



Newsletter

September 2016

The Society's Chair Writes:

Welcome to this issue of the MCS Newsletter, which provides readers with a clear impression of the wide range of issues with which the Society has a legitimate concern and of the ways in which Society members have been engaged in seeking to bring about improvements in conditions across the Liverpool City Region (LCR). Again we are grateful for the particular efforts of MCS Council members Andrew Pearce and Glynn Marsden for securing the timely assembly of contributions to this issue.

Members will be aware that this summer has been a period of significant change in how many features within which policy and other related matters are to be addressed across the Liverpool City Region (LCR); inter alia, the consultations undertaken in respect of the devolution of powers to the new Combined Authority of the LCR.

More recently Liverpool has produced the draft of the Local Plan on which comment is currently invited.

We have seen the disappointing outcome of SAVE's attempt in the High Court to reverse Liverpool City Council's decision to approve the demolition of the eastern side of Lime Street to make way for the controversial Neptune redevelopment scheme. In addition, concern has grown about the future of the Liverpool Mercantile Marine World Heritage Site and its retention by ICOMOS / UNESCO on an 'at risk' list.

Meanwhile, in June, primarily through the efforts of MCS Vice-Chair Jean Grant, MCS organised a very successful fourth 'State of the City' event, marking the local celebration of national Civic Day at the Bluecoat. We are also very pleased to note the emergence of the second official statement of MCS policy with respect to a specific field of concern with the publication of MCS White Paper 2 : Terraced Housing in the Liverpool City Region '... the most sustainable and attractive option', thanks largely to the efforts of MCS Council member Trevor Skempton. The paper was first made available as a consultation document, based primarily on ideas that were presented by Trevor Skempton and others at the MCS State of the City event in 2014.

The Society has adopted a plan to develop its corporate membership and is in the process of recruiting corporate members. Further information about this and the benefits to be derived by firms or other agencies that take up this opportunity is to be made available shortly.

Please note that MCS Council is eagerly seeking the assistance of someone who is prepared to as Honorary Secretary (Hon Sec) of the Society. Should this prospect appeal to you, please see the article below which spells out, in a little more detail, the tasks that the Hon Sec would be expected to address or how he/she might best contribute to the smooth operation of the Society.

Members can look forward to significant improvements in the effectiveness of the MCS website as a means of communicating information about the Society's activities, including the series of interesting and engaging evening presentations that are scheduled to take place over the coming

period, building towards the MCS Annual General Meeting on 22 November at the familiar venue of the Quaker Meeting House in School Lane.

For your further information, during much of this period I am to be abroad and MCS Vice-Chair Jean Grant is acting chairperson during my absence.

Dr Peter Brown (MCS Chair)

Editorials

["Municipal Vandalism" at the Futurist but good news for the ABC Cinema](#)

The demolition of the Futurist cinema in Lime Street and the forthcoming demolition of all of the once-elegant early Victorian buildings between the Vines and Crown pubs have caused the Society much concern and cries of "municipal vandalism". Certainly the buildings were much decayed but their total demolition and the fact that the published designs for their replacement have met unfavourable comments from lovers of good quality architecture have not made Liverpool's City's planners more popular. 'Streetscapes' such as this part of Lime Street are part of what attracts tourists to Liverpool. (*Michael Portillo's television programme based on Bradshaw's guides recently recognised in Glasgow that it is its buildings that draw tourists.*) It is time for a public commitment in Liverpool to protect the city's heritage architecture and to insist on good quality designs for new-build.

We wondered at the haste with which the demolition of the Futurist was carried out – one day after the High Court turned down an appeal against its demolition!

But there is better news about the former ABC cinema across the street from the Futurist. Developers Neptune has issued plans to convert the building into a music venue, TV broadcast venue and bars and restaurants, bringing, they say, new life back to the area. Jonathan Brown, a member of the Society's Council, says, "This shows the power of listing. The Futurist was arguably equally important as the ABC". The listed ABC Cinema (originally the 'Forum') was built in 1931, the unlisted Futurist in 1912.

There will be new claims for more of Liverpool's stock of heritage buildings to be listed for conservation provided that some new form of economic use for them can be found.

[The future of the waterfront](#)

We are delighted that Peel Holdings has dramatic plans to bring human and economic life back to the dock area north of the Pier Head and we wish them success. We wish however they would keep the public more informed about what they are doing. We asked them to address a meeting about progress which the Society would organise. They were not able to give a "yes" at this time due to other commitments of their time. We fully understand this. We half understood their reply as an undertaking to come to such a meeting in the New Year. We hope we have this right and look forward to such an event.

Peel Holdings will of course take into account that fact there may come a time when they will need public support for whatever plans they have. If such a situation should arise, it will not be wise to spring their plans on the public at the very last moment.

MCS: Call for Volunteers

In the March edition of the MCS Newsletter it was expressed that Society welcomes new members who have a passionate interest in their surroundings and local environment whether built or natural and that a number of vacancies (namely Hon. Secretary, Hon. Membership Secretary and Programme & Events co-coordinator) still need to be filled.

It is essential that the Council has these roles filled and is looking for people with skills to be part of the busy team to help take the MCS forward in accordance with its adopted business plan or to simply lend a hand with our activities. The Society's working group responsible for such matters has put together an information sheet in respect of the position of Hon Secretary. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Chairman or Vice Chairman via chair@merseycivic.org

MCS White Paper:

Terraced Housing *by Trevor Skempton*

The MCS has produced a White Paper on Terraced Housing in the Liverpool City Region, describing it as 'the most sustainable and attractive option...'

Following the earlier White Paper on 'Urban Design' [which was adopted as MCS policy in October 2012], the discussions in the 'State of the City' events, and the involvement of some MCS members in the Welsh Streets Public Inquiry, the MCS decided to clarify its position on the future of terraced housing. A Green Paper was discussed and amended, with the final version being presented to the MCS Council on 2nd August 2016, who then approved its conversion to a White Paper, confirming it as formal MCS Policy.

The core of the argument is that the traditional city or town is made of public streets and spaces, which are defined and enclosed by 'joined-up' buildings. These can be seen as marking the distinction between that which is 'urban' and that which is 'suburban' – in the former, the public realm and public facilities are of prime importance; whereas in the latter, greater emphasis is given to private space and private transport.



The paper touches on the impressive history of the Liverpool-Welsh architects and builders. It extols the benefits of terraced housing and argues for attention to be given to streetscape and proportion. It proposes new Conservation Areas on both sides of the river and the strengthening of the edges of our urban parks, bringing back the special relationship between terraced housing and open space.

Seven conclusions start with a plea for an end to systematic demolition of older terraced housing, with conservation, rehabilitation and



sympathetic modern infill instead, and end with a plea for a mixed economy to provide housing for all.

Metro Mayor Candidate

Steve Rotheram has been chosen as the Labour candidate for the position of Mayor of Liverpool ('Metro-Mayor') City Region and is forecast to win when the election takes place on 2 May 2017. Steve is a former Lord Mayor of Liverpool and is currently MP for Liverpool Walton. He will need to accommodate the views of people in Wirral, St Helens, Knowsley, Sefton and Halton boroughs as well as his native Liverpool in united efforts to benefit the City Region as part of efforts to overcome the present economic imbalance between the north and the south of England.

Priorities for the City Region

The Society has responded to the consultation exercise carried out by the new Liverpool City Region Authority, offering proposal for items to be among its action priorities. It focuses on the economy, Housing and the environment, transport, tourism and training and education.

On what is for many people the most sensitive issue at the present time, it recognises the need for more houses in the region and insists that this must be in the urban core areas and not on established "green" sites. Claiming that there is plenty of scope for new building in derelict dockland and industrial areas, it advocates high densities of housing which should be concentrated around railway stations. It regrets the poor public transport connections with Salford Quays and the industrial areas of north east Wales.

Rail Direction

'Rail North' is one of the new bodies set up recently as part of efforts to reduce the

London-centric character of government in Britain. It brings together Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) across the North of England into one cohesive and proactive body, which represents the regional and local economic, transport and strategic objectives for the rail industry. It hopes to enable Local Authorities to develop their understanding of rail industry processes and to provide their local experience and expertise to influence franchising outcomes as they never have before. People interested in local economic planning need to get to grips with the new body.

Tourism Policy

The Society has decided to prepare a policy paper on the growth of tourism in our region. Tourism offers the best hope for growth of the jobs market in Liverpool City Region yet it sometimes seems to be a Cinderella in the actions of local authorities. Local Councils are not entirely to be blamed for this. They have suffered very large cuts in funding from London and face the fact that promotion of tourism is not a duty imposed on them by legislation, unlike much else of what they do. Some argue that the tourism industry does not need interference by the public authorities but they are a major aspect of tourism, especially where smaller enterprises are concerned, where coordination between firms in the sector and between the sector and the public authorities can bring benefits.

Governance for Community Groups

The Prince's Regeneration Trust is holding a BRICK workshop on 15 September at the Florence Institute ("The Florrie") 377, Mill Street, L8. See the Trust's website <http://www.princes-regeneration.org/resources/brick> for tickets (£19). BRICK (Building Resources, Investment and Community Knowledge) is an important new programme for the Trust,

taking education about heritage regeneration to another level and reaching out to a much wider community than we have ever been able to in the past. Its projects aim to provide new employment, training and educational opportunities especially in deprived areas. This seminar will focus on governance and management issues for community groups.

Walking Around Part of L8

Rob MacDonald organised a successful guided walk on 3 July around the district centred on the Anglican Cathedral. This area is rich in interesting architecture and reminders of the city's extraordinary past.

The city is proud of its ecumenical character, so it is appropriate to note that the Anglican Cathedral was designed by a Roman Catholic and the Roman Catholic by an Anglican.

There are places of worship in abundance close to the Anglican Cathedral; a small. Modern German church, a Greek Orthodox Church, a mosque, a Roman Catholic Church, a splendid synagogue (sometimes called Liverpool's third cathedral), an Anglican church (St Bride's) and the beautiful spire and ruined body of a Welsh Presbyterian church. Britain's first drive-in bank is there – now used for other purposes after the original building was fire damaged in the Toxteth riots of 1981, as was the gentlemen's Racquets Club, now replaced by housing.

There is so much to see in this part of Liverpool, but best do a little home work beforehand so as to understand what is there.

A further Guided Walk is planned, possibly in the Ropewalks district.

State of the City IV *by Trevor Skempton*

State of the City IV - Merseyside Civic Society held its fourth annual 'State of the City' day on the 18th June 2016. As on previous occasions, the Bluecoat housed a variety of activities, including live music, stalls, and Lego-city-building with Liverpool Architectural Society. The heart of the event was a series of lively discussions, structured with an objective of producing guidance for future action.

The different strands of discussion throughout the day were carefully drawn together to formulate three priorities for actions to be taken by the Merseyside Civic Society over the coming year. There is a description of these discussions on the MCS website, and the priorities are summarised as follows:



First Priority: Movement and Integration

It is urgent: To get more people out of cars and on to integrated public transport.

The MCS is to arrange discussions and a public meeting with Merseytravel. It will develop a campaign on a range of transport-related issues, including the better integration of trains, buses and ferries, and the integration



of transport planning with urban design and future development. This would include active support for existing campaigns on cycling, as well as pedestrian movement and safety.

[Second Priority: The MCS as a Facilitator](#)

It is urgent: For us to support, empower and sustain local community groups.

The MCS will arrange future State of the City events, developing the facilitator role. This is an ambitious conclusion, with implications for the organisation's structure and resources, but it could give a new sense of purpose to the MCS.

[Third Priority: Planning and the City Region](#)

It is urgent: To have accessible information, and understanding of our rights.

The MCS should focus on improving its involvement with the Planning Process in Liverpool City Council [bearing in mind the importance of Liverpool City Centre to the whole of Merseyside], whilst also increasing its engagement with parallel processes in the five other Councils of the recently-designated Liverpool City Region, alongside and in support of those other societies and groups that focus on a specific local geographical area.

Mending Our Churches

It was announced in July that St Luke's Church in Southport and St Mary's Knowsley have received grants for roof repairs from the latest (and apparently last) Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund. £25m has been made available for this by the Government.

A new booklet is available (price £3) from New Brighton Heritage and Information Centre about the building in which it is located, St James' church in the town. The spire, which had become unsafe, has been rebuilt and a new gilded cross placed on it. New Brighton Community Partnership publishes the news.

Heritage Open Days

These wonderful opportunities to go inside buildings which are not normally open to the public are here again, at the beginning of September. See local papers and the internet for exact dates, which vary from place to place.

Planning & Conservation Matters

Buildings

Last year Liverpool did not feature in the Victorian Society's Top Ten List of Endangered Buildings. Nominations for 2016 were submitted in July. We await the results with interest.

West Kirby War Memorial

MCS member Diana Lane reports the Listing of the West Kirby War Memorial in the grounds of St Bridget's Church, West Kirby. The structure was the work of Charles Sargeant Jagger who designed the Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner in London.

Wavertree Church Saved

Last October, the Society joined SAVE and the Victorian Society in objecting to the demolition of the Lawrence Road Memorial Church in Wavertree. The church building has been spot listed.

The Victorian Society and MCS has made representations to the Liverpool Planning Authority objecting to the proposed demolition

of the Bushells Building, Springfield, one of Liverpool's surviving warehouses.

Former Rapid Store Facing Demolition

There is talk of demolishing the long former Rapid store in Renshaw Street. Whilst being a non-designated heritage asset, it is nevertheless a typical part of the Liverpool street scene which makes the city a comfortable and attractive place to live in and to visit.

Around the Region *by Andrew Pearce*

Trip Advisor, the tourism rating agency, rates the Beatles taxi tour in Liverpool twelfth in the UK of "Things to do", ahead of such attractions as the Houses of Parliament, the Roman Baths in Bath and the National Railway Museum in York. London, Edinburgh and Belfast had entries above Liverpool's. Good for publicity even if one could wonder about how the conclusion was arrived at.

Why do new shopping centres and waterfront developments always feature the same national chains of cafés and shops? A new development in Bristol has bucked the trend, favouring local shops and cafés instead. And if you take a close look at it, you soon find out why the UK's property market keeps producing what some call "cloned High Streets". Below the apartments overlooking the shimmering harbour side, soy lattes and craft beer are available from dawn till dusk. And the emphasis is on local firms, individual companies, not just the familiar chains. This is something to think about for people planning developments in Liverpool's Central Docks?

"New" trains for Merseyrail - Merseyrail is likely to order new trains before the end of this year. It describes the present 3-coach

trains as the oldest in use on British railways. In fact, some others were built as 4-coach sets and intended for services out of London's Waterloo. For technical reasons, it was decided to transfer three of the coaches of each set to Merseyrail, leaving the fourth to be coupled to other carriages on the Waterloo services where they still run. You can recognise them because their roofs are lower than the coaches to which they are coupled.

Let's hope that Merseyrail's new trains are entirely suited to Merseyside's requirements, not hand-downs from elsewhere.

There is little doubt that Merseyside's economy has benefited from the EU money which has been spent here. What the future holds for business, research and the arts remains to be seen. The new Government seems less keen than its predecessor on the "Northern Powerhouse" which was intended to benefit this region. One result of the Northern Powerhouse plans was the electrification of the railway from Liverpool to Manchester (now completed) but onward electrification to Leeds and the North East is in limbo.

Formby Civic Society now published an article in the fortnightly edition of "Formby Bubble", a free newspaper available in local shops.

The Society noted the "Liverpool Loves" festival at the beginning of August. Its insistence on using local suppliers and staff wherever possible is to be commended with a commitment to put profits into a fund for local entrepreneurs.

The Society is concerned about the closure of some of the fine heritage pubs in the city such as the Lion Tavern on Tithebarn Street.



It notes with interest Merseyside CAMRA's campaign to protect such pubs, not because of the quality of the beer but because they form an important part of Liverpool's streetscape and are wonderful examples of "The British Pub", now a declining species and propose that, if they have not already done this, we collaborate on making a list of heritage pubs in the city region.

The Royal Bank of Scotland has reported that Liverpool was the second most affordable city for students, after Portsmouth, took into account living and accommodation costs and students' incomes.

It was interesting that The Times thought that Edward Morris was important enough to merit nearly a half page in the paper's "Register", its obituaries column. The paper said that his grasp in 19th century sculpture and art was little short of encyclopedic and the work he did in assembling a sculpture collection for the Walker Art Gallery. He donated a collection of some 1,500 books on art history to The Walker. Yet again proof that The Walker is one of Liverpool's visitor gems, perhaps a little under recognised. Yes, and before anyone pooh-poohs high art as a tourist attraction, just look at the crowds that pile into the National Gallery in London.

"Woolton stone and Liverpool Cathedral" has been published by the Woolton Society which is obtainable at the Cathedral book shop.

Forthcoming Events 2016

18:30hrs for 19:00hrs at the Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool

Tuesday 20 September 2016

Looking back at the mass rehousing in Everton in the 1960s and 1970s: A good job clearing up the horrors of Victorian housing, or, the destruction of communities?

Speaker: Frank Doran

Frank Doran, a former Lord Mayor of Liverpool and Executive Member of Liverpool City Council responsible for the bid for European Capital of Culture, will recount the plans and the results of the massive exercise to remove the very unsatisfactory housing in the Scotland road area of the city and provide new houses and flats for the residents in the city's suburbs and in Kirkby.

Were the properties too insanitary, too decayed to be rehabilitated, or, could they have been refurbished, preserving the local close-knit community? Was the new accommodation provided for them of the right type and in the wrong place?

Was it necessary to split up the local communities in Everton between different new housing projects?

Frank will draw upon his own central involvement in what was done and in the decisions made in Liverpool Town Hall (and by Whitehall) and make use of hindsight to learn lessons for the future.



**Foundation for Art and Creative Technology
(FACT)**

88 Wood St, Liverpool
14:00hrs - 17:00hrs

Thursday 29 September 2016

Liverpool Development Update
(Organised by Place North West)

Speakers (confirmed to date):

Nick Kavanagh
(Head of regeneration at Liverpool City Council)

Colin Sinclair
(Chief executive of Liverpool Knowledge Quarter)

Oliver DeLucia-Crook
(Business development director at Curtins)

Elliot Lawless
(Founder and director of developer Elliot Group)

Phil Mayall
(Development director at Muse Developments)

Hugh Anderson
(Director of hotel agency at Lambert Smith Hampton)

Hear from a cross-section of developers and advisors on the large-scale projects proposed for the city over the coming years. Liverpool's resurgent development market which includes the £1bn creation of a Knowledge Quarter, a £45m city connectivity plan, and a strong pipeline of homes and hotels will be discussed at this afternoon event.

Advance Notice

**18:30hrs for 19:00hrs at the Quaker Meeting
House, School Lane, Liverpool**

MCS Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 22 November 2016

Further details and agenda will be issued in accordance with the MCS constitution.

Edited by Andrew Pearce
Technical support by
David Massey & Glynn Marsden

