

Stoneygate Conservation

NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2003

PUT US IN THE PICTURE PLEASE!

We plan to hold a photographic exhibition early in 2004 of the spaces and life of Stoneygate.

In particular we are looking for images that evoke some of the "feel" of the area at different times of day and under various weather conditions. Foggy days or night scenes, or rain in the streets. People dressed down for a heatwave or muffled up for snow; looking out of windows or sitting on walls. What are the shapes that people make against buildings and foliage? Some close-ups would be nice too, focusing on the quality of building materials or the shape of a window. It would be particularly nice to have some black and white photos as well as colour.

If you would enjoy providing or putting together a group of photos, please contact Anna Revill on 270 9885 to let us know your ideas.

Silver anniversary was an opportunity to shine

Wine of all colours greeted the 36 people who attended the Society's 25th anniversary AGM (five more than last year).

Also in many colours were the pictures of the area by local schoolchildren that decorated the walls.

SCAS remains solvent despite increased activity for the silver anniversary, but to stay that way it needs a few more members.

One solution would be for readers to consider discussing the benefits of membership with their friends and neighbours, although the committee is considering a membership drive as well.

Another would be to invite the membership of next year's AGM to vote on putting the subscription up a little, since some on the floor felt it was far too cheap! Both courses of action are possible, and would keep the Society healthy.

A map giving the new political boundaries and councillors was

circulated. This has become complicated. The conservation area is now barely in Stoneygate political ward, being mainly within Knighton ward and a significant chunk of Castle ward. Councillors are as follows.

- Castle: Susan Waddington and Joseph Kitterick (Lab), Debbie Almay (LibD).
 - Stoneygate: Parmajit Gill, Robert Renold and Hussein Suleman (all LibD)
 - Knighton: Gary Hunt, Barry Coles and Joan Garrity (all LibD).
- Debbie Almay and Joseph Kitterick both came to the meeting, taking the opportunity to make useful connections with the community they represent – and vice versa.

They explained a little about planning matters, giving an update on the proposed residents' parking scheme people had voted on before the election. It seems likely this will be rejected now; rule changes will make it less expensive in future years when it may be reconsidered.

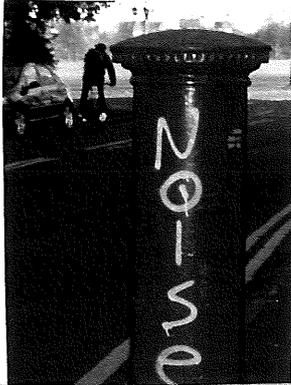
Future events planned by the SCAS committee include a 2004 conference at Vaughan College to be co-ordinated by SCAS in conjunction with the British Association. This will look at the built environment: materials, techniques and restoration.

More of that in the future, but anybody with skills or knowledge to contribute on those topics should contact Madeleine Cooke (270 6420).

The meeting concluded with an animated and informative talk about local author Helen Boynton's work in progress, "Clarendon Park and the Knighton estate".

The changing circumstances of families, affecting the area through significant name changes and sometimes by road diversions, was a central component of her talk.

Change does happen — thanks to SCAS power



After the feature on graffiti in the May 2003 newsletter we recorded the problem, as you see here.

The city council's Graffiti Team moved in, cleaning marked street furniture around St Mary's Park like the postbox (pictured left) that we had brought to their attention.

Perhaps encouraged by this, the garage of the White House on the corner of North Avenue (above) was cleaned or repainted, and some three months later has stayed clean. It had been a huge target; its stately black doors make a real difference to the area.

Cooking up a cogent objection

Recent press coverage of Robin Cook's attempt to stop a planning application in Edinburgh provided food for thought.

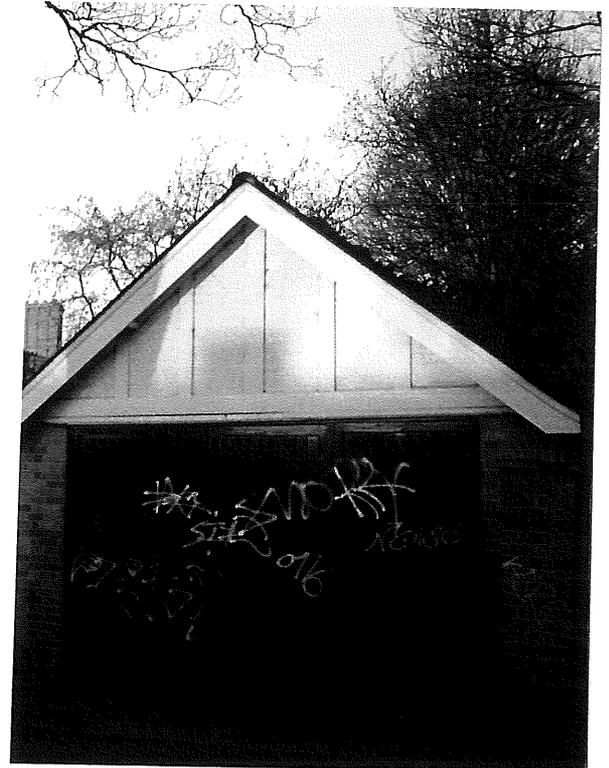
Concerned that it would allow students to move in nearby, he argued that his home is an important workplace for which he requires quiet, and mentioned special needs consequent on being an ex-cabinet minister.

His objections — some cavillers described them as pompous —

were not accepted as reasons to dismiss the planning application, which has been approved.

If only he had had the good offices of a group like SCAS. It would have helped him phrase the objection in terms the planning committee would accept, or realise the futility of his action.

Contact us if you would like advice about refining your objection.



SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT

Many residents were angered by the appearance of no-parking signs in our streets a year ago, and SCAS protested to the city council about the visual clutter that these had imposed on the conservation area.

One member made strong representations to the council about a sign erected on the pavement immediately in front of her gatepost. Recently it was removed — along with all the others in her street.

According to the council, legislation which came into effect at the beginning of this year removed the need for such signs to accompany double yellow lines. In theory they could all be taken down, but the cost and timescale of the work is obviously a problem.

If you have similar objections, talk to the council; it really can make a difference.

In this period the council considered approximately 52 applications, of which 43 were approved, four refused and three withdrawn.

All were monitored by SCAS and the following is a summary of the most significant.

Twenty-seven applications to fell and prune trees in the area were approved and three are pending. Concerns continue about telecommunication masts and satellite dishes.

120 Queens Road: Change of use to a school – withdrawn.

27 Knighton Road: Demolition of coach house and extension with 19 flats – refused.

234 London Rd: House to rear garden – refused.

Victoria Park Rd: Telecommunications column and cabin – refused.

10 Central Avenue : Conversion of house to five flats – refused. Use of coach house as a dwelling – approved.

Adjacent to 2 Southernhay Road: Erection of 2m fence to London Road — approved.

254 London Road and 9 Elmfield Avenue: Conversion of Grade II listed house to eight flats and erection of 15 houses in the grounds – approved.

38 Ratcliffe Road: Conversion of nursing home to seven flats – approved.

10 Woodland Ave: Erection of house and garage in side garden – approved.

19-21 East Avenue: Conversion of nursing home to two houses – approved.

24 Knighton Park Road: Demolition of bungalow and erection of two blocks providing 24 flats – approved.

50 Clarendon Park Road: Change to four flats – pending.

99 Clarendon Park Rd: conversion of garages to house – refused.

Barratt Close: Erection of block of 14 flats - pending.

A walk around new stonyegate

In the August heat a group of SCAS members joined Richard Gill for a 25th anniversary walkabout. Focusing especially on some of the more recent additions and changes, the discussion highlighted the way an area like this maintains its vitality.

A flexible approach to usage has kept our local large halls, schools and church buildings functioning. Some of the larger corner houses have been sympathetically converted into flats and their former coach houses into modern homes. Appropriate infill offers visual variety, with houses of different periods sitting alongside each other in many of the streets. St John's Octagon and St John's School were clear examples.

The Sycamores, North Avenue is a good example of an effective modern development. This three-storey 1980s building with a slate-clad mansard roof has large window and door apertures, which formed clear pockets of shade in the August sun.

MEMBERSHIP

SCAS is unique among Leicester's conservation areas in having survived 25 years. However, membership is dropping slightly. We recognize the need to reach out in different ways if the Society is to stay alive and in touch. Two initiatives are under way.

We are in the process of printing an introductory leaflet about SCAS and the conservation area. Local estate agents have agreed to give them to people who move into the area, and this will probably be the main way that we make contact with newcomers. However, if you can see other opportunities for distributing them to a relevant audience, please let us know.

We also had a couple of generous responses to the plea made in our last newsletter, repeated at the AGM, for help to set up a website. We were most grateful for both.

We will be working with Geoffrey Hall, a systems analyst, who is currently talking with us about site design and expects to put it up this side of Christmas. It will include information about upcoming events, and interactive bulletin boards.

As well as reaching new audiences, we hope the website will engender different types of communication with existing members.

SCAS CONTACTS

Chair: Diane Hall 221 5630
Co-ordinator: David Oldershaw 270 0010
Treasurer: Henry Evans 270 2169
Membership: Odette Fogler 270 5623
PR: Madeleine Cooke 270 6420
Newsletter: Jennifer Clegg 270 5181 and Julia Killey 210 9077
Trees: Caroline Cook 210 9685
Members: Tom Copp 270 4975, Anna Revill 270 9885

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

Stoneygate Conservation Area Society

I/we wish to join the Society/renew membership and enclose cash/cheque for £3 (per household per year) as from 1 April 2003. Please make cheques payable to Stoneygate Conservation Area Society.

Name

Address

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Tel

Send to: Odette Fogler, Membership Secretary, 5 Calbri Court, 37 Knighton Drive,
Leicester LE2 3HD (tel 270 5623)

We apologise to members for some missing pictures and unorthodox formatting in this newsletter —we encountered last-minute technical problems and hope to return to our usual high standards next spring.