

From the Editor

As you will see from this edition of Trust News, your committee has been very busy recently dealing with a number of planning applications for listed buildings. Our planning guru, Richard Ormerod, keeps a close eye on all applications affecting the town and advises the committee on how we should respond. Many of the applications are for improvements or small additions to buildings and we see a lot of applications involving management of trees. We often write in support of applications which are clearly meant to enhance the condition of the property.

In some cases, particularly where the property is a listed building, we look at the application in the context of its historical status within the history of Devizes. Longs Building and the Crown Centre are two examples of this. We are very aware that some applications, eg the change of use of the Crown Centre to a hotel, will benefit the town and we give careful consideration to our response. However, proposals to change a building which in any way detract from its listed status are not acceptable and we feel it is important to point this out.

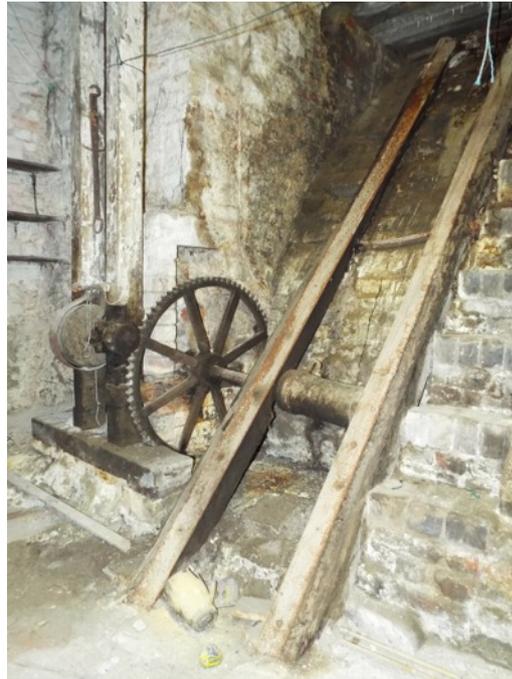
As we say on our website "*The Trust is a collection of people who are proud of our past and concerned to retain the character of a fine historic Market Town and the benefits of living in it. We do not wish to stop progress or live in a time-warp, but we do recognise that change has to be carefully and sensitively managed if our heritage is to be preserved. We are proud of our town and want visitors to enjoy it as we do.*"

As a member of the Trust, we value your support for what we do. We are very pleased that our membership numbers have risen this year. Please continue to support us and tell your friends and neighbours.

Philippa Morgan

The Crown Centre

Developments could damage a listed building



The historic winding mechanism

Picture: John Girvan

While many people will have been sad to see the end of the Crown Centre as a community meeting place, the Trustees decided in 2018 to close the Centre and sell the premises on the open market. Philip O'Shea, the owner of the Peppermill Restaurant next door recently bought the building and has submitted a planning application to turn it into a hotel. The building is Grade 2* listed building, originally a coaching Inn from 1538, so its new role as a hotel is very appropriate.

The Trust has commented on the application for change of use on the grounds that the proposal to create two bedrooms with en suite bathrooms may disrupt the architecture of the building. The interior is of interest - we understand that much of the interior surfaces are of lathe and plaster - and this might be damaged or destroyed by the proposal.

We are also concerned that the documentation provided with the application does not provide the level

of information we would expect. No attempt has been made to identify any features of architectural or historic interest, and there is no assessment of the building's interest or features.

The original application was withdrawn and a further application submitted but meanwhile, work on the building has started. We have advised the Senior Conservation Officer at Wiltshire Council of this.

Our intrepid explorer of cellars, John Girvan, recently visited the basement of the building as he was concerned about the condition of the historic cast iron cog and pinion winding mechanism incorporating a band braking system to control the rate of movement of heavy barrels.

When the building was an inn, this was used for raising and lowering barrels into the cellar on parallel wooden rails from the pavement above. He has confirmed that the hoist is still there and has provided a photograph to prove it!

Lighting Issues in Long Street

A progress report

Readers will recall our report about the recent changes to the street lamps in Long Street. Following a helpful meeting with an officer from Wiltshire Council, we are able to report on progress as far as lighting in Long Street is concerned. Wiltshire Council has agreed to change the lamps where these are currently too bright as a short term measure.

For the longer term, Wiltshire Council has a plan to convert most of the Council's street lighting to LED units over the next two years. This will cost over £12 million and it is expected to have a payback in twelve years because of reduced electricity costs.

The conversion to LED lighting started in October 2019. Lights in the Devizes area are expected to be converted in August - October 2020.

The heritage style lamp stands such as those in Long Street, will be converted separately at the end of the programme. Their external appearance will remain unchanged.

We are discussing with Devizes Town Council the possibility of co-funding the cost of providing replacement heritage-style lamp posts where necessary. More details of Wiltshire Council's plans can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/wccleds>



A long, Long Street lamp post

Longs Building

Remedial works cause concern



Longs Building, New Park Street. Inset: the basement corridor

The Trust has recently been involved in commenting on a planning application submitted by Sovereign Housing Association Ltd, the owners of Longs Building, on the corner of New Park Street and Snuff Street. This is the building which featured in Trust News 144 and is a Grade II* Listed building. Here's the article:

<https://tinyurl.com/longs-bdqs>

The stated purpose of the planning application is to "Install a remedial structural steel support structure for road retaining walls in the basement including helical pile foundations and masonry reinforcement in the basement walls". In other words, the proposed works will support the A361 New Park Street (and the unclassified Snuff Street) next to the building.

However, the application contains no information about the condition of the road structures, the local highway authority's views, or any indication that the highway authority has been consulted.

The Trust objected to the proposed works as it appears to conflict with the statutory objective to conserve Longs Building, its features and setting. In the Trust's opinion, the basement and corridors under the adjoining footways are of historic interest, but will be substantially defaced by the proposed steel structures.

We imagine the applicant has identified countervailing benefits, in terms of stabilising the streets, the building, or both, but no such benefits are spelt out. In particular, it appears that there is an option to reinforce the street retaining structures within the highway limits, rather than interfere with the basement and foundations of this grade II* listed building. This option needs to be considered before Consent is granted for this harmful intervention.

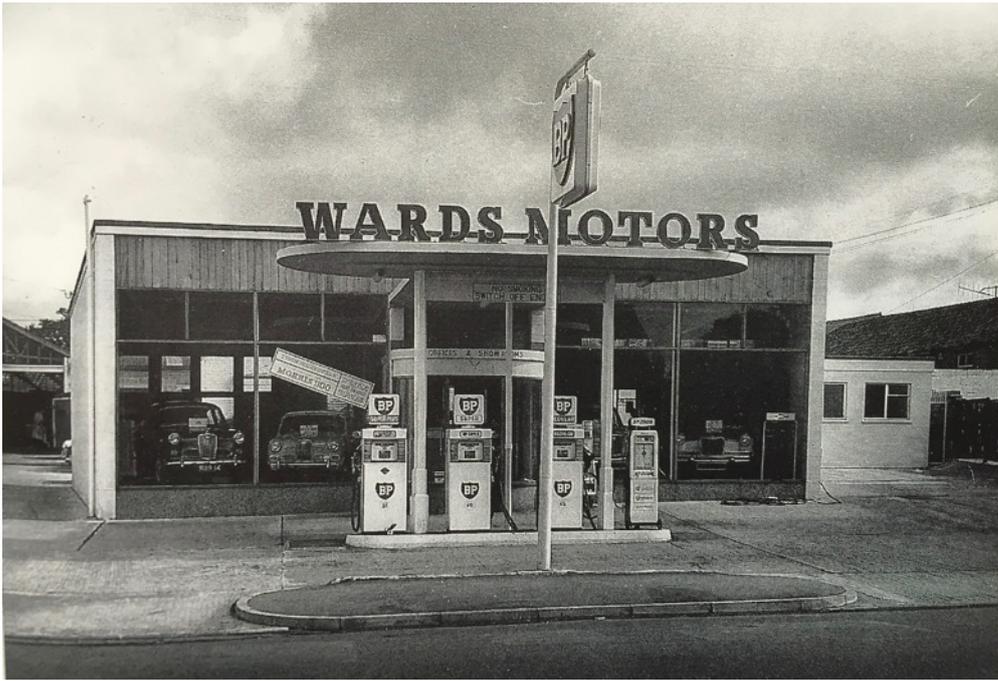
Concerns about the proposal have also been raised by Historic England who noted "The building was one of the earliest factory buildings in the South West of England and as such is of particular importance in the regional storey of industrial development.... It plays an important role in the streetscape, particularly of New Park Street, and the wider Conservation Area. It provides physical evidence of the town's early industrial focus on the cloth industries".

In view of this, the Trust is surprised that Devizes Town Council has not registered an objection to the application.

The planning application has now been called in by Cllr Sue Evans. We will keep you informed.

Ward's Motors

Philippa Morgan looks into an important local firm



'Checkpoint' Tyres is a familiar sight in New Park Street, having been there for more than 20 years. But the premises were previously occupied by Ward's Motors of Devizes, a company with a history going back to 1896 when it was Ward's Cycles.

Samuel Ward, the founder of Ward's cycles, was a personal friend of William Morris, later to become Lord Nuffield, pioneer motor car manufacturer and Chairman of Morris Motors and later the British Motor Corporation. This friendship resulted in Samuel Ward selling Morris motorcycles from 1903, and being one of the first dealers offering for sale the 'Bull Nose' Morris Oxford in 1913.

Also in 1913, Ward's Motor Showrooms were established at 30 The Brittox, expanding in 1916 to take over no 29 and, in 1917, no 28. Alteration was needed in order to allow vehicles to be driven in and out of the premises with large sliding doors fronting the Brittox and the pavement kerb lowered.

The company's original premises were in Northgate Street, but in October 1920, the next major step in Ward's development was a move to 'Hazeldans' in New Park Street. 'Hazeldans' was one of the oldest houses in Devizes, having been

owned by the Nicholas family in the 17th century and sold to John Anstie in 1780. The workshop area next to the house was much larger than the Northgate Street premises with garaging for up to 30 cars and workshop facilities. At this point, the Brittox showrooms were contracted to numbers 29 and 30, and closed completely in 1928.

Samuel Ward retired from the business on 31 December 1927 when it was taken over by Bill Drinkwater and Jack Carter and the company continued to prosper, selling mainly Morris vehicles.

Fast forward to the 1960s and Ward's premises in New Park Street was refurbished with a new showroom, and petrol pumps were installed. Our photo was taken in 1962 with the launch of the Morris 1100 advertised on the window stickers, and the new Wolseley Hornet and Riley on display. Petrol prices ranged from 4s 5d to 5s 1d per gallon!

The Ward's Motors name was eventually discontinued in 1977 with the premises ceasing to trade in 1978.

Information for this article was taken from 'Ward's Motors of Devizes' by Paul Drinkwater, 1996, ISBN 0 9528604 0 6

Museum News

A selection of forthcoming events

Lecture: The Old Stones – the Megalithic Sites of Britain and Ireland, by Andy Burnham

30th November 2:30-4:00 pm
Lecture Hall, Wiltshire Museum

WAHNS members £4.50, non-members £7

Wessex Women Workshop

7th December 1:30-4:00 pm,
Lecture Hall. Free.

You will learn more about our Wessex Women display and explore ideas around working life as a woman and what work means, has meant or might mean to you in the future.

Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference 2020

The 2020 Archaeology in Wiltshire Conference is being held on Sunday 22 March, starting at 10am at the Corn Exchange, Market Place, Devizes. Tickets WAHNS members £25, non-members £35

EXHIBITIONS

Oexmann Art Award Competition and Exhibition 2019 until 5th January 2020

The Wiltshire Museum has been holding the biennial Oexmann Art Award Competition and Exhibition since 1988, and it is now one of Wiltshire's art community's most important events.

This year's competition and exhibition marks the 16th biennial Oexmann Art Award, and is held in memory of the late Theophila Joan Oexmann (née Copland-Griffiths), an artist raised in Potterne. The award was endowed by her husband Richard Oexmann in recognition of her love of this county's artistic heritage.

Cloth Road Arts

25 January – 14 March 2020
(Oexmann Art Gallery)

The Cloth Road Arts is a not-for-profit collective formed in 2004 with the purpose of promoting the visual arts and artisans in the Bradford-on-Avon, Trowbridge, Melksham and surrounding areas of Wiltshire.

Continued overleaf

Museum News

continued

The exhibition will feature a selection of works by members of the group including artwork, textile, ceramics and glassware etc. Full content of the exhibition will be confirmed in December 2019.

Earth & Universe: Images by Robert Harvey

18 January – 15 March 2020 (Piper Art Gallery)

This exhibition features a collection of landscape astrophotography images, highlighting how to capture the beauty of the night sky with a regular digital camera and lenses. Many of the photographs to be displayed include iconic landscapes in Wiltshire such as Stonehenge, Avebury, Devil's Den, West Kennet Long Barrow, Wilton Windmill, Lacock Abbey and Salisbury Plain, providing a strong local connection. Other images will feature from Dorset, Devon, and elsewhere in Britain.

Bookings and enquiries:
www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk

Or call 01380 727369

You can now search the
Museum's Collections
database online

www.wiltshireheritagecollections.org.uk

The Trustees thank you for
your support and wish you all
a Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year



Dates for your diary

This year's Christmas Social will be held on **Thursday 5th December at 7:30pm at Wiltshire Museum**. John Girvan will be showing some video footage of old Devizes and there will be a table top quiz. Drinks and nibbles will be provided.

The Trust AGM will be on **Thursday 19th March, 2020**. Please put it in your diary. Further details to follow.

The Quaker Graveyard

Philippa Morgan explores a local landmark

Whenever I walk through Hillworth Park, I wonder why there should be a Quaker graveyard there. So I did some research and found out more about it.

The first Quaker Meeting in Devizes was in the 1650s. It's estimated that Devizes Quakers numbered around 100. They met in private houses, as did other groups in Bromham, Heddington and Market Lavington. They described themselves as Friends of Truth and the formal title of the movement is still officially the (Religious) Society of Friends.

As to where the name 'Quakers' came from, one story says that the founder, George Fox, once told a magistrate to tremble (quake) at the name of God and the name 'Quakers' stuck. Other people suggest that the name derives from the physical shaking that sometimes went with Quaker religious experiences.

In 1656, the Devizes Quakers bought a plot at Hillworth to use as their burial ground. This wasn't part of the original Hillworth House estate, having its own gateway set diagonally into what was a lane or footpath. This gateway, built in Bath Stone, can be found in the north eastern corner of the burial ground.

The intense persecution of Friends in England which started under Charles I lasted for 29 years. Thousands of Quakers were imprisoned during that time with over 500 dying under deplorable conditions in British prisons. This ended in 1688 when the Toleration Act was passed. The Devizes Quakers then built a meeting house on the site of their burial ground. Then in 1702

they built another in Devizes High Street - this was sold in 1926 and is now a private house - and the building on the burial ground was let as a dwelling. It has since disappeared.

At some point between 1812 and 1842, the lane running to the eastern boundary of the burial ground ceased to exist as a thoroughfare, and so it is likely that the burial ground became integrated into the park at that time. Formal transfer of ownership took place in 1905 when the Burial Ground was sold to Alexander Grant Meek for £75 on condition that it was not to be built on and that burials were not to be disturbed.

It is many years since the last burial, and the land is now managed by Wiltshire Council. Nevertheless, Devizes Quakers maintain an interest in the space and hold an annual Meeting for Worship under the oak tree in the centre, exchanging the wooden beams of their present Meeting House for the tree canopy. Generally meetings are silent and have no theme, but this meeting is usually different with a theme such as the natural world.

Incidentally, the building in Hillworth Park often referred to as the 'Queen Anne' building is Grade 2* listed and is described by English Heritage as "A very pretty building, which overlooks the Quaker Burial ground on the East side, a grassed space with some fine tree planting, partly enclosed by a low brick wall." It was on the buildings at risk register until it was restored by Devizes Town Council in 2011.

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