

GODALMING TRUST CIVIC DESIGN AWARDS

It all began when Waverley Borough Council launched their own awards system in 1995. This of course covered the entire Borough. Not to be left out of what seem a worthwhile opportunity the Godalming Trust launched it's own initiative the following year, thus not clashing with the Borough awards. It was decided at the outset that choices would be limited to schemes completed in Godalming, Farncombe and the surrounding villages. The intention has always been to give public recognition to completed developments displaying a high standard of design and construction and to the teams responsible for them.

Awards are made on a biennial basis. The first of these award schemes took place therefore in 1996 covering work carried out from 1994 to 1996 and completed in time for the Annual General Meeting. Prominent that year as winners were the Sports Centre at Charterhouse School and the then new houses at the rear of Harts Yard off the High Street.

Since 1996 the scope of the Awards has expanded somewhat so as to incorporate additional categories to bring before the public a more varied selection. These categories now take into account not only new buildings but also refurbishment work, extensions to a building, shopfronts, environmental enhancement and a special award. One award is reserved for what the judging panel considers to be the "Best of the Best". It is interesting to note that over the years the Trust has never been short of candidates in any of these categories.

As to the matter of selection, the Trust set up a sub-committee for this purpose. Its members change from time to time but it has always comprised a lay and professional element but so as to introduce an impartial opinion, we have in the past included a member from the Haslemere Society and for many years now a member of the Farnham Society.

The Process of Selection

Of course it is a relatively simple thing to identify an awardable contender but quite another to pursue the possibility. First, each developer must be approached so as to obtain their agreement to take part and to afford access to the works. Assuming this can happen the sub-committee must then conclude, after appropriate site visits, which contenders will be chosen and into which category they fall.

Next, the successful contender must be informed and invited to the Awards Ceremony at the AGM. Out of courtesy the Development Team must be notified and invited, all of this involving contact and correspondence with many disparate parties. A photographic record is maintained throughout so as to stage an exhibition of the winning schemes at the Awards Ceremony. I have already mentioned above the schemes awarded in our first year of involvement. There would be too many subsequent schemes to mention in this brief report but just to give some idea of what the Trust has been up to over the intervening years listed below are some of the winners chosen completely at random:-

1998 ----- The extension to St. Marks Church at Ockford Ridge.

2000 ----- The Broadwater Oak tree sculpture.

2002 ----- The Centenary Sports Hall, Priorsfield School.

2004 ----- Restoration of Church Garden Godalming United Church

2006 ----- Stockwell Barns Ashtead Lane

This year the Trust reaches its seventh award scheme and the sub-committee has already agreed an interesting bag of winners and highly commended schemes, as in any of the preceding years.

As usual the Awards Ceremony will take place during the Trust AGM on 24th September of this year. In conclusion please bear in mind that both the membership and public at large are always cordially invited to submit suggestions to the Trust. Who knows, some project may just be a twinkling in the eye at the moment and could be an award winning development in 2010!

Henry Collen