.

'Block D (convenience store on corner with Wilton Road) The Society finds this very disappointing. Like blocks A and B, it owes nothing to any historical style discernible within the site, nothing to the wider traditions of Salisbury buildings, and fails to compensate for these failings by achieving any independent design distinctiveness. Its red brickwork is likely, based on modern brickwork elsewhere in the city,

to be banal at best. The Society maintains that a much more contemporary approach, looking for instance to the outstandingly successful Bourne Hill extension, could work far better in this location, adding real design distinction to the site without in any way detracting from the listed Finch House next door.

'Block C (to the W of the older, retained part of Finch House)

This is the one part of the scheme which works well, achieving a simplified, stripped-down classical effect without any extraneous details or add-ons. While its white render will obviously need careful detailing, and maintenance, to keep its freshness, it is likely to be more successful than large areas of brickwork, particularly where the latter is seeking to fulfil the historically thankless task of in some way matching the Fisherton Grey brick which is a prime component of the character of this part of Salisbury, but has long been unobtainable.

Applying the Block C approach to a much higher proportion of the

scheme would be of great benefit to it.

'Overall, the Society accepts that the price paid for the site, coupled with the considerable expense of rescuing its long-neglected listed buildings, dictates a high density development a long way removed from the former mental hospital character. Nevertheless, within these constraints there is scope for a less heavy-handed approach, as demonstrated by one relatively small part of the scheme itself. A further demonstration comes with the indication in the application documentation of the likely design of the final phase of the Quantum scheme, the Station Courtyard in the SE corner of the whole Old Manor site, which again uses a refreshingly simple approach.'

Space limitations preclude any more than an indication of the designs to which the Society has reacted. The convenience (see p 17) store is the building chosen for illustration, since it combines prominence on the

street scene with an uninspired anywheresville design approach, which attracted the Society's most firmly expressed objection. This means that the more positive message conveyed by Block C has to remain unshown. All the buildings can be seen on the Wiltshire Council website, under application N° 15/09465. The dense thickets of documentation revealed under this number can be negotiated more easily if one is aware that the 8th in the succession of 'design and access statements' is the best conveyor of the overall effect of the Phase 1 scheme. The 11th in the line of

such statements gives a preview of further phases, including the final Station Courtyard one, arguably a breath of fresh air after the rather heavy-handed approach to most of the inevitably dense development of the site. This part of the city will certainly receive the tidying up it has long needed, but despite protestations made by Quantum about respecting the site's historic character, very little of this is actually going to survive the remarkably protracted process now playing out.

Richard Deane

MARSH CHEQUER SIGN COMPETITION

CALL FOR ARTISTS

COULD YOU DESIGN and EXECUTE THE
MARSH CHEQUER SIGN

To find out more visit
WWW.MARSHCHEQUER.COM

The closing date for submissions is 29th February 2016. No submissions will be accepted after that date

OFFICERS as at 1st December 2015

PATRON

The Lord Congleton MA, Hon LLD

PRESIDENT

Dame Rosemary Spencer DCMG

VICE PRESIDENTS

Major General Roy Dixon

Mr Ken Wiltshire

Brig Alastair Clark

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Peter Dunbar (Chairman)

p.dunbar212@btinternet.com

Richard Deane (Vice-Chairman)

rdeane@madasafish.com

Philip Price (Secretary)

philatlarge@hotmail.co.uk

Adrian Harris (Treasurer)

adrian.harris62@ntlworld.com

Charles Villiers (Membership)

crvilliers@aol.com

Stephanie Siddons Deighton (Magazine)

stephaniedsd@gmail.com

James Woods (GPC)

lisandjames@gmail.com

Neil Beagrie (Publicity)

neil@beagrie.com

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Paul Stevens (Acting Chairman)

admin@paulstevensarchitecture.co.uk

Richard Deane (Secretary)

rdeane@madasafish.com

Judith Payne

judith.payne@hotmail.co.uk

Leslie Lipscombe

leslie.lipscombe@btopenworld.com

Nicola Lipscombe

nicola.lipscombe@btinternet.com

Elaine Milton

emilton@emhp.co.uk

Louise Rendell

louise@stannsgate.com

Duygu Riley

duyguriley@hotmail.co.uk

Jeremy Turtle

jeremy@j-turtle.co.uk

Melanie Latham

melanielatham56@gmail.com

David Gregory

david.gregory.architects@googlemail.com

James Salman

jamesalman@designengine.co.uk

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

James Woods (Chairman)

lisandjames@gmail.com

Lis Woods (Secretary)

lisandjames@gmail.com

Jenni Dougan (Plaques)

jennidougan@hotmail.com

Judy Howles (Lectures)

howles@ntlworld.com

Brenda Hunt (Visits)

rogerbren.leach@clara.net

Neil Beagrie (Publicity)

neil@beagrie.com

Charles Villiers (Membership)

crvilliers@aol.com

Editor:

Stephanie Siddons Deighton

stephaniedsd@gmail.com

Printing:

Salisbury Printing 01722413330

www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk

civic@salisburycivicsociety.org.uk

@salisburycivic

Registered Charity 293143

PROGRAMME of EVENTS 2016

Thursday January 14
**NEW YEAR PARTY and AWARDS
CEREMONY**

Guildhall, Market Walk, Salisbury
Tickets £10

February (exact date tbc)
HENRY FIELDING BLUE PLAQUE

Thursday March 17
**A TALE OF TWO CITIES
SAINTES and SALISBURY**

Mervyn Pannett
6.30pm
Methodist Hall, St Edmund's Church Street,
Salisbury
Free to members. Non members £2.50

Thursday April 14
PLANNING FORUM
Methodist Hall, St Edmund's
Church Street, Salisbury
Free to members. Non members £2.50

April (exact date tbc)
Visit to the
BOMBAY SAPPHIRE DISTILLERY
at Laverstoke Mill, Hampshire

Wednesday June 15
AGM
**THE FARM BUILDINGS of
WILTSHIRE**

Alan Wordsworth from the
Wiltshire Buildings Record.
Methodist Hall, St Edmund's Church Street,
Salisbury
Open to all Members

July 27 or 28 or 29 (tbc)
MYSTERY VISIT
In the true spirit of mystery we will
release information nearer the time, but
do make a note in your diaries.

September 8 - 11
HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Thursday September 22
**A NEW USE FOR A REDUNDANT
CHURCH** - The conversion of St
John's Church, Lower Bemerton
to community use.

The Rev'd Simon Woodley
6.30pm
Methodist Hall, St Edmund's Church Street,
Salisbury
Free to Members. Non members £2.50

Thursday November 10
**UPDATING the WILTSHIRE
PEVSNER** Julian Orbach
Methodist Hall, St Edmund's Church Street,
Salisbury
Free to Members. Non members £2.50

Tuesday November 22
OPEN MEETING
Free to all