

# Stoneygate

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2002

## Conservation Area Society

The society's AGM will be held at The Octagon, St John's Church, Clarendon Park Road, on 29 May at 7.30 pm.

Cynthia Brown, of the Leicester University-based East Midlands Oral History Archive, will give a talk about this project.

We are keen to make sure that the society remains connected

to local opinion, and that residents keep us informed of any changes that could affect the character of the area. Thus we hope as many members as possible, and any curious friends or new neighbours, will attend the meeting.

We will be announcing details of an accompanied public walk around Stoneygate to visit key

buildings and features described in the character statement. And we expect the presentation on a local oral history project by Cynthia to give us a new perspective on the area.

There will also be an opportunity for discussion of proposed changes to London Road, including the Mayfield Road roundabout – see next page.

## OLD PRINT WORKS' NEW LEASE OF LIFE

The Leicester Chinese Christian Church has been created from an old print works on Clarendon Park Road, which for a time acted as a garage.

It was a major concern for SCAS after somebody proposed turning this large building into a nightclub in a residential area with a parking problem. Fortunately our objection was upheld.

In contrast to the concerns raised by that development, the Chinese Christians' decision to hold their main service on Sunday afternoons minimises parking problems, since worshippers attend other local churches mainly in the morning.

There is more to be pleased about than avoidance of parking problems. The building's many grand features have been sympathetically preserved in this conversion.

I visited just after Sunday worship was complete, so had an opportunity to see how well the building works for a variety of users. Raymond Tang,



Nightclub, no . . . church, yes.

Church Secretary, kindly showed me around.

The whole of the ground floor has been divided into rooms of different sizes: a youth centre, a Sunday school for 40 young people, kitchen and toilets. There is also a creche upstairs. The only part of the building awaiting funds for completion is a downstairs prayer room.

Two flights of stairs at each end of the building lead to the upper hall, the main focus for worship. This is the brightly-lit space with carved wooden cross-beams that can be seen from the street.

Young musicians practising for the following week's service kindly agreed to be in the photograph, which shows how effectively the internal use of wood creates a coherent and calm space.

We are delighted to welcome rather than complain about a new development. This imaginative conversion gives an old building a new lease of life, and adds the spice of cultural diversity to the character of Stoneygate.



Peaceful space . . . the interior of the church.

*Jennifer Clegg*

# Peace and safety under threat on Victoria Park

Two alarming items were on the agenda of the Victoria Park Users' Group meeting in March - park events and violent crime.

Large events on the park listed so far for this year are: Menphys Golden Gala (June 3), Rainbows Event (June 6), Summer Sunday (July 6/7) and Carnival (August 3).

It seems quite possible that there will be another event like "One Big Sunday" on the park in September, although no official announcement has yet been made.

SCAS feels this is quite different from the other local, charitable and community events.

SCAS as a body is powerless in the face of this event; Victoria Park is outside the conservation area. All that can be done, short of taking legal advice, to try to curb the event - assuming people want to - is for individuals to write to the Director and Assistant Director of Arts and Leisure at the city council. They could also lobby local councillors and write to the Leicester Mercury.

Do nothing and the council will assume that everyone likes these events.

No figures are available from the council on how much was spent or accrues as a result of the 2001 "One Big Sunday". This is information which SCAS believes should be in the public domain.

We can only hope that the event has been of



benefit to some local residents or regular park users. What are your views?

It was reported to VPUG that violent theft on the park had increased in recent months. These "muggings" had taken place after dark.

Requests to the council that the park, in particular the paths, should be lit at night still fall on deaf ears. Apparently it is very expensive. Could possible money from big events not be used to fund lighting?

## *People you can contact about this*

Raymond Klemm 273 7726

Customer Helpline Section, Environment and Development Department 252 6339

Mike Candler, Assistant Director of Arts and Leisure (general inquiries) 252 7807

City Council Complaints or Compliments Line 252 6480

Festivals and Events 299 5981

East Knighton city councillors: Joan Garrity (224 3915, email garrj900@leicester.gov.uk), Robert Pritchard (252 6045, email pritr900@leicester.gov.uk).

Stoneygate city councillors: Ned Newitt (270 7076), Karey Hunter (221 9656).

# London Road traffic changes on the way

Big changes to London Road are being considered by the city council.

- \* Bus and cycle lanes would be added at certain intervals.
- \* The Guilford Road/Ratcliffe Road junction would be signallised.
- \* The Mayfield Road roundabout would be signallised.
- \* There would be more provision for pedestrians near the roundabout.

SCAS believes the plans would have a considerable effect, not least in encouraging more traffic to divert from London Road congestion through residential areas: we remain vigilant. Nothing is official yet and SCAS has not been informed when a public consultation exercise will start.

We would like to receive your views when you have seen the plans. Have you any views so far? Please get in touch.

A contact at the council is D G Patel, Traffic Management Department, Environment and Development - tel 252 6339, fax 255 9782.

## More from the character statement: North Stoneygate

This area straddles the city end of London Road, with the twin towers of St James the Greater just beyond the Mayfield roundabout providing a visual punctuation to the north.

North Stoneygate extends to St Mary's Park on the west, down to North Avenue, Dukes Drive and Holmfield Road. Some large detached buildings have been demolished and replaced by flats, particularly on the London Road frontage, but despite this infill it remains a relatively open part of the conservation area. Surviving detached houses are found mainly to the east of London Road as it slopes towards Evington Brook.

The character statement considers that: "The wooded frontages

at the junction of Ashfield road and Elmfield Avenue give an enclosed, secret quality to this locality."

The Charles Frears campus of De Montfort University preserves a parkland feel with expansive lawns and mature cedar trees, while the triangular St Mary's Park is considered "one of the best corners of the conservation area". The eye is led towards it by high brick walls to the White House on North Avenue and to 14 Knighton Park Road, which serve to delineate boundary spaces.

From an architectural perspective the White House, designed by Ernest Gimson, is arguably the most important building in North Stoneygate. It has a national reputation as an example of the Arts and Crafts movement which uses local materials, mainly decorated leadwork and slate roof tiles.



Most important . . . The White House.

## Planning matters

The following is a summary of planning applications considered by the Society's committee since the last newsletter and some of the decisions taken by the city council on applications within the conservation area over that period.

We have been involved in consultations over the production of site development guidance for replacement uses of the Stoneygate School premises after its relocation.

The committee has also been concerned about further applications for bars on Queen's Road but since these are outside the conservation area, no details are given here.

There are also continuing concerns about the erection of telecommunication masts and satellite dishes on public buildings in the area.

103 Avenue Road: conservatory – approved.

14 Victoria Gardens, London Road: new window – approved.

6 Central Avenue: single storey extension – approved.

5 Springfield Road: conservatory – approved.

Knighton Court, Knighton Park Road: replacement UPVC windows – pending.

Knighton Hayes, Ratcliffe Road - erection of four storey building and 16 flats – pending.

27 Knighton Road: change of use from religious

centre to single house – pending.

32 Ratcliffe Road: changes to coach house – pending.

### *Tree news*

183 London Road: after unauthorised removal of five trees by the owner, who lives abroad, the council will remove the unsightly stumps. Owner is to replace the trees with two silver birches.

9 Southernhay Road: Three "relatively poor specimens" are to be removed. "There are many other fine trees in the garden."

Knighton Hayes, Ratcliffe Road: proposed works to trees still being considered.

46 Ratcliffe Road: All of the trees were "poor specimens" and removal has been approved.

SCAS has been assured that the replacement trees on West Avenue that have not taken root are to be replaced again.

### *UPVC windows*

In the last newsletter we requested comments on the SCAS view that these should be banned from the front elevations of all properties in the conservation area, not just on commercial buildings.

Since there were no contrary comments, we have requested an article 4 direction to that effect be added to the character statement.

## SCAS CONTACTS

Chair: Diane Hall 270 7586  
Co-ordinator: David Oldershaw 270 0010  
Treasurer: Henry Evans 270 2169  
Membership and planning applications: Odette Fogler 270 5623  
PR: Madeline Cooke 270 6420  
Newsletter: Jennifer Clegg 270 5181 and Julia Killey 210 9077  
Trees: Caroline Cook 210 9685  
Members: Cynthia Mackay 273 4946  
Tom Copp 212 8729

Meetings are quarterly, enjoyable and informative. New committee members are always welcome.  
If you would like to join SCAS, please return the form below.

### *Stoneygate Conservation Area Society*

*JOIN US!*

I/we wish to join the Society and enclose cash/cheque for £3 (per household per year) as from 1 April 2002. Cheques should be made payable to Stoneygate Conservation Area Society.

Name .....

Address .....

Tel .....

Send to: Odette Fogler, 5 Calibri Court, 37 Knighton Drive, Leicester LE2 3HD.

*Don't forget . . .*

### **SCAS AGM**

Wednesday, May 29, 7.30 pm

The Octagon, St John's Church  
Clarendon Park Road

***EVERYONE WELCOME***