

Horsham Society

David Griffiths



Chance to improve boring part of town

The growth of Horsham town has been the result of much 'ad hoc' development, with little consideration having been given to the integration of the various areas.

The western approach to the town centre is via Lynd Cross, a pedestrianised link to the lower end of West Street. Lynd Cross is the intersection of two pedestrian routes - a north / south and east / west.

The centrepiece of the area was originally the 'Rising Universe', a water feature with seating which the residents of Horsham either loved or hated. This, along with McDonalds and the Lynd Cross public house ensured the area buzzed with the coming and going of people.

Now, following the demise of the water feature due to maintenance costs and the loss of McDonalds to a new development, Lynd Cross is now a barren space, resembling a desert without an oasis, the one redeeming feature being the birch trees, which replaced the 'Rising Universe'.

The empty Trend offices, which sit to the north of Lynd Cross, form part of the Swan Walk development, which also incorporates Wilkinsons. Aviva are the Swan Walk



The birch trees which replaced the 'Rising Universe'.

landlords and they are scheduled to redevelop this end of the shopping centre and there has been much publicity, citing a new cinema complex and the relocation of Wilkinsons, to provide yet more cafe

culture.

However, there has been no indication when this work might begin. The southern end of Lynd Cross connects with the bus station. This area needs some urgent attention, to provide a fully integrated pedestrian link between Dunelm and The Forum, with the rest of the town. Black Horse Way, which is the only access to the Carfax, presently acts as a service road for West Street, with the resultant problems of rubbish and errant wheelie bins.

The western approach to Lynd Cross is a paved area that benefits from some tree and shrub planting. This is also the main pedestrian route for the Waitrose / John Lewis store.

West Street abuts the eastern side of Lynd Cross, and is the main shopping street for Horsham, on which considerable expense was expended re-paving it. However, the result did little to lift the appearance of the street. Thankfully Horsham District Council have introduced planters and hanging baskets, which have introduced colour and now make West Street a very pleasant area.

How to improve Lynd Cross and inject some life into this dying part of the

town? A thought would be to introduce a cruciform shaped glazed canopy, similar in construction to the one which was originally in Piries Place.

The extremities of the cruciform could extend into the four arms of Lynd Cross, serving to link the whole area. The canopy, possibly incorporating some form of screening would provide an 'all weather' area for events, indoor markets, performances / musicians, and even the provision of a cafe.

The existing birch trees could be removed from their existing position and supplemented and replanted at the outer ends of the canopy. Such a feature along with the opportunities that it could provide would undoubtedly serve to return life to this present boring and under-utilised area of Horsham.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns. For more information, visit the website www.horshamsociety.org or phone 01403 259038.