

Annual Report April 1st 2009 - March 31st 2010

Stroud Preservation Trust is a building preservation trust set up to preserve buildings of particular historical, architectural and constructional interest, in and around Stroud, for the benefit of the local community and the Nation.



The last AGM report ended by saying that the negotiations with the Stroudwater Textile Trust to form a centre at the Goods Shed had not been successful, and that we were now progressing with an alternative scheme to make the building secure and available for basic uses. This has been successfully progressed during the year and building work is now in progress. We are using the funds raised or promised over the last few years to ensure that the building is not at risk and to convert it to a form where it can more easily move into some form of use. In the following sections work in progress is reviewed, together with other discussions that have been held on the future of the Goods Shed. A large effort has been spent on delivering a viable project at the Goods Shed and this has severely limited the time available to look at other buildings and issues. However, help has been given in several areas and these are also described.

Planning/progressing work at the Goods Shed.

We decided to use our available fund (about £120k) to do fairly basic works to improve the image of the building in terms of both use and security. Ideally this would involve installing roller shutter doors on all of the arch openings, flooring over the track bed and the centre loading bay area, removing the majority of the external platform and making good, renovating the offices, laying on power and repairs to windows, rooflights and drainage as necessary. The existing plans were modified in accordance with these requirements by Atelier 17 and submitted for the planning permissions. Getting the permissions were delayed by mistakes within the planning system, as the initial plans

were mislaid and forgotten within the control system. Discussions were held with Stroud District Council and English Heritage to clarify several points and all permissions were finally granted in March. A tender exercise was held to identify a suitable contractor. There was a wide spread of quotes and only Carter Construction provided one that was close to our budget, and even here we had to exclude several areas of work. We finally granted a contract to Carter Construction to install roller shutter doors, floor over areas within the building, remove the external platform and rebuild the area immediately joining the shed and to repair the drainage system. The rooflights are to be repaired under a separate contract through Network Rail. We do not have funds at present to install the power supply or renovate the offices. The contract work finally began on the building in March and already the image of the building is improved. The present work is classed as alterations, and as such will be zero rated for VAT.



March 2010



*Tornado passing the Brunel Goods Shed
(c) Keith Hursthouse 2009*

Discussions on extending the lease with Network Rail

Our lease was initially for 40 years and there is now about 18 years remaining. The short duration of the lease has always been perceived to be a barrier to developing a viable use in the building, as it makes it difficult to obtain capital grants. Lengthy discussions were held with Network Rail on the extension of our lease period to 99 years. These were initiated when we had a prospective user in negotiation. However, when the terms were being finalised, we did not have a user in hand and in the Network Rail lease terms there was a non reversionary clause. This meant that the SPT could not return the lease to Network Rail, other than with their agreement, and this is unlikely to be obtained. We felt, and our solicitor agreed, that this clause was unacceptable for the SPT, without a committed long term user. We therefore decided to put the discussions with Network Rail on hold. The basis of an agreement is established and could be reactivated by ourselves or a new owner. The cost of these discussions were significant to the SPT, because of the Network Rail legal fees and our solicitor fees that accumulated.

Fund Raising

We continue to raise further funds to extend the work we can do on the Goods Shed. We applied to the

Gloucestershire Environmental Trust for a grant, but this was rejected on the grounds that we do not qualify to be registered by the national body, Entrust. They rejected our application to register, because there would be insufficient public access. However, it is felt that the local committee would have accepted our proposal and we are intending to appeal against the Entrust decision.

We are also discussing the leasing of the extra car parking space, formed by removing the external platform of the Goods Shed. We have had a positive response from the company that currently leases the land at that end of the station yard.

Options for the Future Use of the Goods Shed

We have considered what to do with the building when the current phase of work is complete. We do not want the building left unused and therefore we are starting to develop a marketing strategy for the building. The first stage is to produce a prospectus for the building, so that potential new tenants/owners can see what it is offering and can then contact either the trust or, for commercial approaches, our agent (who will be Andrew Watton and Co.). The availability of the prospectus will be publicised and made available as a download from the website. Valuations for rent/sale are currently being obtained.

Other Activities

We have provided advice to Norman Philips (relation of WH Davies, poet ('What is this life if full of care, we have no time to stand and stare...')). Norman Philips owns the cottage at Nailsworth, which is the former home of WH Davies. It is now uninhabitable and is in need of sympathy. We advised on what should be done to the

building to bring it back into a usable condition and to make it safe.

We also provided our view to the SDC on the future of Tricorn House.

SPT Chair

I've been chair of the trust for more than 20y and I'm not offering myself for re-election this year. Its time for another to take on this role, perhaps develop a new vision for the trust and move it forwards into the future. We are discussing the future of the SPT at present with the aim of finding a formula that meets the aspirations of its trustees and serves a useful need. The SPT has served a vital role in helping to preserve the historic buildings of Stroud over the past 25 years and there is a considerable list of successes. However, market conditions have changed, which has made it more difficult to develop viable (to a bpt) building projects, but there are other options. If you would like to join us and formulate the future work, join us as trustees.

Finally, a thank you to all those who have helped with the Goods Shed project and other activities during the year.

Nigel Paterson, Chair, SPT

Trustees

Nigel Paterson Chairman
Tim Bryan
Camilla Hale
Steve Hurrell
Tim Harrison
Anne Mackintosh Treasurer
Emma Stuart
Richard Wood
Richard Fox (co-opted)

Bankers

CAF Bank
Barclays Bank

Auditors

Shiner Mitchell Fisher & Co Ltd

Financial Information

Income and Expenditure

Income £1,434
Expenditure £14,048

Breakdown of Income

Membership /Donations £698
Investment Income £136
Rents £600

Breakdown of Expenditure

Administrative £1,464
BGS costs £12,584

Fund Balances

General Fund £34,223
Restricted Funds £13,264
Value of property £27,500
Total £74,587

A full financial statement is available on request.

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