

Planning Sub-Committee

Patrick Sherratt

The organisers of major planning activities in Dover continue to "drag their heels".

The much heralded Dover Town Investment Zone (DTIZ) on the St James's site was granted planning consent one year ago and is still a barren wasteland. The proposals for the hotel with the communication mast, that is essential to be constructed in order for Burlington House to be demolished, is awaiting "revised plans" as the original hotel group experienced financial difficulties and it is understood Holiday Inn Express has taken on the project. The site that has permission for mainly retail suddenly announced the interest of a Multiplex Cinema. Again no plans have to date (mid May) been submitted for public viewing by DDC.

The controversial "Western Heights" application also proceeds at a snails pace and only minor alterations since my last report and sadly there is no indication from English Heritage of the Heritage Package that is proposed by the developer. The Dover Society has again mentioned to the Planning Authority (DDC) the importance of such a package with the need for English Heritage participation in particular as English Heritage has starved

financial investment to the Western Heights.

Dover Hospital planning application has had a few amendments but does not resolve the Dover Society concerns as outlined in my last report and we wait for this to go to DDC Planning Committee stage when we hope to make a suitable presentation.

Section 215 activity has been dormant during the winter period with weather conditions not suitable for some of the required restoration work. However it is pleasing that another eyesore in Castle Street (number 5) is nearing completion, see photo. Currently 55% of the 69 identified properties in stage one (Dover Town) have either been completed or work is underway. The second stage in Folkestone Rd is already seeing scaffolding being erected in



A Much Improved Tattoo Parlour 5 Castle Street

particular around the Dover Priory station area.

Two Section 215 notices have been served to owners by DDC, these being 1 Atholl Terrace and 13/13A Cannon Street. These notices are for the legal enforcement to comply and list the work to be carried out. Failure within the prescribed timescale results in appropriate legal action. These two will, I believe, be the "test cases" for further 215 notices to be issued. The Dover Society Team consisting of Mike Weston, Jim Pople, Beverly Hall and myself continue to carry out periodical inspection of the identified properties and we have already, in conjunction with the DDC Principle Planner (Enforcement) short listed nine other properties for serving 215 notices.

We continue to seek a solution to the major eyesore of the former ABC Cinema in Castle Street and have a dialogue with Wetherspoons and the DDC Regeneration Officer.

DDC Planning has just produced a consultation document "Draft Parks and Amenity Open Space Strategy" with comments required by the 25th July. The Society will be responding to this important document in particular as part of the community is seeking to establish a large "International standard" skate park in Connaught Park. The consultation document introduction states it aims to raise standards at its



Work in Progress ...



... now a Much Improved 7 Castle Street

major urban parks. It is pleasing that a prime objective is quoted "In the first instance efforts will be focused on strategic sites in Dover, to support the corporate objective of regenerating the town".

Concern has been expressed by members of the anti-social behaviour in Dover. Following the closure of detention facilities at Dover Police station it is felt that this is a partial cause. The Society Executive asked that I take this matter up with the recently elected Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (Mrs. Ann Barnes). Correspondence has failed to alter the decision but Mrs. Barnes states that policing levels, which include staffing of detention facilities, can only be considered for alteration if there is statistical evidence and as such suggests that ANY anti-social activities should be reported using the police 101 phone service. Any reported instances should be given an "incident number" at the time of reporting thereby providing statistical records.