

From the Lookout Post August 2017

CADRA AGM and Open Meeting

Following a brief AGM and round up of the year, CADRA welcomed Dr Megan Aldrich, Architectural Historian to give a personal view of the history of architecture in Caversham.

Megan highlighted the traces of Tudor architecture in Caversham from the cottages in Caversham centre and in Surley Row, the remaining elements of St Peter's Church and the influence of Mapledurham House – a classic example of Tudor domestic Architecture. The original Manor House at Caversham Park from the 1600s, designed by Robert Smithson who also designed Longleat, will also have influenced local building.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, building was limited to the small, domestic, vernacular with no grand architecture similar to that of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Early in the 19th century, Caversham was influenced by the Picturesque Movement and paintings by Turner and Havell give an artist's view. Caversham started to become popular as a leisure destination and Villas were built as a summer house away from London. Towards the end of the century, Victorian streets were designed with delightful elements of design in polychromatic brickwork. These important streetscapes remain as one of the most important features of Caversham. However, they are fragile and easily lost. They need to be nurtured and protected.

The Arts and Craft 'umbrella movement' can be traced in many areas of Caversham with the influence of Voysey, a leading architect of the movement. There is a mix of gothic and other elements and important reference to the Tudor past and we can trace the Tudor influence in many aspects of 19th century building.

Megan concluded with her three favourite buildings.

1. St Barnabas Church
The first corrugated tin church with gothic detailing remains as the Church Hall. The existing church built in the 1920s is a fine example of Arts and Crafts with Gothic style and has some lovely detail.
2. Chiltern Court
Originally named Warren Court and built in 1879-80; by William Ravenscroft of Reading, for George May, this reflects the High Aesthetic movement. It is Grade II listed.
3. Caversham Library
One of the libraries built by the Carnegie Foundation, the library is sometimes referred to as being in the Free Renaissance style. But arguably it is influenced by Voysey and by John Ruskin, Professor at Oxford and a regular visitor to Venice. In Megan's view it belongs to the Arts and Craft movement and looks back at the Tudor Style.

The meeting concluded with a retiring collection for the Society of Protection for Ancient Buildings which was founded by William Morris.

Images – Caversham Library, Hemdean Rise, Chiltern Court

CADRA celebrates 50 years

CADRA was formed in 1967, initially around concern over the building of the new precinct. Across the country, it was a time of change with a growing awareness of the need to recognise and protect local heritage and for local communities to work together. Since then, CADRA has followed and sought to exert a positive influence on progress and change in Caversham. Around 2000, a review was completed, including adoption of a new constitution. Since then, the newsletters have developed, a website and Facebook page have been established and the informal network, locally and across Reading, has continued to develop.

2017 is a year of golden anniversaries and CADRA joins, among others, the creation of Conservation Areas, the Watermill Theatre near Newbury and the Beatles album 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band'. So CADRA will welcome everyone to celebrate '50 years ago today' at the open meeting on **Tuesday 17 October**. Dr John Evans will talk about 'Trees in Caversham' before we cut a cake and drink a toast. There will be a 50th anniversary extended issue of the CADRA autumn newsletter for CADRA members. Membership leaflets are available in Caversham Library and Waltons Jewellers or you can join online at www.cadra.org.uk

St Peter's Conservation Area

The new draft appraisal for St Peters Conservation Area was launched at St Peters Fete on the afternoon of Saturday 8th July. Leaflets and the full appraisal document are available in Caversham Library or at <http://www.cadra.org.uk/conservation-areas.php>

A key proposal is to extend the Conservation Area to include the Church Street/ Church Road/ Bridge Street junction, Bridge Street, and Caversham Bridge, and this proposal has been incorporated into the appraisal. It is hoped that the appraisal will eventually be adopted by Reading Borough Council as part of its formal planning policy. The engagement of residents and building owners is key to its credibility and acceptance by RBC, which will have to undertake its own formal consultation to give the document full legal force.

This consultation closes **Saturday 19 August**. Please do take the opportunity to comment now. It will be important to be able to show that the appraisal has public support.

You can comment: online via the CADRA website <http://www.cadra.org.uk/conservation-areas.php> or by emailing appraisal@cadra.org.uk, or by writing to: St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal Comments, 121 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7LB