

# Stoneygate

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2001

## Conservation Area Society



### JOAN COPP - A TRIBUTE

Joan Copp, editor of the SCAS newsletter since 1995, died peacefully at LOROS on Saturday, 8 September 2001.

She founded Cambridge's first free newspaper before moving to Leicester, where she became editor of the Hinckley Herald and Post. Once Joan retired, SCAS was privileged to gain the services of such an experienced journalist.

We offer condolences to her husband Tom. We also celebrate the energy and enthusiasm she brought to projects such as defending the Mayfield roundabout and relaunching SCAS. We hope to continue the concern she expressed for the area and people of Stoneygate.

## TRY AGAIN, FAIL AGAIN, TRY AGAIN, FAIL BETTER!

So said one of Samuel Beckett's characters – and we certainly need to strengthen our resolve in the face of failure.

One of our biggest disappointments was failing to stop the development of yet another bar on Queen's Road, in part because it lies just outside the conservation area.

Another was being unable to stop the sale of allotments for building land at the back of Queen's Road. Steve Bradwell, senior building conservation officer with Leicester City Council, told our AGM that the pressure to build new homes within cities created a major threat to green spaces. Their disappearance would significantly alter the character of the conservation area: he urged vigilance.

One recent success was the publication of plans to put yellow lines around dangerous junctions. It came as something of a surprise: in our May 2000 newsletter we published a response from Peter Webster of the city council, saying the need was apparent but work was unlikely to happen for another four years. Thanks to the council for listening to local opinion.

A small cavil was that details on lampposts were rather hard to interpret. In the future we hope the council will assist bewildered and short-sighted residents by publishing a small map to accompany such complex plans.

Of current work, we successfully asked for the removal of inappropriate decorations that had been planned to adorn flats due to replace the demolished white building opposite Victoria Park.

We also keep a watching brief on outline planning permission to convert the garage on the Mayfield roundabout to residential use. The owners must decide within three years what type of residence they plan to build, and apply for full planning permission.

## AN EYESORE NEAR YOU THAT OUGHT TO GO?

It can be difficult to know who to tackle when an offensive eyesore lurks near your home, or how to make the person responsible do something about it. Yet persistence can win, as members have discovered in recent months.

- An ugly metal fence erected "temporarily" at the back of Lea Holme was still there two years later. Following active lobbying from David Oldershaw, it was finally removed this summer.
- Steve Bradwell, city council senior building conservation officer, facilitated the removal of ugly refuse from the rear of Clarendon Park Road by putting local members in touch with Sue Barker, a planner in the council's Urban Design Group (252 7282). She has been persistent with awkward cases, and diligent in keeping Henry Evans informed of actions taken and progress made.

If you would like support or guidance on how to get an eyesore near you removed, let us know.

# Our area's special character defined

The Stoneygate character statement was published in January 2000. Its goal is not to set the area in aspic, but to prevent careless development destroying it by specifying its unique qualities.

The conservation area runs to the east and west of London Road, from the Mayfield roundabout to Ratcliffe Road.

"Stoneygate" describes a narrow ridge of boulder clay and gravels that underpins London Road. The earliest recorded house was called Stoney Gate, a 17th century farmhouse on the site of Dukes Drive flats, but most buildings in the area went up between 1870 and 1914.



*Roofline of a Stoneygate street against the night sky*

"Tree-lined streets and large mature gardens form Stoneygate's main defining features . . . The mixture of red brick, slate and timber with trees and shrubs is the most prevalent visual theme linking the otherwise quite diverse elements."

The character statement identifies a second theme, the rugged skyline broken by gables, turrets, dormers and elaborate chimney stacks. Some architecture is in the Queen Anne style, showing Dutch influence by triangular pediments and curved gables.

If you would like a copy of this statement, which offers an excellent introduction to the area, contact Steve Bradwell, senior building conservation officer at the city council (252 7296). Or read future editions of the SCAS newsletter, which will summarise the character of each sub-area.

A current concern before the SCAS committee is the replacement of windows with UPVC frames. We are considering asking that an "Article 4 direction" be added to the character statement. This would extend the ban on commercial buildings replacing windows on front elevations with UPVC to all buildings.

If you have any views or comments about this proposal, please write to David Oldershaw (6 Central Avenue) and let him know.

## GETTING TO THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

Trees and other greenery are amongst Stoneygate's most attractive features, but they need constant care and attention.

A leaflet 'Protected Trees' which gives information about trees in Conservation Areas is available from the city council's Environment and Development department (254 9922). The person responsible for tree protection is Paul Champion (252 7263). Often it is up to residents to ask for trees to be pruned, re-staked or replaced.

Are you aware of any trees or bushes that are hazardous because they overhang or overgrow the highway? If so contact John Moss (252 8481).

Or do you know of any council-owned street trees that have been vandalised? If so contact Alan d'Albe (252 7359) in the Trees and Woodland section of the Arts and Leisure department.

## HELP TO LIST A BUILDING

There are surprisingly few listed buildings in the Stoneygate Conservation Area, something Steve Bradwell reminded the Society when he addressed its AGM.

When a building has listed status it gains legal protection. Listed buildings are designated to be "of special architectural or historic interest" by English Heritage. There are three grades; the majority are Grade 2.

Not only is it possible for members of the public to nominate buildings for listing, in times of reduced council resources it is quite usual. You do need time and persistence to get a building listed.

Useful facts about old buildings in the conservation area can be unearthed at the Leicestershire Records Office in Wigston (257 1080). Steve Bradwell follows the acronym BDAMPFISHES when preparing a report for listing: Building type, Date, Architect, Materials, Plan, Facades, Interior, Subsidiary features, History, Extra information, Sources.

If you think any particular buildings in our area deserves the protection given by listing, you can get further information from us or directly from Steve (252 7296).

*"I have received your application, which appears complete. If later I find that it is incomplete or invalid, I will write to you again."*

One of our members got this response from an officer of the city council's Environment and Development department for doing the decent thing: applying for permission to fell a tree in the conservation area. This member had already gone beyond what any reasonable person should be expected to do. He had filled in the same green form three times (yes, in triplicate, that lovely ancient word).

Perhaps the officer imagines membership of a conservation area is restricted to people with a good store of carbon paper. He certainly seems to find it acceptable to write to people in Kafka-esque language.

We hope this story will not dissuade you from applying for permission before felling or lopping trees: they are a vital component of the conservation area. However, we will be encouraging that officer to modernise the application procedure, and to reconsider the way he addresses customers.

## 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 Cook 270 6420  
Newsletter: Jennifer Clegg 270 5181 and Julia Killey 210 9077  
Trees: Caroline Cook 210 9685  
Member: Cynthia Mackay 273 4946

New committee members are welcomed.

*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 2001. 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.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

<b>328 London Road (Care home)</b> Single-storey and first floor extension to side - Approved	<b>Clarendon Park Congregational Church, London Road (Listed building)</b> Antenna and radio equipment cabinet - Approved
<b>21-25 East Avenue</b> Change use of nursing home to two houses - Approved	<b>230 London Road (garage on roundabout)</b> Residential development (outline) - Approved
<b>206 London Road</b> Change use of house to six flats - Approved	<b>325 London Road (Care home)</b> Single-storey extension - Approved
<b>26 Knighton Park Road</b> Demolish nursing home, provide block of 24 flats - Approved	<b>336 London Road</b> Change use of hotel to 4 flats - Approved
<b>14 Knighton Park Road</b> Convert outbuildings and first-floor extension to flat - Approved	<b>32 Ratcliffe Road (Inglewood – listed building)</b> Flat on first floor of coach house, 1.8m close-boarded timber fence along Elms Road - Pending
<b>223 London Road</b> Extension, removal of condition to permission - Approved	<b>58 Stoneygate Road (School)</b> Two-storey side extension - Pending
<b>33 Elms Road (rear of)</b> Detached house and garage - Approved	<b>181 Avenue Road (Flats)</b> Alterations and two-storey extension to provide 14 flats - Pending
<b>362 London Road (Nursing home)</b> Conservatory extension to side - Approved	<b>2 Southernhay Road</b> Two-storey detached house and garage (renewed consent 1993) - Pending