



The Wavertree Society

Caring for Wavertree - Past, Present and Future

NEWSLETTER 243

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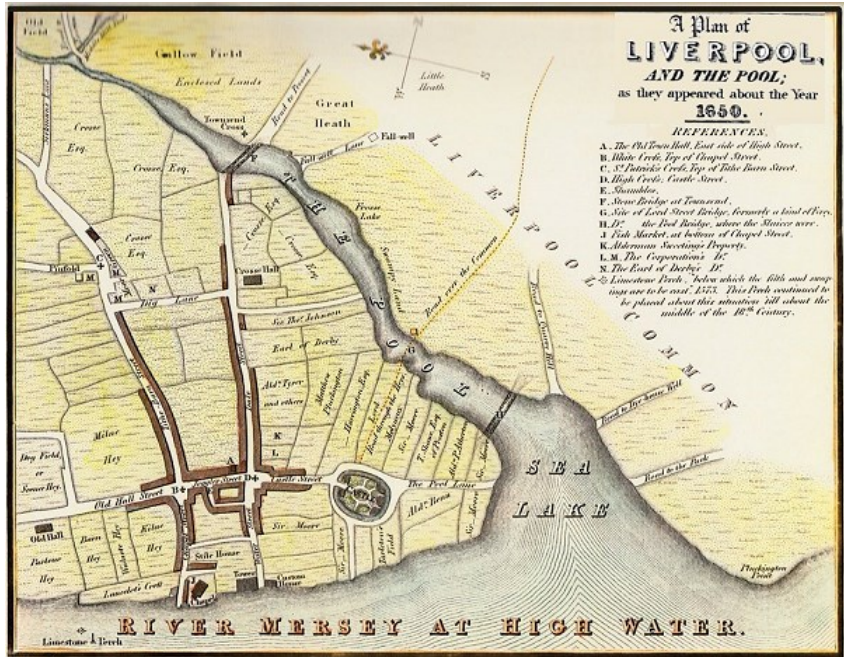
November
2022

Our next meeting:

LIVERPOOL'S MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

A talk with old slides
by **Christina Clarke**
on **Wednesday 23rd
November** at 7.30 p.m.
at the **Olive Mount
Community Centre**,
Edgewell Drive, Liverpool
L15 8GG

This talk will look at the topography of Liverpool, and emphasise the importance of the Pool in creating the town's medieval street pattern. Christina Clarke is a former member of the Wavertree Society's Committee. She will explain how her group, The Save Our City Campaign, ensured that the seven original streets of Liverpool were recognised in perpetuity. Bonk street/Bank street, Moore street, Juggler street, where are they now? Come along to Christina's talk and you'll find out!



COMMITTEE NEWS

We are pleased to say that we have two new Committee members: John Farmer and Laurence Sidorczuk. Both of them came forward and volunteered at the A.G.M. on 30th October. Laurence is no stranger to our Society – he was a Committee member in the early 1980s – but has recently returned to live in Sandown Lane. In addition, 8 of the existing Committee members agreed to continue. The Officers for 2022/23 will be appointed (by the Committee) on 10th November.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2022/23

... are now due. The current membership year began on 1st October. 60 per cent of our members are already paid-up – many members pay for 2 or 3 years at a time – but if your Newsletter address label reads '30/09/22' then we look forward to receiving your renewal subscription. Please send it to the Membership Secretary (see back page for details) or pay online via bit.ly/payWavSoc

DESMOND ROSS 2023 CALENDARS

We have purchased a second batch of calendars from Des's family for re-sale. There are now only a few left, so if you want to buy (price £7.50 each if collected, or £10.50 for one, £19 for two by mail order) please phone our Sales Officer on 0151 722 6265 or email us – info@wavertreesociety.org – as soon as possible.

THE WAVERTREE SOCIETY aims to IMPROVE local amenities and to PROTECT the local environment and architectural heritage, especially within the Wavertree Village and Wavertree Garden Suburb Conservation Areas.

Chair: **Robert Zatz** 65 Sandown Rd, Liverpool L15 4JA (0151 733 5878 or 07973 951408)

Vice Chair & Planning Sec: **John Wood** 3 Soarer Cottages, Grange Lane, L25 5LF (07703 531991)

Hon. Treasurer: **Colin Pyle** 1 Monkswell Dr, L15 8JN (0151 722 1565)

Membership Sec & Sales Officer: **Sheilagh Birch** 338 Wavertree Nook Road, L15 7LJ (0151 722 6265)

Local History Sec & Newsletter Ed: **Mike Chitty** 16 Chartmount Way, L25 5LB (0151 428 7801)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE at www.wavertreesociety.org for more pictures, information and web links relating to the topics featured in this and previous Newsletters.

You'll find instructions on how to join the Society – or renew your membership – online using a credit or debit card.

You'll also discover how you can help us by registering with Easyfundraising.org.uk and generating donations from retailers (at no cost to yourself) when you shop online.

LIDL AT THE ABBEY – WHAT WE THINK

As reported in our last Newsletter, Lidl UK propose to refurbish the former Abbey Cinema building – using the ground floor as a supermarket and 'mothballing' the remainder. Various architectural features will be restored, and the whole building will be made safe and weathertight. Liverpool City Council's Planning Department has asked us for our views on Lidl's planning application (ref.22F/2152) and this is how our Chairman has responded on behalf of the Society's Committee:

1. Wavertree needs a supermarket on this site. The Lennons/ Gateway/ Somerfield/ Co-Op supermarket which occupied the former Abbey Cinema building between 1981 and 2020 was of great benefit to the local community, especially those without the use of a car.
2. The site deserves a building of the highest quality. It is a key location within the Wavertree Village Conservation Area, close to historic buildings including the Coffee House pub, the former Lamb Inn, the Picton Clock Tower and the 18th-century Lock-up. We objected to Lidl's original plan (for a new-build supermarket following demolition of the former cinema building) because the proposed design was not good enough. As Historic England's official List Description demonstrates, the Abbey Cinema building is a building of architectural quality, adding character to the conservation area though very different in style from the buildings around it.
3. The refurbishment and future maintenance of the building will be key to the success of the project. When we consulted our members on Lidl's original demolition plan, some described the existing building as "a carbuncle" and "an eyesore". Others described it as "attractive" and "iconic". We suspect that, if it is restored sympathetically, attitudes will change and more people will incline towards the latter view. Lidl's proposals are therefore very welcome. They are also surprisingly ambitious. We do wonder, for example, whether it is really necessary for all of the windows to be replaced. We hope that the Council's planning and conservation officers will give the company guidance on what work is necessary and what is merely desirable.
4. An obvious problem with the site is the shortage of car parking provision. The number of spaces available is well below the level typically associated with a Lidl supermarket. However the site is well served by public transport. It will be important to lay out the car park in such a way that shoppers arriving and departing on foot, or by bike, bus or taxi (as well as those with buggies or in wheelchairs), are encouraged and not inconvenienced. The proposal to house the trolley storage area within, rather than outside, the building will help maximise the area available for parking.
5. Another potential shortcoming is Lidl's proposal to 'mothball' rather than use the upper floors of the building. However, we are pleased to note that they are to be made stable, secure and weathertight. Also, having visited the building recently accompanied by Lidl staff, we can quite understand the company's fears that any commercial use of the upper floors will reduce the (already limited) availability of parking for their customers. While we would like to see some limited use – such as a first floor café within the glazed corner tower, taking advantage of the views across the Conservation Area, which might be open at off-peak times to serve primarily local customers arriving on foot – we do not feel that planning permission should be refused merely on the grounds that the upper floors are shown as remaining empty.
6. In terms of the detailed design, we assume that decisions on some elements (including the landscaping/boundary treatment) will have to await the submission of the Listed Building Consent application. However, members of our Committee have raised doubts about the following: (i) the windows – the proportions of the panes proposed for the corner tower apparently differing from those either side; and (ii) the billboards – the two on the ground floor being thought to be over-large (much larger than the traditional cinema billboards that they are perhaps intended to mimic).
7. One of our main concerns – which we know is shared by Lidl – is that a decision on this planning application should be made as rapidly as possible. The people of Wavertree have already been without the supermarket for over two years. With every month that passes, building costs escalate. The associated Listed Building Consent application will take some time to prepare and process. We hope that the Council's planning officers will work pro-actively with Lidl's architects to avoid unnecessary delays and wasted effort.

www.wavertreesociety.org
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info@wavertreesociety.org

Do you want to JOIN the Society?

Our annual subscription is **£5 (household)** or **£10 (company, etc.)**. Please pay online (see website) or send a cheque, payable to 'The Wavertree Society', to the Membership Sec: 338 Wavertree Nook Road, Liverpool L15 7LJ.

Are you a PAID-UP Member?

Your address label indicates the date (e.g. 30/09/23) on which your current subscription expires. You can renew, if you wish, for up to 3 years at a time.