

Friargate proposal



Aerial: The Friargate complex with Greyfriar's Green in the foreground

A radical masterplan designed to help revive the city's flagging economic fortunes was announced at the end of May.

The plan designed to save a considerable repair bill to restore existing council offices, would see a £40 million new council complex incorporated into the Friargate development next to the railway station.

While the old Council House will remain as a base for councillors and meetings, the plan would see the number of council offices across the city reduced from 27 separate buildings to

just nine. By relocating to Friargate the city council is hopeful a 'big' organisation will also wish to build its headquarters in the complex. Other changes in the city centre will include a one-stop council shop in Broadgate.

Fargo moving apace



A further stage in the redevelopment of Far Gosford Street is about to go to the Planning Committee for consideration. The proposal, to create a total of 29 new dwellings behind the restored 121-124, has been brought forward by Brian Harrabin.

The mixture of two and three-storey houses has been designed with the original Victorian configuration of Albert Place in mind where historically there was a live-work factory complex established by a master.

This proposal follows hard on the heels of a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the ongoing heritage regeneration

programme in what is one of the city's most important historic streets.

The vision for Far Gosford St is to create a street wide quality heritage environment that is the setting for creative and alternative businesses - a bohemian quarter for the city, attracting a much wider mix of visitors to both day time and evening attractions.

Marina and canal village



A revised plan for a marina at Hawkesbury has been put forward by the Roland Wilson Trust. As well as 169 homes that will form the village, the development also incorporates a marina with up to 150 berths, 40 allotments, a community building and public open space. Last time round councillors voted against the plan on the grounds that it was too intensive for the highway structure, and an appeal was made. The new plan is presented with a reduction of 31 houses to 169. The planning statement says: "The provision of a marina for up to 150 berths

is considered to be of benefit to the community in terms of waterside regeneration, tourism and generating interest in the West Midlands canal network."



coventrysociety

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Next meeting



Venue: Recently opened businesses- Windsor's, Cyrenians and Refreshed

We meet at the Windsor café in Far Gosford Street at 6.30pm on June 10 when Ian Harrabin of Complex Developments will take us on a tour of this historic suburb.

It's an opportunity to see some quality restoration to a number of buildings and also hear about the next phase of work.

For those wishing to see the recently opened Windsor's, Cyrenians shop and an interesting venture called Refreshed, then it is suggested you arrive just after 6pm. The coffee shop will remain open for business.

See you on the 10th

Unplugged

Belgrade Theatre Unplugged is a unique opportunity to hear extracts from forthcoming productions in a variety of interesting venues around Coventry and Warwickshire. The cast, a company of professional actors, will be performing at The Charterhouse on Saturday, June 15 at 6pm. Admission £2-50, concession £1-50

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More news and views on our website: www.coventrysociety.org.uk

Bishopgate proposals



The Society is disappointed in the latest proposals for the former Post Office Sorting Office at Bishop Street.

Artist impressions indicate frontages more suited to an out-of-town retail park rather than a quality development in the city centre.

At the ring end of the building (pictured left) a new entrance provides instant access to a surface crossing of the dual carriageway road. In our view the building, designed as a government department in the 1970's, with elevations faced in red brick, deserves more sympathetic treatment.



Victorian: The Black Horse public house in Spon End, is safe for the time being after consent for demolition was refused.

UHCW traffic

While the urgent matter of better access for ever increasing visitor numbers to Walsgrave Hospital rages on another possible solution has been put forward by member Les Fawcett.

He writes: "While drawing up a plan to utilise the existing bridge over A46 that serves Walsgrave Hill Farm for an access from A46, it occurred to me that there is nothing in the extensive documentation included with the application to show that UHCW has made sufficient effort to persuade people to use the bus rather than driving to the hospital.

It seems many staff and visitors drive to the hospital when they could well use a bus. In a survey of staff travel habits, 12% of them declined to reveal their mode of travel, suggesting that they drive to work unnecessarily and do not want to be challenged.

There are over 2000 staff parking spaces but less than 1000 visitors spaces.

So I wrote to UHCW with two suggestions:

1. Every letter to a patient should include an automatically-generated message according to the postcode giving the bus routes, fares, times, parking charges, and the walk distance for both modes, with a plea to use the bus.

2. Every member of staff should be given a personal travel plan according to their address, working hours, disability, and need to use their car on duty. Those not qualifying for car use should not be given the reduced car parking facility (less than £1/day) that they seem to all enjoy now. They would have to pay the daily rate that the public pay.

It may be that these measures would solve the problem without any capital expenditure.

The effect of these measures could be cumulative; an increase in bus use would justify enhanced services."

Friends group



The first meeting of Coventry Charterhouse Association took place at the end of May.

The association sees itself as a Friends supporting group that will work alongside the Coventry Charterhouse Trust, set up in 2011.

There are tremendous opportunities here to encourage local people to get involved in work parties, and the raising of money to help with restoration work in the house and grounds.

photograph by Harry Teather

Tale of three pockets



Over the last 12 months the Society has been talking to the Council about possible involvement in various schemes to create pocket parks. One of the sites, at Bishop Street (above left), has been landscaped by the Council themselves. Another is the site of a Heatline station at Whitefriar's Lane (above right) that seems to have diminishing merit. Now, in recent weeks we have been asked whether the Society might be interested in helping to create a temporary park on the site of the old Queen Victoria Road corner with Spon Street. Is anyone interested in leading on this possible project?