



NEWSLETTER – No.114 – WINTER 2007

THE CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTARY

We have had a meeting with the developers who have submitted plans for the Baptist Church site in Church Street. They hope to replace the church with a modern structure which will include some flats in addition to a new church and also some Pegasus apartments. We think the plans, if approved, will greatly improve what is a prominent site in the centre of Epsom.

The Society recently acquired a book published in Coronation Year (1902) in which Dr W.E.St.L.Finny describes the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and Gordon Home writes 'A Guide to Epsom and the Epsom District'. The volume includes a number of advertisements for local traders: The Kings Head Hotel and Assembly Rooms opposite The Clock Tower offer single rooms at 3/- (15p) per night and we are assured that the sanitation is perfect, that Livery Stables are available and that every class of carriage can be supplied. There is an excellent picture of the Durdans 'The Epsom Seat of the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Rosebery' who was Prime Minister in 1894/5. Presumably published in two separate volumes as 'The Homelands Handbooks', they were originally priced at 9d.

I have also been reading Epsom and Ewell on the Internet and thought readers who do not have access or have not tuned in recently might be interested to read something which was of interest to Epsom residents more than 60 years ago:-

'Concerned ratepayers streamed into the Ebbisham Hall in June 1933 to attend a meeting opposing the widening of Epsom High Street. They had heard of proposals which would make the street 75 feet wide leading to a bottleneck at the East Street railway bridge, while the wide new road could only encourage speed fiends who would race to the narrow South Street corner. The meeting felt that, at the very least, the town's ambulance station and mortuary should be moved to this point to meet the expected casualties. The protest was led by traders who felt sure that after the development people would motor through the town and not stop to shop while pedestrians feared for their safety once traffic was free to drive fast down an unencumbered road. A relief route was proposed taking cars along Waterloo Road, Chase Road and Hook Road.'

We now know that the fears were not realized and motorists who have to queue at the pedestrian crossing would be amused.

Our 'Display' in the Mall Ashley in September seems to have aroused a good deal of interest and I am pleased to say enabled us to recruit 90+ new members. We now have a membership of 1666 and Ishbel Kenward, Geoffrey Stone and Malcolm Boyd with other members of the committee deserve a vote of thanks.

The Annual Buffet Supper was enjoyed by some 140 members and grateful thanks to Joy who was the mastermind, to Tony Smith who organized the bar and washed the glasses afterwards and to Geoffrey Stone for the audio side of things. Members of the committee shifted the furniture before and after and many thanks to all involved including the entertainers and the caterers.

We hope you all have a good winter and a happy Christmas and New Year and we look forward to meeting many of you at events in 2008.

HARRY CORBEN

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Centrale, Station Approach: We are keeping an eye on this prominent and disappointing building. We now understand that the architects who gave us a most interesting talk in January 2006 were engaged only to prepare the design and get planning permission. They did not supervise the construction, which might partly explain why there have been departures from the approved drawings. The planning department have been working hard to get the developers to improve things and this has resulted in a new planning application (under the name of Hudson House) to obtain approval for alterations to some features and for acceptance of others. We have discussed this with the Design and Conservation Officer and are in touch with the Planning Consultants who submitted the new application. When we more fully understand what is proposed we shall make suitable comments.

This example shows that the planning department have insufficient staff to monitor all construction work at an early stage, so that if any of our members notice anything which may be incorrect, please let me or the planning department know and it will be taken up, though our knowledge of detailed approvals is limited.

Drummond Gardens, Christchurch Mount: The application to put up two blocks of flats and a pair of semi-detached houses has been withdrawn by the applicant.

Baptist Church, Church Street: This important application proposes the demolition of the existing church, which adjoins the footpath through the public car park and the meeting room at the rear. The new buildings include a new church on the existing site in Church Street with a first floor of church rooms and two floors of affordable housing above. There would also be a four storey block of sheltered apartments by Pegasus Homes at the rear along the frontage to the car park with a return frontage to the road leading to the Town Hall opposite the existing apartments. To achieve a regular shaped site, the Council would sell the small rectangular green area adjoining the footpath. We met the developers and discussed a number of issues but in principle we thought the design attractive and suitable to provide an improved view approaching the town

along Church Street. The agenda for the next Planning Committee includes a recommendation to refuse permission because the amount of affordable housing is inadequate but there seems no reason why this cannot be settled in further negotiations.

Storage Units, Derby Arms Road: These units are next to the Derby Arms pub and are old. They were originally used for storing equipment from the racecourse but the present road layout and the general improvement of the area brings them into prominence. We have objected to their appearance and eight planning appeals have recently been decided, mainly against enforcement notices. These appeals were lost and the only ones upheld were against refusals to extend and refurbish. Although this is in the Green Belt, we had supported the refurbishment proposal because it would have improved their appearance. We have written regarding the permission granted on appeal to retain the metal fencing with a condition to get the Council's approval to landscaping. We have asked to be consulted and suggested that the fence should be painted green to reduce its impact. Not much else can now be done.

Chasanhill, Epsom Road, Ewell: We have twice opposed development of this site on grounds of overdevelopment. The second application is now subject to appeal and a third has been made with little difference. We have again written to oppose.

Superstore site, Upper High Street: We have been informed that the Helical Bar have withdrawn their appeal against the refusal of permission for the superstore which they put in at the last moment to safeguard their position. The future is now open to speculation although the Council have now approved a series of Site Development Options.

The Ashley Centre (aka The Mall): There is a proposal for new signs reflecting the rebranding of the centre as The Mall, Ashley. These need, by definition, to be in prominent positions and we have objected on the grounds that they look tasteless and, with a large red initial M, to be advertisements for big Macs. They are, however, going to the next Planning Committee with a recommendation for approval.

ALAN BAKER

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

In previous *Newsletters* I have commented on the progress of the Local Development Framework and, in particular, the Core Strategy, the overarching policy document governing Council policy for the next fifteen years. I have reported that the Core Strategy was adopted by the Council in July and it has now been published in a form that can be seen and bought by members of the public. It can also be accessed in the Council website www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk. I have copied below several Policy statements that may be of interest to members who like to keep a critical eye on developments in the Borough. I recommend that the document is read since the policies I have selected are not necessarily more important than others. In particular there are projections of the yearly numbers of new dwellings required, their siting and the proportions of affordable dwellings in new developments. Further policy documents will be produced by the Council that will expand and provide detail over the topics in the Core Strategy.

Policy CS 1: The Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvements necessary to achieve sustainable development. Changes should protect and enhance the natural and built environments of the Borough and should achieve high quality sustainable environments for the present and protect the quality of life of future generations.

Policy CS 2: To ensure the Green Belt continues to serve its key functions, its existing general extent will be maintained and, within its boundaries, strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development as defined by Government policy.

Policy CS 5: The Council will protect and seek to enhance the Borough's heritage assets including historic buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains, ancient monuments, parks and gardens of historic interest, and other areas of special character. The settings of these assets will be protected and enhanced.

High quality and inclusive design will be required for all developments. Developments should:

- create attractive, functional and safe public and private environments;
- reinforce local distinctiveness and complement the attractive characteristics of the Borough;
- make efficient use of land and have regard to the need to develop land in a comprehensive way.

MALCOLM BOYD

PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE

It is some time since we commented on roads, parking and congestion. We continue to monitor planning applications with regard to safe access, effects on local traffic and parking.

A continuing concern is the congestion in Epsom and in particular our High Street created by the A24, a principal road, passing through the town centre. The visual, noise and air pollution caused by the traffic goes completely against the aims of EPS and the Epsom and Ewell planning authority to continue to preserve and develop Epsom in an appropriate manner. There have been several attempts to plan and build a bypass or relief road, however, in each case, the proposal failed to receive local approval, condemning Epsom to retaining the A24 through the High Street for the foreseeable future.

Current Government policy is to move away from highway construction and to favour Active Traffic Management which encourages projects to manage routes better. A solution which does not appear to help Epsom; the Kiln Lane Link is a victim of this policy.

We had a recent meeting with David Curl the Surrey CC Local Highway Manager responsible for Epsom and Ewell. However Mr. Curl had only recently taken up the appointment. We explained our concerns to him and in a useful discussion we agreed

that the way ahead is for small improvements to help ease the congestion in the High Street. There is a traffic modelling exercise currently in progress which could lead to improving the flow through the High Street junctions.

We understand there is to be a meeting between the planning authority (Mark Berry) and David Curl in April and we will attempt to meet both parties before then to put forward our views.

NORMAN DEMPSTER

CONSERVATION

Since the AGM we have looked at over forty applications related to listed buildings or buildings within conservation areas. Many of the applications are relatively modest and are usually well designed to suit the building. In such circumstances we do not offer any comments keeping our powder dry for the cases we feel are important.

We strongly supported the successful local listing of the Adult Education Institute in Church Street and Heron Court in Alexandra Road. The Institute, which is owned by the County Council, is up for sale - soon after the interior had been badly affected by the installation of a lift to meet obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act. An application to demolish Heron Court and build houses was recently turned down on appeal, partly on the grounds of its listing. We got there just in time, and are now anxious that any other buildings of local value are similarly protected.

The application to demolish 51-55 Church Street and build 24 apartments was refused last year. The subsequent appeal was withdrawn by the developers earlier this year, but we must expect them to come forward with a new proposal. Similarly, the proposal to build houses in the garden of Dame Annis Barn was refused, but we should expect this to re-emerge in due course.

The Cedars in Church Street is being renovated and converted for use as flats. While we welcome this continued use of the building for residential purposes and the sensitive way in which the work is being done, we unsuccessfully objected to the construction of additional houses in the garden as an unwelcome urbanisation. The issue of building houses in gardens is a continuing issue about which we are particularly vigilant. We have been in correspondence with our MP about this and hope that the classification of gardens as brownfield sites will be rescinded by a future government.

Most recently, we have been very concerned about a proposal to put new roofs over the nine apartment blocks at Briavels Court. A strongly worded letter has been sent expressing our reservations over the proposed design. There is a local feeling that there may be an eventual extra storey.

ROBERT AUSTIN

EVENTS

ANNUAL BUFFET SUPPER PARTY, FRIDAY 19TH OCTOBER 2007

This party was held in St Joseph's Church Hall and a record number of 136 people attended. It was a most enjoyable evening and according to reports afterwards the best we have had so far. The entertainment by our own members Kate and Malcolm Brown and their group 'Sweet and Low' supported by a delightful soprano and their son on his trumpet was excellent and very popular with everyone. My thanks to the committee and all those who helped to make it a success.

OUTINGS

VISIT TO THE MILL AT SONNING ON SATURDAY 12TH JANUARY 2008 FOR LUNCH FOLLOWED BY A MATINEE PERFORMANCE OF RAY CONEY'S PLAY 'RUN FOR YOUR WIFE'

There are three tickets still available. If anyone would like them, please apply on the application form in the last *Newsletter*. Full details about the outing were in the last *Newsletter*.

Tickets will be issued shortly.

SECOND VISIT TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND LUNCH, MONDAY 3RD MARCH 2008

This visit is fully booked. There have been a few small unavoidable changes since the outing was advertised and these will be explained in a note accompanying the tickets which will be sent out in the next few weeks.

OUTING TO MAPLEDURHAM AND HENLEY ON THURSDAY 24TH JULY 2008

Another outing has been arranged to replace the one which had to be cancelled this year because of the flooding. It will be the same as the one proposed for this year; even the cost will remain the same because the people concerned have all very kindly agreed not to increase their price. Full details were given in the Spring *Newsletter* No.111. For those who have not kept the *Newsletter* they are repeated below:

Mapledurham House and Mill are situated on the river Thames just north of Reading and up river from Henley.

In the morning we shall travel to Henley on Thames to visit the River and Rowing Museum which is a short distance along the river bank from the town centre. A booking has been made for us to visit the museum as a group and have a conducted tour of the first gallery. There is a separate attraction of The Wind in the Willows which is included in the entry ticket and comes to life with an audio-guide telling the tale of Mr. Toad and his friends. The museum has a cafe for drinks, snacks and lunch. Everyone is free to make their own arrangements for lunch, some may prefer to bring a picnic or

eat at one of the nearby cafes. Those not wishing to visit the museum can walk round the town or stroll along the river bank. We shall leave Henley at 1.30 p.m. sharp to drive to Caversham where we board the boat for the 40 minute journey upriver to Mapledurham. We disembark at the landing stage and will be taken by our guide to the Watermill for a conducted tour. There has been a mill on this site since Saxon times; the present building dates from the 15th century making it the only surviving working watermill on the Thames. The mill will be working for our visit and the wholemeal flour ground here and other by-products can be bought at the shop. We will then walk to the house for a conducted tour. Mapledurham House, an Elizabethan Manor House, is still the home of the descendents of the original family. The house contains a collection of portraits, furniture, the great oak staircase and original plaster ceilings. The estate was the setting for a number of films including *The Eagle has Landed* and *Inspector Morse*. The visit will end with a cream tea. The coach will bring us back to Epsom after tea.

The pickup places in Epsom will be outside the Methodist Church in Ashley Road at 8.30 a.m. sharp and 8.45 a.m. sharp at the car park at Tattenham Corner near the tea hut where there is ample free parking. We should be back in Epsom between 6 and 7 p.m. depending on traffic.

The cost will be £35.00 including the Henley River Museum and £29.50 without the Henley Museum. These prices include coach, boat trip, entries, cream tea and tips. Priority will be given to those who were booked on the cancelled trip. Tickets will not be issued until after Christmas. Please apply on the application form included with this *Newsletter* and return with your cheque and stamped addressed envelope to Joy Furness.

TALKS

THURSDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2008 at 8pm in MYERS STUDIO, EPSOM
PLAYHOUSE

Practical Building Conservation - the means to an end

We have invited John Ashurst Dip Arch, RIBA widely regarded as the pre-eminent building conservation architect to give this talk. After an extensive career with English Heritage he was appointed Professor of Heritage Conservation at Bournemouth University and is now a consultant. He has had a formative influence on the approach and methods employed in the conservation and repair of historic buildings, ancient monuments and sites in the UK and abroad and made a lasting and vital contribution to the understanding, care and conservation of the built environment.

Because he knows Epsom well, is shortly publishing a book on Pitt Place and his talk will include local examples, this is an event not to be missed.

Tickets are £3 each. Please apply on the application form included with this *Newsletter* and return it together with your cheque made payable to Epsom Protection Society and a stamped addressed envelope to Joy Furness.

JOY FURNESS Tel 01372 722186

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APPLICATION FORM FOR
OUTING TO MAPLEDURHAM AND HENLEY, THURSDAY 24TH JULY 2008

NAME
ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NO

Please tick below as appropriate:-

I will join the coach at the Methodist Church at 8.30am sharp.

I will join the coach at Tattenham Corner at 8.45am sharp.

Cost per person £35.00 (inclusive of coach, boat, entry to both properties, cream tea and tips)

Reduced rate (excluding Henley Museum) £29.50 per person.

I would like Full price tickets

I would like Reduced price tickets

I enclose a cheque for £

Please make cheques payable to Epsom Protection Society and enclose a Stamped Addressed Envelope.

Please return completed form to Joy Furness 37 Woodcote Hurst Epsom KT18 7DS

Tel 01372 722186

NOTE: PLEASE SEND A SEPARATE CHEQUE AND STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE FOR EACH APPLICATION. This will lighten my workload considerably and save EPS expense; so many people forget to enclose a SAE.

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APPLICATION FORM FOR
TALK, THURSDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2008 AT 8PM IN MEYERS STUDIO, EPSOM
PLAYHOUSE

NAME
ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

I would liketickets for the talk (£3 each) and enclose a cheque made payable to Epsom Protection Society for £.....and a stamped addressed envelope.

Please return to Joy Furness 37 Woodcote Hurst, Epsom KT18 7DS (Tel 01372 722186)

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