

# Stoneygate Conservation Area Society

NEWSLETTER : MARCH 1998



## RESIDENTS SEEING RED OVER ORANGE

FEARS are mounting that plans by communications company, Orange, to instal a ground station and aerials on land inside the Stoneygate conservation area will put a giant Cedar tree at risk.

The city council alleges it is powerless to stop work going ahead in the grounds of Lyndhurst Court flats because the necessary notice of intent has met with all legal requirements and also has consent from the freeholders, the Wilson Trust.

SCAS committee member, Diane Hall, contacted the council's Conservation and Planning Department after a Society member alerted her to possible danger to the huge, ancient tree that stands as high as the six-storey block of flats.

Ms Hall stressed in a letter sent on behalf of SCAS to Conservation Officer, Mike Taylor, that the Cedar, which Orange is understood to have identified as a pine tree, is in an area defined by the local authority as being of special characteristic and historic interest.

"Clearly the council has a duty to look after the character and appearance of such areas and has special legal powers to do so," she said.

Steve Brown, a member of the Development Control team, who subsequently spoke to Ms Hall, said at first that nothing could be done because planning permission is not an issue.

He then told her the Department of the Environment could be asked to prevent Orange from installing in the area, but 'if we did it for one conservation area we would have to do it for them all.'

It is believed that a second communications company, Ionica has shown interest in providing the same facilities for

Stoneygate Court, which is also owned by the Wilson Trust.

Council Landscape Planner, Richard Riley has been to look at the tree and in his opinion a ground station - built in the form of plastic pods enclosed by a brick wall six inches from the tree - was totally unsuitable as trenching would have to take place for the wall foundations.

He promised to contact Orange's own surveyor to see if another spot in Lyndhurst Court can be used.

Councillor Robert Pritchard, Liberal Democrat East Knighton, said: "The location of the ground station at Lyndhurst Court is completely inappropriate because of the harm to trees. I will get in touch with the council to see what can be done to stop this happening."

And Labour member for Stoneygate, Councillor Ned Newitt, was quick to express his concern and promised to investigate the matter.

"I am in any case not happy at the way in which Orange have the right to plonk these masks on buildings: enquiries will be made," he said.

Stoneygate Court resident, Peter Janes, said Orange's notice of intent should have been notified to the planning committee and SCAS instead of being delegated to and passed on the nod by planning officers.

"Why have a conservation area when this sort of thing goes on. All we shall see as next door neighbours is a mast extending above roof level," Mr Janes said.

### Same old excuses

**IN SPRING 1996** a letter to Leicester City Council asking for double yellow lines to stop parking up to the corner of specified road junctions in Clarendon Park brought the response that although there was no record of accidents over the previous three years, the locations had been inspected and problems were apparent.

The letter then stated that 'a temporary shortage of staff resources' meant nothing could be done at that time.

**FEBRUARY 1997** and a reminder letter was sent - still nothing doing. This was because two vacancies (one due to maternity leave) had yet to be filled and 'Members of the Traffic Group are fully committed in implementing other traffic schemes to ensure that funding is spent prior to the end of March.

**OCTOBER 1997.** SCAS takes up the issue and is advised again by the Traffic Engineers' Department that 'there are many junctions that would benefit from waiting restrictions. Unfortunately there is not the resources available at present.'

## STREET TREE IN WAITING

FOUR men and a van appeared last month on Central Avenue, to replace a damaged tree.

The ornamental pear was all set for a permanent home in LE2 - until the planters discovered it had no hole to go to because a paving slab had got there first.

Some time later following much consideration, calls back to base and what looked like elevenses while waiting for instruction, they gathered body, soul, tools and the near-to-blooming little tree together and departed.

Solicitous enquiries revealed the tree was in store because John Thorneycroft, the trees and woodlands officer who may have raised the order to plant, was on sick leave. "We can't dig holes in the footway without first knowing where the service pipes beneath it lie and we don't know when John will be back," explained the manager, Alan D'Albe.

The very latest news according to tree surveyor, Phil Brophy, is that with John Thorneycroft still, sadly, on long-term sick leave, the tree has been heeled in at the depot pending a decision.

"When he does return the tree order will not receive top priority among the tasks to deal with.

"There is in any case very little time left now for planting and the Highways Department would have to make a service check beforehand. The earliest we would be able to do anything is autumn, the likelihood is next year," he said. *Joan Copp.*

This newsletter is published by:  
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Please note - any views expressed are  
not necessarily those of the publisher.

# SCAS IN 'SEX SCANDAL'

**N**O, not really - but to write about Stoneygate Conservation Area Society in a way that is riveting does call for some desperate measures.

## SHOCK

### VIEWPOINT

Discussions with friends (and partner) who are not converts to the cause place me quickly on the defensive. Is it really just an organisation of middle class do-gooders with nothing better to do? What does it achieve - apart from saving the roundabout, of course? And what's wrong with change anyway?

At times I falter, my mind goes blank and I begin to doubt the cause. Some reasons for my involvement with SCAS are sentimental, like an attachment to the area where I have lived for 20 years. I enjoy the atmosphere and appearance of somewhere that mostly remains true to its Edwardian and Victorian past.

There is however more to this than the pleasure of being surrounded by architecture that is familiar and pleasing to the eye. Modern architecture at its best is exciting and beautiful but standards in general fall short. The pastiche of styles from Tudor to Edwardian that has become the vernacular of contemporary house building, does no favours to the old or the new.

Pressures on urban areas are enormous. Changing demography, with more single households and a rapidly ageing population, create demand for smaller housing

units - potentially destroying the social balance and creating a nightmare of traffic and parking.

Developments in technology (cable) and transport also pressurise roads and the environment. All this and the vagaries of planning laws and regulations mean constant vigilance is needed to prevent the destruction of our local environment. Without a collective voice, local people may moan but are powerless to influence what is going on around them.

This is where SCAS comes in. Not to oppose change and development for the sake of it, but to achieve a balance between old and new. Examples of our concerns include the maintenance of Queens Road as a thriving and attractive shopping area: monitoring change of use of properties and the division of family housing into individual units, without proper thought for the parking and traffic implications and multiple wheelie-bins; moderating developments which are out of keeping with the local area; and, of course, that roundabout.

This may not be particularly 'sexy' but it is important. SCAS could not exist without your support and involvement. See you at the next meeting? *Ro Gordon.*

## Planning Applications

- **24 Victoria Park Road.**  
Conversion of ground floor rear to s.c. flat and single storey extension at rear. **Refused.**
- **1 Albert Road.**  
Change from residential home to single dwelling house. **Withdrawn.**
- **12-14 Stoneygate Road.**  
Development of property (flats) into six s.c. flats and four bedsits (car parking available). **Approved.**

**SCAS**  
Annual General Meeting  
Tuesday 28 April 1998 at 7.30pm  
St. John's Parish Centre  
Clarendon Park Road  
(London Road end)  
**SPEAKER:**  
Mike Moore  
Independent Museums' Consultant  
*Life in a Victorian Suburb*

## STONEYGATE CONSERVATION AREA SOCIETY

I/we wish to join the Society/renew membership and enclose cash/cheque for £2.50 (family per year) as from 1st April 1998. Please make cheques payable to Stoneygate Conservation Area Society.

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Title) ..... Tel: .....

Address: ..... Postcode: .....

(Please send to: Odette Fogler, Membership Secretary, 5 Calbri Court, 37 Knighton Drive, Leicester LE2 3HD. Tel: 270 5623)