

The Henley Society was formed in 1961 when a major planning application was approved by the Henley Borough Council which would have involved the demolition of the handsome Catherine Wheel Hotel in Hart Street and its replacement with a row of 1960's style shops.

Local residents and visitors alike were aghast at the idea not only of losing this splendid old building but that its own elected Council should approve of the shops scheme without due regard for the town's historic street scene. Such was the local anger to this decision it resulted in the formation of the Society and the saving of the Hotel. Hart Street is one of the jewels in Britain's high street scenes and to imagine it without the Catherine Wheel façade would be unthinkable.

Since then the Society has flourished ensuring that planning applications are examined by its own planning and conservation experts and it regularly brings its influence to bear on difficult and controversial applications. This is not to say it has no time for modernising or merely wants Henley to be submerged in aspic. Quite the contrary. Whilst the best of the past matters it is also necessary to incorporate the best of the future.

Additionally this non-political organisation arranges visits and events for members to see and enjoy all manner of historic and interesting places and to appreciate the need for continual vigilance on our environment. Concessions and special arrangements are the norm.

Our watchwords are to work to maintain the very best of the town for posterity and to ensure that the highest and most sensitive standards are applied to future developments.