

IPSWICH BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2014 *(Edited by Bob Allen)*



GUEST SPEAKER FOR AGM

Dr Geraint Coles

Lecturer in Cultural Heritage at UCS Business School

**‘HERITAGE AND REGENERATION IN IPSWICH’ – Isaacs,
Wednesday 29th October, 7pm – Book the date now**

We are extremely fortunate to have DR GERAINT COLES as our guest speaker at this year’s AGM. Dr Coles is Lecturer in Heritage Management and Course Leader for the Masters programme in Professional Practice in Heritage Management at UCS.

Dr Coles is an expert on the archaeology of the human impact on landscape. While Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh Geraint became closely involved in the management of significant cultural landscapes, including the Isle of Lewis where he worked with local people to help create community run centres at Calanais Stone Circle and Dun Carloway Broch. This led to an interest in the use of heritage assets to create social and economic regeneration, and he left academia to lead the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal. This project developed an explicit focus not just on the restoration of a waterway but also the creation of a sustainable amenity generating its own income, providing local up-skilling through training, improving the natural and historic environment, and having a significant impact on the community, the quality of life, and opportunities for business growth.

With this kind of background, Dr Coles will be a very welcome speaker to reflect on heritage and regeneration opportunities in Ipswich.

This year the AGM is in a different format and in a different venue – WEDNESDAY 29TH OCTOBER, 7pm, ISAACs on the Waterfront. We will start the evening with a very brief formal AGM before Dr Coles’ illustrated lecture. Refreshments will be available. To help us to estimate the catering and accommodation requirements, PLEASE BOOK YOUR PLACE BY EMAIL njacob@njarchitects.co.uk OR PHONE 01473 221150

EXEMPLAR REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The Ipswich & Suffolk Freehold Land Society



2014 images (100 years from the building of the last two examples and the outbreak of World War I)

Many members will no doubt be familiar with the work of the Ipswich and Suffolk Freehold Land Society (FLS) – an organisation active in Ipswich from 1849 to 1965, when it became known as the Ipswich & Suffolk Permanent Benefit Building Society, which in turn eventually metamorphosed into the present day Ipswich Building Society. Originally it was formed to enable people of relatively modest means to become ‘forty shilling freeholders’. The Society acquired land and sub-divided it into small allotments for their subscribers, who thus owned sufficient land to qualify them to vote, and by taking a mortgage with the Ipswich & Suffolk Permanent Benefit Building Society branch of the organisation they could own one of the properties built by the Society. There are fascinating accounts of the work of the society compiled by Margaret Hancock on the internet which you can access by typing in ‘Ipswich Freehold Land Society’; these include photographs of the buildings erected by the FLS. In Ipswich the first houses were built in Lancaster Road in 1866, but between this date and the final ones erected in 1938 large areas of the town were provided with good quality houses, and many can be identified by the ‘FLS’ name and date plaques which were commonly provided. Although much speculative housing in this period was variable in quality, many of the FLS properties were characterised by the use of well-selected materials, good workmanship, and the designs incorporated some of the latest developments in villa and terrace architecture.

An early IBPT project in the 1980s was the refurbishment of a house on Arthur's Terrace. At the time, many Victorian terraced homes were being mercilessly subjected to 'modernisation', which in the 1960s and 1970s meant re-roofing with unsympathetic (and heavy) concrete tiles, rendering over original brickwork with hard cement, replacing sash windows with ill-proportioned plastic framed picture windows with meagre opening vents, not to mention the ripping out of original fireplaces and 'flushing' panelled doors with hardboard sheets. We wanted to show that refurbishment could be carried out at a reasonable cost in ways which could retain original features and yet provide the amenities required by modern living, and the Arthur's Terrace property provided an exemplar of what could be achieved. We have long wanted to tackle another refurbishment project of such a property, and we are now actively working with the Ipswich Building Society to identify a potential candidate from among the houses built by their predecessor, the FLS.

Our aims now, however, include the desire to refurbish the property in line with the standards of insulation and fuel efficiency which are current today. Ideally we are seeking a property built before 1914. We would be grateful to hear from any member or friend who knows of a FLS property on the market, or likely to become available in the near future for our consideration.

A PROGRESS REPORT ON BUILDINGS AT RISK

County Hall – A Registry Office and venue for Weddings?

After a long period when little progress seemed possible it is good to see the progress being made on St Andrews House which will include some elements of social housing. As for the County Hall facade, there is still visible damage to the roof, the buddleia continues to flourish in any suitable nook and the clock face appears even more dilapidated. There is very good news, however, in that there is an application in the pipeline for a change of use for part of the building – including the old Council Chamber - as a Registry Office. This would be an excellent formal public use for this part of the complex, which includes the Council Chamber. There is also the possibility that the former Members' Accommodation may become the site for further residential development. A Hedge Fund Lottery bid is a possible source of additional funding. Altogether these developments are very encouraging.

St Michael's Church

Work has now started on the church hall to enable community use by Jimas. This is a first stage in a comprehensive re-development project. The crack in the east end of the church itself is being repaired and we understand that there is hope that the main building can be re-roofed. Viewed from the outside, the church may again have its tiled roof with the dormer windows. A recent street market within the shell of the church generated much interest in securing a future for this building, and we strongly support the efforts being made by all concerned to make this dream a reality. It would make a substantial contribution to its immediate neighbourhood which is in desperate need of visual uplift.

The Old Bell

Some work has been undertaken on the roof following the granting of a license for scaffolding to be erected on the pavement, but at present the work seems to have stopped and there are fears that the building is still not watertight. The conversion to a funeral parlour seems to us to be an admirable change of use for a building which seemed to have few options left. We look forward to seeing the whole scheme complete and this prominent historic building once more secure and in use.

1-5 College Street

We very much supported the Borough Council in threatening an 'urgent works' notice. The result has been that surveys have been undertaken to decide on the nature and extent of works necessary to make the roof secure and weatherproof. We are also heartened to hear that the companies selected for this work were the ones recommended by the Borough Council's officers. As yet there is no further progress to report.

Cliff Cottage, Cliff Quay

Again we support the Borough Council in considering an 'urgent works notice' for this property which has been badly affected by both wet and dry rot and possible broken drains. It is very pleasing to report that the owners are now putting in hand the work necessary to secure the building. The Borough Council officers will be monitoring the situation and eventually it may be possible for funding to be secured for refurbishment. The building could become a family home, linked to the Brewery Tap. This combination of circumstances could possibly open up the possibility of the Trust being involved at some stage to help secure the future of this interesting and historic property.

Further Properties under consideration

In addition to those listed above, the committee is keeping a watching brief on a number of properties in the town centre, several of which are the upper stories of shops. In some cases these retain many historic features which have been lost at ground level, including panelling, staircases, plasterwork, and timber-framed structures. Often, however, access is difficult, and residential or other uses may conflict with the main retail function of the ground floors. As the pattern of retail changes, it may be that more flexible and imaginative uses may be found for these, and the Trust may be able to facilitate the development.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Following the very successful Corporate Members Event at the Ipswich & Suffolk Club, the committee is considering a range of future activities for the Trust to complement our core activity of seeking to refurbish historic properties at risk. These include providing guided walks during Heritage Open Days; an annual event for members, perhaps supported by sponsorship; a service for the owners of listed buildings in Ipswich to provide support for them on matters such as insurance and conservation; and development of the webpage to provide corporate members with a link to details of their activities.