



APPR A news

APPR A exists to help retain the unique character of the Avenues and Pearson Park conservation area and to support the neighbourhood's strong community spirit

Chair's Report November 2009

I have recently received an anxious enquiry about insurance premiums in the Avenues; as I have previously reported, I find that my premium climbs steeply every year, and I have failed to find cover with another insurer. This is not the experience of the Committee, so the assumption has been that it is my problem. Now I know that there is at least one other. Perhaps if your premium has gone up inordinately, you would let us know—and tell us the reason given. For me, it is of course the easy blame attached to subsidence, although, fingers crossed etc, my house has been solid on its new foundations since it was piled 18 years ago; the other reason given is the flooding. But now there is a third one, produced for this Westbourne Avenue resident—a rise in local house burglaries. This makes me think that they just select a random reason from a plausible list, since the police have consistently reported a decline in local house burglaries this year (balanced alas by the rise in shed burglaries...)

On the subject of flooding, we have pointed out to the Council that Hull should qualify for a central government grant designed to help householders make their homes as flood proof as is practicable; no response has been forthcoming. Meanwhile, we have had news of a product, ready next February, designed and manufactured in Hull (patent pending) to protect air-bricks. The satisfaction of supporting a local enterprise might make me actually do something to protect my house, instead of just writing about it. I hope to have more details next year.

The Park Avenue house on which I reported in our last issue now has good-looking plans which we saw at a Committee meeting; we appreciate the architect's willingness to consult and to listen. Because it is difficult, if not impossible, to match new bricks to old, the plans feature bays built in yellow brick as a contrast to the red brick. We thought this looked incongruous—more jarring than unmatching reds. The defence was that there is a precedent in the yellow houses of Park Avenue, Salisbury Street and Victoria Avenue; but the red brickwork on these houses is essentially decorative and therefore not comparable—we thought—to outstanding bays. Our final suggestion was that the old bricks from the back of the house should be used in the front, and the unseen back be rebuilt with new bricks: pretty helpful, we thought, but the architect evidently fancied his solution. What do you think?

Remember the retrospective application from Farnley Square? It has been refused on the grounds that it would mean loss of urban green space and is not in keeping with the Conservation Area. The third reason was a surprise—the proposed timber fence creates blind spots which result in a perceived or actual safety problem for users of the footpath. Ugly, yes; but dangerous? I'll have to go and look at it again...

Law-abiding residents of Marlborough Avenue (no partiality there) have been outraged by the enforcement of the new 'national directive' on dropped kerbs; the directive is clearly meant to apply to crossings and driveways, but we in Marlborough Avenue have

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Avenues residents are invited to come to
a **RESIDENTS' EVENT**

on Saturday 13 February 2010, 2.00–4.00 pm

at **Boulevard Village Hall**

Hull's Heritage at Risk?

Conserving the special character of our historic housing

If you missed the Avenues event, you can catch it at the **Boulevard Village Hall on Saturday 13 February (2–4 pm)**. Keith Knight, whose talk is reproduced on page 3, will not be there, but the local speakers will be giving the talks again with photographs, showing:

- ▶ historic details in Avenues, Boulevard and Coltman Street;
- ▶ the importance of maintaining continuity and harmony within a group of houses;
- ▶ how repair can be a better option than replacement;
- ▶ the contribution of the St Andrew's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI—funded by Gateway and The Lottery) in improving conservation in Boulevard and Coltman Street;
- ▶ the restoration work in Boulevard and Coltman Street (before and after);
- ▶ other areas in Hull which have become degraded through lack of planning controls.

There will also be detailed information from the THI on the use of Article 4 Directions (which make planning permission necessary before householders can make alterations).

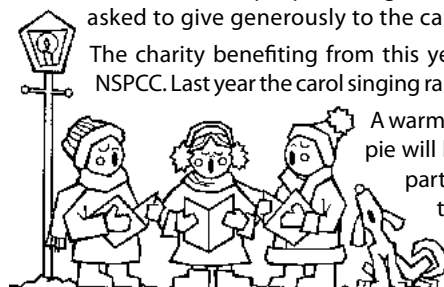
We hope you can attend and give support to other residents in conservation areas.

Our annual carol singing around the Avenues takes place on Saturday 19 December. Meet at 5.45 pm at the Park Avenue fountain.

Carol sheets will be provided but please bring your own Christmas lantern or torch. People preferring to stay at home and listen are asked to give generously to the caller at the front door.

The charity benefiting from this year's collection will be the NSPCC. Last year the carol singing raised £257.50 for this charity.

A warm Christmas drink and mince pie will be waiting for all who take part and survive the cold until the end (8 pm).



Ian & Christine Colquhoun



Your column—your say

Renovation & repair of wooden sliding sash windows

You can Do It Yourself!

The main day to day problems with these windows are rattles, drafts, stiff operation and poor sound insulation. All can be overcome easily and cheaply using mail order materials and a little care. English Heritage says that the outlay is repaid in energy saving in less than two years, whilst DIY secondary double glazing takes up to ten years to repay and full double-glazing can take up to 100.

The running grooves for the sashes are made up with two beads: staff bead on the room side of the window, and parting bead between the sashes. Sound and draught insulation is achieved by replacing most of the beads with new ones carrying nylon pile which prevents wood-to-wood contact and fills any gaps. Pile is also fitted between the sashes where they meet. The beads, pre-fitted with pile-carrier, are readily available online, along with all the other materials you might need. I used Reddiseals of Droitwich. It is best to paint the beads to match existing paintwork before installation.

What follows is just an overview which assumes no other work is needed. Detailed instructions can be found online. Staff beads are usually nailed in place and need to be gently levered away from the frame. Cut the joint line with

a sharp knife beforehand to avoid damaging the paintwork. The top bead should be left to allow some trickle ventilation. The inner sash becomes free from the frame and can be removed once it is also freed from its cords, which are nailed to a groove in the sash. Fitting pile-carrier to the meeting rail on this sash is the trickiest part of the work and needs a router and some accurate chisel work.

At the bottom of the running groove is a section, sometimes press-fit, sometimes held by a single screw, which is levered out from the bottom to access the sash weights. Parting beads can be nailed, but are often press-fitted. These also lever out. Now the outer sash can be removed and refitted with new sash cords. All that remains is to fit the new beads. The top halves of the parting bead have the pile facing the street, and the bottoms have it facing the room. I prefer to screw staff beads in place to avoid damage when they next need removing.

It should be possible to complete a window in less than a day. (I did much more than this minimum work, but was still able to refit each pair of sashes the day after removing it. Temporary overnight fitting is easy).

I planed the sashes to allow for long-term movement, made good all poor wood and loose joints, gave sashes and frames three coats of paint and replaced all the window furniture. Even so, the work cost under £300. Each room became noticeably quieter and warmer as its window was completed and the windows now run much more smoothly. I would certainly recommend this method of improvement, which also helps to preserve the character of the area.

Rod Berrieman
Marlborough Avenue

The views expressed in this column are those of the writer(s) and do not necessarily represent APPRA policy.

Planning permission is needed for felling/pruning garden trees

Remember planning permission is required for felling or pruning trees which have a trunk circumference of more than 24cm/9.5 inches. Hull City Council will give you advice. Write to: Planning Services, Kingston House, Bond Street, Hull HU1 3ER with your proposals. They will let you know in writing if you need planning permission or not. Informal advice can be given by telephone: 612345.

The committee thanks residents for submitting requests for felling/pruning their garden trees. We approve most of them.

Stephanie Wilson continued from page 1

None dropped kerbs at the end of the small pathways across the grass on the south side. None of us have ever noticed them before, nor can we remember when they were installed—but it seems obvious to us that they are an aberration, since subsequent kerb renewals run straight across these paths without dipping. We are all too aware of them now, since the CEOs (confused? Civil Enforcement Officers—aka traffic wardens) have been fining drivers who have 'obstructed' them, and their right to do so without informing the public has been defended by the city's Street Scene Services. There's a chapter for a satiric novel about local government here—meanwhile, in practice, some of the fines have been rescinded and it is our hope that no more will be issued. However, please tell us if you incur a fine, so that we can continue to argue against what we see as a mistaken application of the law.

We have discussed money-raising and donations with Pippa King following her report in the last issue of her first summer of organizing Open Gardens, with the able assistance of her team. We agree that there should not



Stephanie and Jacky celebrate our latest tree sculpture (see page 4)

be any rival attractions, other than those with invitations like Mires Beck Nursery. Pippa would like some autonomy in deciding on the charities to receive donations; she would consult all the gardeners, then bring their choices to the AGM to be confirmed. That seems fair and proper; do you agree?

I am not commenting on the issue of restrictive byways, as it is out of our hands now, and became perhaps unduly contentious, owing to conflicting information and advice. Let's hope Defra's decision will bring clarification.

It was difficult to find a date to suit all diaries for the carol singing this year; we hope to see lots of you on the day we have chosen: Saturday, 19 December. **Happy Christmas!**

Stephanie Wilson MBE
Chair APPRA

Conservation event for residents of 3 October 2009

Report by Design Guide Sub-committee

Thank you to all those who participated in this well-attended event. Your views have been recorded by Arc* and will be referred to in our continuing dialogue with the council regarding how to stop the continuing loss of original features through out-of-character alterations.

Overwhelmingly residents expressed the view that they want more to be done to preserve the historic character of our conservation areas; and their preference for windows and doors in timber, rather than UPVC. This corresponds with the survey by English Heritage (see www.english-heritage.org.uk) which shows this type of over-modernisation to be detrimental to conservation areas where they are not adequately protected by planning controls.

(*Arc is an independent organisation based in Hull promoting and fostering quality in architecture)



Photo of Westbourne Avenue 1905: with kind permission from Paul Gibson

Residents' conservation event 3 October 2009

Address by keynote speaker

What are conservation areas?

Conservation areas were created in the late 1960s due to public protest arising from mass housing clearances which were sweeping away whole communities and cherished environments. The Civic Amenities Act of 1967 required local authorities to designate conservation areas which then required a planning application for consent to demolish buildings in these areas.

There are currently around 9,300 conservation areas in England and a recent survey by English Heritage shows one in seven of them to be suffering from inappropriate development, neglect or decay.

One reason this has come about is partly because the old definition of demolition—that nothing could be removed, even details like doorknobs—was challenged and lost in a famous court case. The general upshot is that permission is only required for total or substantial demolition. It then became possible to do all sorts of things in conservation areas which are detrimental to their special qualities—for example to install plastic windows. These have become ubiquitous, due to aggressive sales techniques and powerful commercial lobbying. The UPVC lobby has even managed to make the ludicrous claim that UPVC is a sustainable material. Even well-designed development can be changed shortly afterwards, adding porches, dormers, changing doors and windows etc, without any planning permission being required; with the result that an area, even a conservation area, becomes drastically altered over time. There is a balance to be made between personal freedom and public good. For instance removing historic features from one house in a terrace will reduce the sale value of the other properties.

People value their heritage

The good news is that people value heritage and want to do something to stop the rot. Look at the English Heritage web site and ask them for their booklet, "Heritage at Risk Conservation Areas". There is lots of guidance on good practice, eg PPG15. Principles are embodied here even if you do not have Article 4 Directions or Supplementary Planning Guidance.

I was asked to give an example of good conservation practice from abroad. As an exemplar Venice remains virtually the same as it was a hundred years ago. This is because of strict controls. However, even York, one of England's major historic cities, has lost whole swathes of historic buildings.

Estate agents tell us that listed buildings and properties in conservation areas are worth more than equivalent properties elsewhere. This is precisely because they have historic and period values. There is value in heritage.

How residents can take the issue of conservation forward

- 1 Seek Article 4 Directions from the Council. They are a vital tool to help conserve the special character of an area. These require planning permission for alterations which were previously permitted development. A balanced judgement can then be made.
- 2 Conservation Area Assessment. Local Authorities should periodically assess their conservation areas and produce a plan for their preservation and enhancement. For instance Bradford Council have produced conservation area assessments for over 50 of their conservation areas. The assessment for The Avenues appraisal was produced in 1998. Councils only prioritise what they think people want—make your voice heard. This should include a Conservation Area Management Plan.
- 3 In some areas local residents have carried out this appraisal. And in other areas the appraisal has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Avenues Conservation Area booklet (*Practical guidance for residents on renovation, planning and design*), could form the basis of this Appraisal/Management Plan and, following statutory consultation procedures, adopted by the local authority as Supplementary Planning Guidance.



Westbourne Avenue PHOTO: Ian Colquhoun

- 4 Get Council to play their part: "Streets for All". Ensure your Council pays proper attention to the public element—cluttered streets, patchwork pavements, defaced and ugly rubbish bins all detract from an area. Go through their procedures, ultimately complain if necessary. English Heritage's booklet, "Streets for All—Yorkshire and Humber" gives valuable guidance. Lobby councillors: our local councillors are there to help. Phone and write to Hull Council.
- 5 Have expert advice available. Residents in areas with a Townscape Heritage Scheme, such as St Andrews, can seek good advice on alterations from the scheme officers. In other conservation areas it may be possible to make arrangements with conservation architects (through Arc for instance or the local RIBA branch), to provide equivalent advice and support.
- 6 Maintain a directory of recommended builders/tradesmen.

Answer to a question about relative costs of timber and upvc

It is not true that conservation and using 'like for like' necessarily costs more. Shop around, get several quotes. There are specialist companies who will refurbish historic windows. UPVC is a horrendously expensive material, is bad for the environment and will not last whereas many Victorian timber windows are still fine after 150 years. Moreover, installing plastic windows will reduce the saleable value of your house.

Answer to a question about how to avoid loss of historic features

If you really want to be effective, you have to make alterations subject to the normal planning process by Article 4 Directions. Conservation is not about preventing change, it is about managing change.

Keynote speaker: Keith Knight, Chartered Architect and Specialist in Historic Building Restoration and Urban Regeneration, Dean Knight Partnership Ltd, York; and Chair of the Yorkshire Region of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

Avenues Advent Calendar 2009

ADVENT CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2009

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
194 M	199 P	119 V	183 P	55 W	42 M	113 W	162 P
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9 V	72 W	142 W	9 S	10 P	85 P	96 P	145 M
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
92 V	18 P	240 V	127 V	244 M	165 W	28 P	191 M

Details correct at time of going to press. Visit www.avenuesonline.org.uk

This is our ninth walk-round Advent Calendar: the event started in 2001 on a resident's suggestion.

Our thanks to **Lesley Longworth** who works many hours to organise this event, and to all the participants for their colourful and creative work.

Key to Location

M	Marlborough
P	Park
S	Salisbury
V	Victoria
W	Westbourne



Anthony Minghella Tree

APPRA's commemoration of a famous resident

APPRA commissioned Jacky Ward Lomax to carve a tree in celebration of the life of playwright and film-maker Anthony Minghella.

Jacky's dignified and minimal theme incorporates drama's Janus masks and a film strip, stating the dates of his birth and death.

The tree is not far from the house where Anthony Minghella lived while teaching at the University: 168 Park Avenue. Our grateful thanks to the anonymous donor who contributed £50 towards APPRA's tree sculpture fund, to help pay for the required Highways Permit.

Tree sculpture watch!

We have always said that our series of tree sculptures are to be enjoyed while they last, as they won't last forever!

The tree sculpture project originated in 1998, with Kevin Storch's Angel in Marlborough Avenue, and the latest addition (the eleventh sculpture) is the Minghella tree pictured here (*below, left*).

However, two of our tree sculptures have succumbed to woodworm and rot. The Angel was the first to go, in November 2007. Its base was so rotten that a strong wind blew it over. The next to fall was Charlotte Jenner's tribute to Barbara Hepworth (also in Marlborough). Happily, both sculptures have found new homes where people can still see them: the Angel was rescued by Chris Coulson (see APPRAnews issue 31, April 2008); Charlotte has taken her sculpture home, and intends to install it in her front garden.

Please keep a watchful eye on the remaining sculptures, and let us know if they seem unstable or rotten. Hull council's tree officer has been informed and is also keeping an eye on them.



The Friends of Pearson Park

invite you to join them in singing carols, led by the St Vincent's Choir, in the Pearson Park Hotel on Sunday, 13 December 2009 from 1.30 pm to 3 pm

Complimentary tea, coffee and mince pies will be provided, courtesy of the Hotel Management

PLANNING MATTERS

Are you doing house repairs or improvements?

Always ask before you build or do alterations. Hull City Council will give you advice. Write to:

Planning Services
Kingston House
Bond Street
Hull HU1 3ER

with your proposals. They will let you know in writing if you need planning permission or not.

Informal advice can be given by telephone: **612345**.

Planning permission is required for windows and crossovers

In the Avenues and Pearson Park Conservation Area **specific planning permission (under Article 4 Directions of 1995)** is required for:

- the construction of a *driveway* across a pavement or verge;
- the removal or alteration of a *window or bay* facing the highway. **This applies equally to an already altered or replacement window as it does to an original one.**

There is no fee for an application resulting from an Article 4 Direction.

Detailed information is available from the Council in leaflet and other forms; and on the website:

www.hullcc.gov.uk/planning

More detailed guidance on planning controls can be found in the Avenues Conservation Area booklet.

Design Guide

for The Avenues Conservation Area

If you have very recently moved into the area and thus do not have your free copy, please phone Stephanie Wilson, Chair of APPRA on 493037, and she will provide you with one. As well as being a pictorial celebration of the varied architecture in The Avenues, the Guide provides practical advice on repair and renovation; and information on the planning controls for this area, with details of whom to talk to at the City Council.

You can buy copies for friends, at £5 each, from Stephanie Wilson, Panache on Chanterlands Avenue and Clements News on Princes Avenue.

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Chrys Bavey (newsletter), Ian Colquhoun, Mal Dawes, Haris Livas-Dawes, Lesley Longworth, Christine Minnikin, John O'Mullane, Kate Stockdale (Treasurer), Stefan Weigert, Alan Worsley

WEBSITES

APPRA online	www.avenuesonline.org.uk	<i>news + pictures of all Avenues events incl Open Gardens; info on Conservation, planning matters; APPRA committee minutes; back issues of APPRA newsletters, and much more...</i>
Art in the Avenues	www.hullsangel.org	<i>complete record of tree sculptures; fountain rescue; Advent Calendars</i>