

newsletter

**WELCOME
to our new members**
Urban Gravesham continues to grow. Over the last few months we have had many new members - welcome to you all. Thank you for joining our endeavours to protect our historic town.

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REPORT ON HERITAGE QUARTER CONSULTATION MEETINGS



Edinburgh House's original proposal for Gravesend's Heritage Quarter.



- EH consistently refused to answer legitimate questions not only regarding the progress of their new plans, but also on why their proposed development in Castleford remained unbuilt several years after being given planning permission.
- The Council-recorded Minutes of the meetings were inaccurate, a matter which UG have repeatedly pointed out and wish to record.
- A supposedly independent business representative at the third consultation meeting has Edinburgh House as a client and therefore a vested interest in the company.

Following the Council's refusal of planning permission for the Edinburgh House Heritage Quarter scheme and the subsequent withdrawal of their appeal against that decision, it was announced that the developer would submit a new application. In July 2011 EH and GBC promised a full, comprehensive consultation period with the public and key stake holders.

In August we reported that the Council had set up a forum to discuss the sort of development that Edinburgh House should build. At the time we expressed the hope that that the newly-elected Council had accepted that the original scheme was deeply flawed and that they were prepared to work together with the community for a new regeneration plan suitable in scale and design for Gravesend's unique riverside setting. UG representatives attended a series of three consultation meetings together with members of GBC, EH, St. George's Church and local businesses. We are extremely disappointed with these consultation meetings for several reasons:

- UG requested that the consultation meetings should be open to the public and press, but this was refused.
- There was no focus on the central issues of design and scale that gave rise to such a huge groundswell of public opposition to the original scheme. Instead there was a general reluctance by the Chairman to clearly establish the purpose and scope of the consultations and talks were repeatedly diverted into vague discussion of peripheral issues.

UG WANTED TO BE PART OF A GENUINE CONSULTATION PROCESS THAT WOULD RESULT IN REGENERATION SYMPATHETIC TO GRAVESEND'S UNIQUE HERITAGE QUARTER AND ENSURE A STABLE LONG TERM FUTURE FOR OUR TOWN.

Our concern is that EH are aiming to submit another planning application early in the new year without genuine public consultation and with no significant alterations in design or scale to either the Eastern or Western Quarters. We view any such rehash of the original failed Sept 2010 planning application as totally unacceptable.

Urban Gravesham is the independent local civic society and acts without political fear or favour. It is therefore our duty to openly share information with the local community, including our grave reservations about the consultation process and the recently publicised financial difficulties of Edinburgh House.

The Urban Gravesham Committee are not prepared to remain silent or be drawn into complicity with what may well prove yet another attempt to rush through a third-rate, ugly scheme of shoddy, over-sized blocks of one-bedroomed flats onto our historic riverside town.



It looks as if our campaign will continue for some time to come. We will keep you informed.

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EDINBURGH HOUSE PAY UP



Following the withdrawal of their Planning Appeal last July, EH have paid UG's expenses incurred in preparing for the cancelled Public Inquiry. We are currently awaiting a reply from Gravesham Council to our letter asking the amount of their costs and if they have claimed these back from Edinburgh House as they are entitled to do.



THE FUTURE OF GRAVESHAM: Gravesham Council Planning Department Presentation to Urban Gravesham. 07.11.11

Councillor Lee Croxton and two planning officers recently gave a presentation on the Council's draft Core Strategy of its Local Development Framework at Urban Gravesham's regular Monday night meeting at the Three Daws.

The Core Strategy sets out planning policies on what and how much development will happen, where this will be located and when it will happen over the next 20 years. UG will be responding officially to the LDF with particular regard to the

future of the town centre and also expressing our concerns that proposals to earmark areas of the Green Belt for future housing development could have an adverse effect on Gravesham's urban areas.

Please see our website for full UG response to the LDF consultation. Also add you views via the Council's website: www.gravesham.gov.uk/ldf Closing date 8th December 2011



SAVE
OUR CAFE

WOODLANDS PARK CAFÉ

Many people, including Councillor Mick Wenban and MP Adam Holloway turned out in the rain to call on Gravesham Council to rebuild the café in Woodlands Park, recently destroyed in an arson attack. The small café provided a much-needed community facility and after years of neglect and anti-social behaviour which had slowly blighted the Park, it was once again becoming a popular and friendly place for families with children as well as young and old people. It had been refurbished and opened in the summer as a project by local school students who

said they are willing to put their time and effort into helping rebuild it again. Despite this, the Council have indicated that they do not intend to give the go ahead for the project. **We urge the Council, which prides itself on listening to the community, to think again and save this small symbol of local residents' initiative and unity.**

GRAVESEND LIBRARY

Kent County Council have recently accepted UG's donation of £200 to assist with their project in creating a beautiful outdoor space in the rear courtyard garden of the newly re-opened central Gravesend Library, they will be **"delighted to accept our offer of a donation of £200, and the offer of help from members will be much appreciated"**. The new library is a great example of genuine consultation and dialogue which took place between designers, architects, councillors, library staff and users, resulting in a lovely library which respects and sensitively restores aspects of the old Carnegie building and combines accessibility, light and space within the new annexe.

