

January / February 2012

urban gravesham

The Civic Society for Gravesend & Northfleet

newsletter

member of:



WELCOME

to our new members

Urban Gravesham continues to grow. Over the last few months we have had many new members - welcome to you all. Thank you for joining our endeavours to protect our historic town.

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AGM

At the beginning of January, the function room of the Three Daws was packed to hear Owen Hatherley, renowned author of "The New Ruins of Great Britain." speak at the AGM of Urban Gravesham.



...by Urban Gravesham members at the AGM

His presentation illustrated the evolving fashions for city/town centre development over the last four decades. Of relevance to Gravesend were examples of where the fashion for building shopping malls in town centres had failed to enliven or support existing amenities and shops (Southampton, Dartford); where construction of masses of tiny flats had blighted centres (Sheffield and Leeds) and where overambitious and unrealistic schemes had led to unbuilt vacant sites with no realistic prospect of completion (Manchester/Liverpool). His more positive examples came where local people had been closely involved and were effective in shaping local developments (Newcastle/Manchester/Coin Street).

A committee was elected and a vote of thanks went to those outgoing committee members who have done such sterling work over the past year.

At the AGM a poll was taken of Gravesend's best and worst buildings. Topping the poll for best building was The Old Town Hall in the High Street, also amongst top 5 were St. George's church and the newly refurbished library. Worst building was the Thamesgate (Anglesea) car park, with Tesco's and the empty police station in Windmill Street not far behind. Overall, it seems that people prefer historic buildings to modern. However, it seems that some people actually like the Civic Centre - it came midway in our poll! Full results can be seen on the UG website.

Heritage Quarter Progress

Developers Edinburgh House have said that they will be holding a public open day at the "end of January / beginning of February" to reveal their plans with a view to submitting their final proposal for the Heritage Quarter by the end of May/beginning of June. Urban Gravesham's view remains that for the past six months there has been a lot of spin and little substance from EH. When they reveal the details of the scale and design of their scheme, then we will be happy to comment. We should all bear in mind that similar promises were made to the people of Castleford and yet Edinburgh House have still not built anything there, despite having had planning permission for years.



Bath Street / West Street. View from the Gandhi Restaurant.

www.urbangravesham.org **YES to sympathetic regeneration**

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Edinburgh House threaten to sue Urban Gravesham

In December, Urban Gravesham received a letter from Edinburgh House threatening to sue the organisation if it makes further statements on the finances of the company and also demanding to have a list of Urban Gravesham's members.

Given that UG's statement was based entirely on independent reports in the financial press, we believe that the Edinburgh House threat is of little substance. Please be assured that our membership list will remain absolutely confidential.

In the meantime a further report on EH finances has been placed on the website of financial consultants Chalkhill: (https://www.crefin.com/article_loggedOut.asp?subtype=notloggedon&Status=8&SID=32608&ISS=22570)

We quote the report here without comment from ourselves:

"The €8.7m Edinburgh House Estates Pool 1B asset referenced in Infinity

INFIN SOPR reference has been restructured. The EHE pool 1B reference obligation (INFIN SoPR) has been restructured following its failure to repay at maturity (18 October 2011). The terms of the restructuring include:

1. Term extension to October 2013 plus a further 6 month conditional extension;
 2. Subordinate loans will not receive interest or principal payments until the senior loan is fully repaid;
 3. All excess cash will be swept to repay the senior loan (estimated to be €8.8m excluding property disposals);
 4. Sales conditions have been set to allow disposal of properties irrespective of the high LTV; and
 5. Sales equivalent to a minimum of 18m net proceeds must be achieved by October 2012 and 50m by October 2013.
- If the borrower fails to comply with the conditions of the restructure then the servicer and the asset manager will formulate and implement an accelerated sell down strategy."*

Speakers

Former Councillor Conrad Broadley will speak on 6th of February on the HISTORY AND FUTURE OF NORTHFLEET HARBOUR at 7.30pm in the back room of the Three Daws, Town Pier Square, Gravesend. Conrad is passionate about all things to do with the river. He has very strong ideas about bringing it back to life. All welcome.

It is intended that this will be the first talk of a series on matters to do with Gravesend and its future. We also hope to organise a couple of tours to see new and old architecture in London Docklands and elsewhere.

Help save Gravesend from Mass Development!

It looks like UG's campaigns will go on for some time to come. You can help by rejoining UG and encouraging your friends and neighbours to join as well. Thanks to all who have joined UG, renewed their membership and made donations.

Please send all subscriptions, cheques payable for 2012 to: The membership secretary, 20 Ridgeway Avenue, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5BB

Help to protect our Grade 2 listed Train Station

Network Rail have applied for planning permission to GBC to demolish the 1904 lattice footbridge to be replaced by a much larger metal bridge at the station. They also wish to destruct the original water tower at the end of platform one, to make way for this new bridge. Network Rail are also seeking permission to install a third platform at the station running through the centre of the current tracks.

Although Urban Gravesham realises that adaptations to the station have to be made to move forward into the 21st century, we feel that any alterations to the station should be sympathetic and in keeping with our Grade 2 award winning listed Railway Station - which the proposals from Network Rail are not.



Please make your comments for a more sympathetic design to: Clive Gilbert Service Manager, Development Control, Gravesham Borough Council, Windmill Street, Gravesend, Kent DA12 1AU ideally before 14.02.12, no later than 04.03.12

QUOTING: Planning application 20110865

All images can be viewed on the council's website