



# Annual Report 2022 - 2023

February 2022 – January 2023

## Campaigning

We continued to campaign to improve our city and save our remaining heritage, culture and natural environment. In particular we continue to fight to save green land and in particular to try to stop the Council developing land it owns in the Coundon Wedge.

As a corollary to this we support the development on brownfield land – in particular we supported the innovative scheme at Abbott's Park, which the Council refused.

We continued to campaign to improve the City Centre South scheme, which is set to destroy a large part of the city's mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century heritage, as well as some significant cultural elements.

We are particularly disappointed at the closure of the Litten Tree Building, which had been our home for the previous year.

We campaigned to have some affordable housing in the scheme and that has now been agreed, but at the cost of even more intensive development. However we are pleased that the new architects are doing their best to safeguard the public art that was contained in the previous development.

In the absence of a proper review of Coventry Heritage Active Zone, we published our own review, which showed that the HAZ had done well in relation to our medieval heritage, but failed miserably with our 20<sup>th</sup> Century heritage.



*Burges/Hales St. development*

We found out too late about the destruction of Op Art mosaics in the Croft Road underpass and no attempt was made to save them.



*Op Art Mosaics by Headley Lewis*

We don't always oppose the City Council. We supported their ambitious plans for a Giga Factory to make vehicle batteries at Coventry Airport.



We supported their recent initiatives to bring Houses in Multiple Occupation under control.



We also supported the plans to establish Conservation Area in Earlsdon and Brownhill Green.



*City Centre South scheme*



**The City Council has kept us busy responding to consultations and we have responded to more than a dozen during the year:**

- One Coventry Plan
- New conservation areas (Brownhill Green and Earlsdon)
- Transport Strategy
- Energy SPD
- Open Space SPD
- Affordable Housing SPD
- Urban Forestry and Tree Strategy
- Heritage Strategy
- Biodiversity Net Gain SPD
- Residential New Build design guide SPD
- Householder Design Guide SPD
- Tall Buildings and Views of the Spires SPD
- Local listing of buildings in the city
- City Centre South – revised scheme.
- Cultural Strategy refresh
- Houses in Multiple Occupation and Article 4 Directions



We have also engaged the Planning Department on the refresh of the Coventry Local Plan, which will be taking place during the current year.

**Listing and Celebrating**

We supported two buildings for national listing, the Coventry Prep School on Kenilworth Road, the Firs, and Gibbet Hill Farmhouse, the childhood home of Sir Henry Parkes. Both were refused by Historic England.

We also submitted local listing applications for the former Paris Cinema, St. Columbas United Reformed Church, and 8 – 10 Corporation Street. We also commented on the council consultation on the local listing of buildings. Of these, only St. Columbas has been accepted for Local listing.

We submitted the new Ring Road Under Pass Park, known as Naul's Mill Underpark, for the Royal Fine Art Commission Trust Building Beauty Awards, again unfortunately without success.



*The 'Firs' Coventry Prep School*



*Gibbet Hill Farmhouse*



*St. Columbas Church*



*Naul's Mill Underpark*

## Blue Plaques

During the year we installed two blue plaques, at the Firs on Kenilworth Road and at Philip Larkin's birthplace in Radford. We also contributed our thoughts to the developing City Council Blue Plaque scheme.



*Cllr John McNicholas, Lord Mayor of the Coventry with members of the Coventry Society committee at the unveiling of plaques at The Firs.*



*Cllr Kevin Maton,  
Lord Mayor of Coventry*



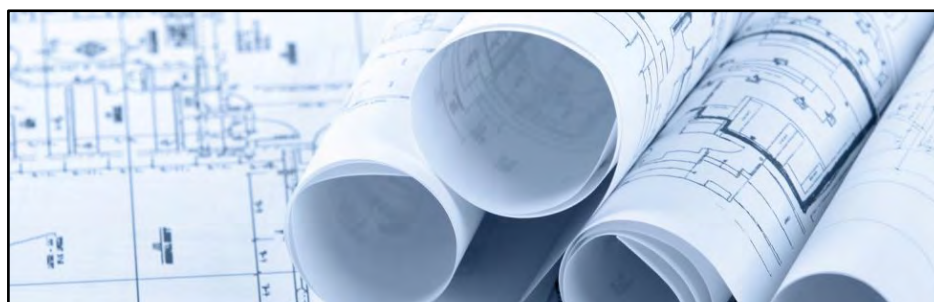
*Philip Pullen,  
Larkin Society*



*Emelie Lauren Jones,  
Coventry's Poet Laureate*

## Planning Applications

We continue to list all the significant planning applications in the city on our website and we commented on a dozen or so planning applications during the year. We are currently struggling with the council's upgraded Planning Portal, but we will continue to ensure that the public is able to see what major applications have been submitted in the city.



## Partnerships

We continued our partnership work with other organisations, including the Guildhall stakeholders group, the Sherbourne River Cultural Programme and the Sherbourne Valley Project.

We partnered with Reading University on a research project to investigate how buildings get planning permission. We chose the Salt Lane Car Park for the project and has several meetings with the researchers.

We also supported our umbrella organisation, Civic Voice, with some problems that impacted on them during the year.

We held our first Boules Tournament in May, courtesy of the Coventry Petanque Club, who showed us how to play, told us the rules and supervised us.

We held two sessions in partnership with Coventry Digital Archive, helping to create meta data for photographs in the Arthur Cooper Archive. These are photos of Coventry taken by news photographer Arthur Cooper between the 1940s and 1960s which have lost their supporting information.

We made a contribution towards the cost of returning one of the Hutton sketches to the Cathedral, in support of the Friends of Coventry Cathedral.



*The framed Hutton drawing with reflections*

## Visits, Meetings and a Conference

During the year we had visits to Coventry Synagogue, the Daimler Powerhouse, the War Memorial Park, Christ Church and the Sherbourne Valley Project. All of our meetings are now held in person. We had nine during the year, with talks from Chris Arnot, Jaqui Ibbotson, David Butler (Head of Planning), Bret Willers and Tony McNally (climate change), Colin Knight (Transport Strategy), historian Peter Coss, and Matt Parker-Wooding (the city's archaeologist). We also had a film show at Christmas.



Coventry Synagogue



Daimler Powerhouse



Walking tour of Sherbourne River



Meeting in the Litten Tree Building

In October we held our second

### **Heritage Conference - The Future of Coventry's Past 2.**

This was a follow up to our first conference which was held in 2019. Heritage organisations and key players from across the city came along to tell us all what they are doing and to discuss the future.

The speakers were -

Councillor David Welsh, *Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities*

Anne Cranston, *Historic Coventry Trust*

Judith Mossman *Pro-Vice Chancellor for Humanities, Coventry University.*

Jill Kashi, *Westwood Heath Local History Group.*

Kauser Husein, *Hillfields History Group*

John Marshall, *Stoke Local History Group*

Mark Cook, *Farm buildings in Coventry*

Peter Elias, *Spencer Park Group*

Nick Cleaver, *Canals & Rivers Trust*

Tim Claye, *Orchards in Coventry*

Charlotte Stranks, *Stoney Road Gardens*



Tim Claye  
*Orchards in Coventry*



Heritage Conference in Drapers Hall

## Communications

We published 156 stories on our News Blog during the year, including 21 editions of Peter Walter's popular series of "lockdown walks in the city".

In addition, we maintained a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Flickr.

You can find out more about the Coventry Society on our website and if you like what you see, perhaps you might consider joining us.

## Warning



The Coventry Society once saved the Black Horse pub, but it was demolished as part of a road-widening scheme. This is why 'The Coventry Society' needs to be on its guard at all times.

**Coventry Society, c/o 3 Old Winnings Road, Keresley End, Coventry, CV7 8JL.**

Web Site: [www.coventrysociety.org.uk](http://www.coventrysociety.org.uk)

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