

NEWSLETTER No. 182 | WINTER 2025



Epsom Civic Society

Newsletter

*Shaping the future,
safeguarding the past*

Visit to “Durdans” - P.4

News from EETAB - P.7

History Walk - South Street - P.8

Planning News and Applications - P.10

Memberships and Subscriptions - P.12

Climate Change and Sustainability - P.6

 epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

 facebook.com/EpsomCivicSociety

 [@EpsomCivicSoc](https://twitter.com/EpsomCivicSoc)



CHAIR'S COMMENTARY

Dear Members,

As I reflect on the challenges in producing a newsletter for Winter 2024 – which finally emerged in Spring 2025 after five re-writes due to the ever-evolving situation on planning reform and the draft Local Plan – it is with considerable pleasure and also relief on my part that this year we not only have a winter edition for you but also that my updates on these topics is shorter, at least for now. Turning first to the **Draft Local Plan**, we must now wait for the Inspector's report following the Local Plan Inquiry sessions (30 September – 9 October). The Inspector's post-hearing letter to the Council (22 October) setting out a list of actions to enable the examination to progress is [here](#); the Council's response (6 November) with timescales for the additional work to be undertaken is at [this link](#) with a note of actions [here](#).

Further updates will be posted on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's website which has a dedicated section on the Local Plan Examination, accessible [here](#) and more generally on the emerging Local Plan [here](#).

Planning Reform

The **Planning and Infrastructure Bill** is in its final stages in Parliament, details at this [link](#). The Bill is currently scheduled to be back in the House of Lords on 24 November, following rejection of their proposed amendments by the Commons. There has been considerable debate about the effectiveness of nature protections afforded by the Bill. It is interesting to note that the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee concluded in its [recent report](#) that far from being a blocker to the delivery of 1.5 million homes, nature is a necessity for building resilient towns and neighbourhoods. The government has two months to respond to the committee's recommendations. A government press release (18 November) announced that **house building around railway stations** would be given a default 'yes' provided certain conditions are met. This paragraph in particular caught the Society's attention: "Recognising the significant benefits for jobs and growth that can be unlocked by building around train stations, these rules will extend to land within the Green Belt, continuing efforts to ensure that a designation designed in the middle of the last century is updated to work today." The press release can be read in full [here](#).

National Development Management Policies

In something of a surprise, Secretary of State Steve Reed has confirmed that NDMPs will not be made statutory, contrary to the initial proposals which were put out for consultation. ECS did not support statutory NDMPs when we responded to the government's consultation, so it's something of a relief for us. Our view was that imposing NDMPs risked undermining local democracy and the credibility of the Local Plan process. The Govt's decision means that these NDMPs will be treated as 'material considerations' in the planning process. Their publication, together with an updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is expected before Christmas.

Local Government Reform

We now know the outcome of the government's statutory consultation on Surrey's proposals for local government reform. Surrey's 12 councils will be replaced by two unitary councils, East Surrey and West Surrey operational from April 2027, with elections for the two new authorities scheduled for May 2026. Epsom and Ewell joins Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge in East Surrey.

In other planning news...four years and counting

We are still waiting for information regarding the outcomes from the Local Listing Project and will be raising this formally with the Council.

Green Your Home

Congratulations to the Council on their timely publication, 'Green Your Home' full details at [this link](#).

And Finally.....

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

As always, all links in the hard copy (paper) version of the newsletter are accessible and functional via our website's [Newsletter Section](#).

Margaret Hollins

Yellow Box: An avoidable town centre land-use travesty

If ever there was a demonstration of the long-overdue need for a Local Plan in Epsom & Ewell it is the Yellow Box carbuncle taking shape in East Street!

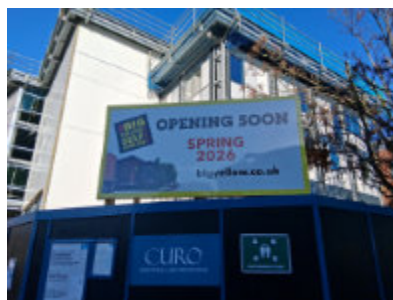
The Epsom Civic Society objected vehemently to this development from the outset – supported, it has to be said, by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, which threw out the initial proposal – only for that decision to be overturned by the planning inspectorate on appeal. Now we are seeing the bricks and mortar manifestation of this jaw-droppingly short-sighted decision imposing itself on our townscape, you have to wonder how different things could have been if only the Council had finalised a proper Local Plan setting out zonal land use prioritisation years ago – rather than scrabbling to get one approved in a process that is currently underway in response to impossibly high and Green Belt-threatening Government targets for new housing.

Such a plan would have firmly designated the former Staples/ Majestic Wine site for desperately needed housing – as, indeed, the Council has informally argued should be the case for years – only in a way that would have allowed the authority to robustly defend

its clear-headed decision to oppose a massive warehouse facility that would, by definition, have been far better situated in an edge of town/ industrial estate location.

The tragedy, of course, is that the Yellow Box site could easily, nay logically, have been included in the forthcoming redevelopment of the former Gas Holder site - allowing not just a substantial increase on the 465 apartments already approved, but also the potential to create a more homogeneous and imaginatively landscaped housing 'quarter' that will instead be left with a massive and unsightly storage unit at its heart.

Hindsight, they say, is a wonderful thing... but the truth is that the missed opportunity in East Street – one we are now going to be stuck with for the foreseeable future – could and should have been averted, all for the want of a Local Plan.



Links in this printed newsletter

If you are reading the printed version of the newsletter and you see underlined text like this, it usually denotes the presence in the electronic version of a “**hyperlink**”, which is a zone you can click on your screen if you are reading the electronic version of the newsletter and be taken to the corresponding place anywhere in the document or the world wide web. Usually the underlined text you see is a substitute for a long string of gobbledegook which the computer likes but is not very nice for humans.

Obviously these don't work on the printed page. But if you want to follow these links and have a computer or smart mobile phone, you can still do so by opening a browser (a program to connect you to the internet such as Edge, Chrome, Firefox or Safari and typing epsomcivicsociety.org.uk in the “**search**” box, which will take you to the home page of the Society's website.

Once there, from the menu at the top, click on “**Newsletters**” and then on the heading for the latest newsletter (or any of the previous ones from the last few years which are further down the page). This will display that edition in a new window on your computer or smart phone.

In this version on your screen, all the **hyperlinks** will work and take you to the source documents, websites or web pages the author wanted you to be able to see and read.

If you have any questions or want further information or help getting to see the electronic versions, please email webmaster@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk to get in touch.

VOLUNTEERS

We are fortunate to have over 60 Road Reps doing the vital job of delivering Newsletters and collecting subscriptions for Epsom Civic Society. However, we have to find replacements, usually 4 or 5 each year. In the past I have achieved this by phoning members. Now I am finding that many phones are not being answered unless the number is recognised. I completely understand why, but it reduces my chances of replacing Road Reps. If you think that you'd be happy to become a Rep in the future, or even

be available for occasional cover when Reps are on holiday or unwell, please get in touch with me. It would be helpful to have a list of people prepared to help out, either occasionally or as a Road Rep. when needed.

We also have vacancies on our committee: more information in the next Newsletter leading up to our AGM in April 2026.

Don't forget, volunteering is proven to be good for your health

Ishbel Kenward – Membership Sec..

01372 438361 membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

'Durdans': A Living History

Having spent a number of years writing feature articles for UK and International design magazines it is odd to look at one's own home with the necessary detachment and ask the endless questions of oneself about the whys and wherefores of its decoration and design. The house is very well known, at least by the east facade facing Chalk Lane and the enormous green gates at the west entrance and because the most famous, fairly recent owner Archibald Primrose, 5th Lord Rosebery was such a large part of the Epsom community. He was a racing man, so buying the Durdans set just below the most famous racecourse in the world and home to the greatest horse race on earth, the Epsom Derby, meant he could, uniquely, walk his horses from his stables onto the track over his own land. Lord Rosebery contributed in many ways giving land for the local park, employment and as Prime Minister winning the famous Derby twice and again later. He was extremely well connected and the list of visitors to the Durdans reads just the Who's Who of nearly 50 years from the Prince of Wales to Randolph and Winston Churchill (regular visitors) members of the Russian Royal family, Cecil Rhodes and numerous politicians.



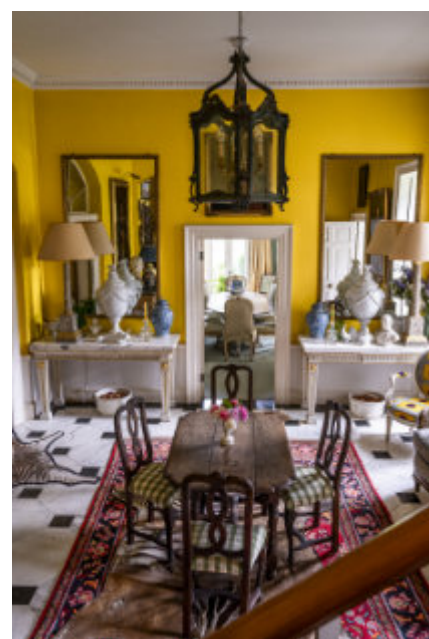
There were three earlier houses on the site, one of which was a magnificent and much larger dwelling known as the Palace built in the late 1600s. What one sees today is the core of a 1760s house, rebuilt by a London merchant after a fire during construction of another house. When Lord Rosebery bought the property from the Heathcote family nearly one hundred years later he immediately began building stables, staff accommodation, a large south facing drawing room, library and more. The old entrance from the west was moved to the Ashley Road, running across Chalk Lane, past his magnificent riding hall and further stables to terminate in a large courtyard and north facing entrance to the house.

We have no floor plans or real understanding of how the house worked from the 1870 and beyond until his death in 1929 and up until the demolition of a great deal of it after WWII. The interior today is attractive, manageable (thank goodness numerous reception and bedrooms were demolished) and contains 2 fireplaces designed, in the 1700s, for the drawing room and what is the library today although it was likely a small dining room in the 18th century. The house went through the usual ups and downs and old photographs show a good deal of neglect in the 1950s, overgrown and very sad. We also have photographs of some of the interiors when the house and the old landscaped gardens were bought freehold, split from the land and principal stables in 1973 before a fresh approach and modernisation was undertaken on quite a scale.



Those familiar with British interior design will recognise the name of Colefax and Fowler and here that most famous English firm was employed to advise on all aspects of the work. Out went heavy red flock wallpaper, linoleum floors and a very old Aga although the kitchen remained where it was, moved from adjacent cellars at some earlier point. Old painted window shutters remained throughout, the capacious entrance hall gained an antique black and white marble floor, layers of papers were stripped from the walls and modern bathrooms installed along with a fashionable honey mustard coloured Westinghouse kitchen and

American fridges. We have kept it all.

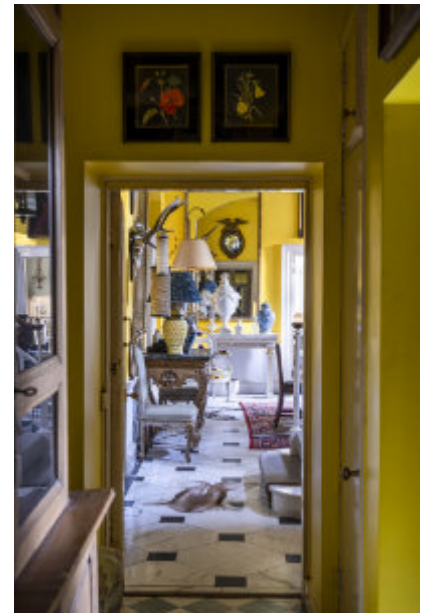




Remarkably the 'mouse' coloured Wilton carpets, glorious red, green and pink floral chintz curtains and sofas, subtle special paint effects and the 'Chinese' yellow halls are still in good order. Upstairs all the rooms are named after Classic winning horses either owned by Lord Rosebery or his wife's

family, racing enthusiasts the Rothschilds.

The grand marble-topped console tables came with the house, thankfully, as the hall needs such over-scaled pieces topped with huge lamps and white German KPM porcelain lidded urns. Of course into this curious eclectic mix came our own pieces - art, family portraits, African sculpture, things collected while living



in Egypt and fabrics (old textiles are a passion of mine) including checks and stripes in the Colefax tradition of mixing simple cottons and linens with grander silk fabrics. Every room now has antique Persian carpets, game skins, and more lamps and fabric shades than is usual I'm sure

Living in a house like this one's imagination turns, or mine does at least, to the ghosts of past gatherings and colourful conversations, the broad sweep of political opinion bantered and argued in these rooms from the French Revolution, the 'Irish' question to the Boer War, two World Wars through to Russia, Ukraine, Gaza and Mr Trump's disruption desire. Let alone the Derby days when the best thoroughbreds of the day were paraded in Constables Yard, guests filled every space, enormous

tea parties were held on the lawns under dazzling marquees and staff were plentiful. We are extremely fortunate that the Durdans Stables are still stables, home to many sport horses, the paddocks green and no development has yet encroached. In fact if Lord Rosebery returned today he would easily recognise the lack of change, much has gone but the core is alive and well. Long may it last.

Johanna Thornycroft



Climate Change and Sustainability: Pavement Parking- a national and very local issue.

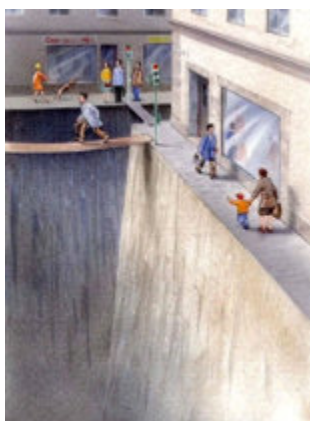
Vehicles parked on the pavements can cause an obstruction and inhibit the independence of many vulnerable people, especially older or disabled people with visual or mobility impairments. And when pedestrians such as families with pushchairs, are forced into the road and into oncoming traffic, pavement parking is simply dangerous.

A survey carried out by Guide Dogs UK in 2020 reported many pedestrian groups experience regular problems with pavement parking affecting 95% of people with sight loss, 99% of wheelchair users and 98% of parents/carers with children. (Source: Blocked In: the impact of pavement parking).

Furthermore, pavements aren't designed to support vehicle weight and this leads to structural damage when cars park on them regularly. Typical pavement construction uses materials and depths suitable for pedestrian loads of around 5kN per square metre, while cars exert pressures of 150-200kN per square metre through their tyres. Cracked paving stones and damaged kerbs result from this excessive weight, creating trip hazards that pose risks to all pedestrians. Local authorities spent approximately £1 billion between 2006 and 2012 repairing pavement damage, with much of this cost attributed to vehicle-related deterioration. (Source: UK Construction Blog, August 2025)

The illustration by Swedish artist Karl Jilg shows just how car-centric our urban areas are and highlights unequal distribution of public space. When pavement parking is added to the mix, the space left for

pedestrians is even more restricted.



*Figure 1:
Illustration by Karl Jilg showing
pedestrian accessible space.*

Our borough is not immune to these issues where parked cars and vehicles on pavements is a constant issue both on residential streets and throughout the town centre. A particular favourite

of mine is pavement parking along Ashley Road on Sundays during which the footpaths, cycle lanes and the road are blocked for most of the day. This pavement parking hotspot has been reported on Living's street pavement parking hotspot map. Living streets is an organisation that campaigns for making streets more pedestrian friendly and supports a nationwide ban on pavement parking. There are many other examples of

this issue within our local area particularly around schools.

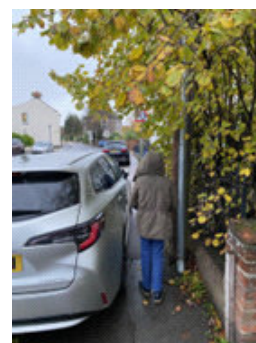
*Figure 2:
Pavement parking on Ashley Road*



What does the law say ?

Driving onto pavements is already illegal under section 72 of the Highways Act 1835 but enforcement is inconsistent and largely reliant on police resources. Parking on pavements can be treated as obstruction by the police and is not a civil contravention enforced by Local Authorities. Local councils struggle to tackle pavement parking and although they can use Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to restrict pavement parking these are restricted to specific streets. Due to the requirements for advertising consultation and signage, they are often costly and are an impractical way to resolve the problem.

Pavement parking in London was prohibited in 1974 and in Scotland a law banning pavement parking was passed in 2019 and implemented in 2023. Drivers can now receive a fine for doing so. In Wales, a review of policy suggested local authorities may be granted new powers to tackle pavement parking, but progress has since stalled. awaiting the results.



And what can be done about it in England/ Surrey ?

In England, the Department for Transport consulted on the issue of pavement parking in 2020 – and November 22nd 2025 marks five years since the Department for Transport's consultation into pavement parking in England. The results and outcomes are still awaited. Our MP for Epsom and Ewell Helen Maguire spoke about this issue recently in Parliament (September 2025) and expressed a common local frustration about navigating vehicular pavement obstructions. She is in favour of a national default ban on pavement parking: "a default national prohibition with local exceptions where needed is the right choice. That would bring the rest of England in line with London, provide clarity for drivers and restore our pavements to the people they are meant for".

Cntd. P.6

A national default prohibition would remove ambiguity for drivers and would also allow for local exemptions so that streets where pavement parking is genuinely unavoidable could be identified. This view is supported by many other MPs and a YouGov polling of councillors commissioned by Guide Dogs in September 2023 shows that 74% of councillors in England supported a national law. It is clear something needs to be done. There is

widespread public and local support for a ban on pavement parking. It is time to reclaim our public spaces- all public space users (both pedestrians and road users) have a right to go about their daily business in a safe manner and the ability of safely navigating pavements is key. It also seems there are substantial cost savings to be had from reduced pavement- and this should also be welcomed.

Aurelie Paoli

Queueing up for street trees!

Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board (EETAB) is pleased to confirm that Surrey County Council's (SCC) Highways tree planting programme for this season is well underway, with over 60 new street trees due to be planted across the Borough over the next few months. Most of these stem from resident-led requests, and the full list of locations can be viewed on our website at:

<https://eetab.org.uk/index.php/projects-2/>



In some instances, significant numbers of residents have clearly come together to 'green' their localities in unison- with no fewer than 12 tree requests approved in Parklawn Avenue (off West Hill) and a further eight in adjoining Eastdean Avenue. This follows on from coordinated resident requests for street tree planting across the Downs Road Estate Conservation Area, which have already seen 30 new street trees planted in The Ridings, Milburn Walk and Walnut Close since January 2024.

"It's heartwarming to see such enthusiasm for street trees and the tremendous environmental and aesthetic benefits they bring - and the Tree Advisory Board's relationship with SCC is growing stronger each year as the authority embraces a more flexible and collaborative approach to street tree planting," stresses EETAB chair Kevin Greening.

"The turnaround in SCC's stance on street trees is both commendable and impressive: From a position just several years ago where there was no proactive replacement of failed street trees at all, no fewer than 880 resident-requested trees were installed in verges County-wide last winter, with a further 550 lined up for planting in the coming weeks," Kevin concludes.

With popular demand for new street trees currently exceeding the resources available to plant them, any requests for new street trees on SCC Highways land lodged since March this year have been held over for consideration in the 2026/27 planting season. That list is still open and accepting further requests, however, so if you would like a new street tree on your road please visit:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/permits-and-licences/planting-trees#apply>

Other tree news...



Meanwhile, the Green Gables development site on Ashley Road continues to present arboricultural challenges - but EETAB has now received confirmation that the recently removed street tree will be replaced before the end of this planting season. We've also been approached for suggestions of suitable replacement tree species, and will be keeping a keen eye on compliance with the approved landscaping and planting scheme as the development progresses.

The Abelea Green Management Company/ residents' association has also been in touch with us, asking for our input on design and species choice for a new tree planting scheme along the entrance road to that development (adjacent to the former Haywain Pub in Dorking Road). This is another heartwarming project, being led by EETAB's 'planting projects champion', Howard Gregory, that we are excited to be involved in.

EETAB is always looking for new members - no knowledge required, just a desire to make a difference. We'd be delighted to hear from any of the residents behind this year's successful SCC street tree applications.

Please contact us at epsomandewelltab@gmail.com or facebook.com/groups/eetab



SOUTH STREET: A tale of sad losses and unlikely survivors

"More than half of the buildings I'm going to be talk about have gone," stressed Epsom and Ewell History and Archaeology Society stalwart Ian West as he set the scene for an exploration of South Street's rich and varied, but sadly much depleted, architectural heritage. Yet, as the Epsom Civic Society members who turned out for the information-packed walk on Saturday September 29 were about to discover, some tantalising fragments of Epsom's spa town heyday somehow managed to escape the ravages of time and demolition wrecking balls of the 1960s, 70s and 80s...

Standing at Epsom Playhouse's entrance, looking southwards across the tarmac and traffic lights of South Street's busy junction with Ashley Avenue, it's hard to imagine that 350 years ago there would have been an unbroken vista of meadows and orchards stretching beyond what today is Rosebery Park.

Harder still to imagine that, as recently as the turn of the last Century - when Lord Rosebery bought and donated to the town council the land for the leafy green space we see today (partly to prevent the spread of suburbanisation towards his Durdans Estate in Woodcote) - this radically altered, but still pleasant, part of Epsom could easily have been set on a sharp downward trajectory. Listed for sale in the early 1900s, the proposed building lot's particulars made it clear that, while the land was in a "good class area, it would be suitable for any quality of development that the purchaser required": "In other words," explains Ian West, "the buyer could have put up anything they liked"...and it was only the timely intervention of Epsom's biggest benefactor - fresh from his brief stint as UK Prime Minister - that saved the day!

Less fortunate, however, were most of the run of elegant (albeit latterly degraded) 17th and early 18th Century spa-era houses that as recently as the early 1970s lined South Street between what is now the Ashley Avenue Junction and Rosebery Park.

Perhaps the most poignant loss, and one that massively invigorated the then fledgling movement to protect Epsom's threatened architectural heritage, was 'The Shrubbery' - a much-loved 17th Century landmark that was demolished in the early 1970s to make way for an Epsom town centre loop road which, while never fully realised, paved the way for the ultimate

creation Ashley Avenue.

Pictured as it was in Edwardian times, The Shrubbery sat smack in the centre of where the Ashley Avenue/ South Street junction now lies. Although its loss enabled the creation of the key access route to the Ashley Centre car park, it's now hard to fathom that a building of this calibre was sacrificed so recently in the name of 'progress'. By the early 70s, however, the Council was determined it had to go. After two mysterious fires and fiercely contested claims that the building was beyond repair the Council finally secured a 'dangerous structure notice' through Court action to allow it to pay for demolition - all against a backdrop of strong local opposition, dissenting expert evidence that suggested the building was salvageable and total ignorance at the time as to quite how noteworthy The Shrubbery actually was. "By one means or another I tried to get into many of the historic buildings being condemned in Epsom at the time," recalls Ian - explaining that lax access restrictions to demolition sites at the time meant that he and other local history experts had managed to salvage a large number of artefacts from the building in the days leading up to its destruction.

These included the carved wooden front doorcase - which was later reused in the renovation of the neighbouring 'Winchester House' - but, more significantly in heritage terms, a large quantity of late 17th Century wallpaper which had been concealed, possibly for centuries, behind wooden panelling.

"In the late 17th Century wallpaper was scarce and extremely expensive, yet here we found it in three rooms," explains Ian, stressing that its discovery revealed The Shrubbery was a far more historically interesting structure than the then town planners had appreciated.

The V & A museum later revealed that the 17th and 18th wallpaper rescued from The Shrubbery, Winchester House, Rosebery Lodge (another building with 17th Century origins that sat directly adjacent to Rosebery Park which also fell victim to redevelopment in the 1980s) - as well as at the former Boots/ Next building in Kingston Market Place - represented the most "significant contribution" to its understanding of the development of interior design in decades.

That acknowledgement came too late, of course, for The Shrubbery and Rosebery Lodge, but the skillful restoration of Winchester House gives a tantalising glimpse of what the town centre end of

South Street could have looked like today, had only more progressive attitudes towards conservation and heritage held greater sway in 1970s officialdom.

Ironically, back in the 60s and 70s Winchester House would probably have seemed the least likely 'survivor' of all - given it had long been concealed from public view by an unsightly garage forecourt. While public attention focussed on the fate of The Shrubbery next door, few would even have known it even existed - yet today it has regained a rightful prominence in the street scene that had eluded it for most of the 20th Century and possibly considerably longer.

Other historical 'lucky stars' include 'London House', which is almost certainly the oldest standing structure in South Street (tellingly significantly lower than the current road level), and



Abelle Cottages: The frontage is late Victorian, but the core of the building dates back to at least 1690.



Woodcote Hall: Built in the 1750s, Woodcote Hall was in a new architectural vanguard with two detached 'pavilion' wings containing its stables and kitchen. Its rear was painted by the noted watercolourist John Hassell in the late 1700s.



The Shrubbery

'Abelle Cottages' on the other side of the road, much of



Rosebery Lodge: Dating back to around 1700, Rosebery Lodge (adjacent to Rosebery Park where Novellus Court now sits) was demolished in 1984, though the original frontage (pictured) was covered by an early 20th Century extension front extension which concealed how significant the building actually was. During its demolition a large section of the 1720's wallpaper found and rescued



Winchester House

which dates back to at least 1690, though the frontage is Victorian. Even the mid-18th Century 'Woodcote Hall' (now opposite the BP garage) had a narrow escape in the 1960s with plans for the demolition of the original stables wing and its replacement with a couple of semi-detached homes only being knocked back following a furious fightback led by the then chair of Nonsuch Antiquarian Society, Norman Nail.

"Back in the day Norman and other conservationist-minded individuals, like myself, had the distinction of being called the 'lunatic fringe' by the then Town Clerk," muses Ian. Considering how much of Epsom's rich architectural heritage fell victim to property speculation between the early 1960s and the end of the 1970s - and the number of elegant and much loved spa-era buildings that were torn down for profit, often with minimal warning to prevent last minute protections being set in place - how fortunate we were that some were 'crazy' enough to care....

Simon Alford



South Street/ Dorking Road/ Woodcote Road junction: The road and wall-line remains the same, and the motoring connection provides a clue, but you have to look twice to recognise the site of the current BP garage 1680 as being owned by 'Widow Witham'. The road and wall-line remains the same, and the motoring connection provides a clue, but you have to look twice to recognise the site of the current BP garage



London House: Built about 1600, timber-framed London House was recorded in a register of Epsom copyholds of 1680 as being owned by 'Widow Witham'. The higher part of the building to the right was added in the early 1700s, and the projecting wing with an overhang over the pavement (to provide shading) was originally a butchers shop.



PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Former Chalk Lane Hotel

A sorry state of partly completed conversion of the former hotel to 21 dwelling units is a long saga going back to original approval in 2018 which stipulated retention of several features of a listed building within the Conservation Area (CA).

The first contractors did not respect these requirements and destroyed many important historic features earmarked to be retained;



some conversion works did start. The contractor was most unsuitable for the class of work, lacking expertise and experience. That contractor went into liquidation, the architect was also dismissed.

After about a year standing idle and importantly open to the weather that encountered deterioration to the building fabric, a new architect working with contractor Vulcan Ellis were appointed. Relatively good progress was then made which we reported positively in the Summer 2021 Newsletter. About the same time marketing graphics were advertised on the site hoardings with the developer being Gage Developments and a local High Street agent dealing with the enquiries. This all seemed progressive and promising.

About May 2024 work came to a stop. Companies House searches reveal that Vulcan Ellis was dissolved into liquidation in July 2024 and Gage Developments struck off in August 2022. So remains the site today with materials, skip, site cabins etc standing idle. A call to the marketing agents offered no help about its current status as the person had no information other than those who were dealing with the site left the agency some months ago.

Langley Vale Farm (not 110 house site)

Despite local opposition and the Society's objections about the use of green belt land the government planning Inspectorate gave approval to the development of 20 new houses. The work that was subsequently commenced has been stopped for the past 9 months or more with the developer going bust. It is rumoured that the site has been bought back by the original developer Fairfax Homes but precise information about the future for this site is difficult to ascertain.

Guild Living

This site is to the rear of the hospital fronting Woodcote Green Road once housing a nurses' home and other buildings then sold off by NHS Estates to Legal & General who entered the development business trading as Guild Living. Approval, on appeal via a Local Enquiry, was granted for around 300 assisted high rise (8 storeys) living flats with supporting facilities.

The site remained an eyesore for some time with the roof tiles removed, demolition and clearance work eventually took place with the site as now and hoarded off. The developers requested that the demolition and ground exploration works constituted a start to the scheme which was then just within the allotted 3-year validity of the approval. This was granted.

The Society always had concerns about the design as being one that was practicable, buildable, workable and, importantly, a product that people would wish to purchase. Legal & General have since marketed the site; we believe that to date there have been no results with the future of this site remaining uncertain.

Hospital Multi-Storey Car Park

Although it is acknowledged that there are car parking difficulties at the hospital which need to be addressed, the proposed 6-storey MSCP about which the Society had concerns due to its bulk and stark appearance situated relatively close to Chalk Lane Woodcote conservation areas, was refused by the planning committee but then granted on appeal in 2022. The

Society maintained that a smaller and better design in brick appearance rather than concrete would be more preferable. There is a time limit condition to the approval requiring commencement by 5 December 2025. This appears unlikely to be met. We endeavoured to find out more via the Council's Health Liaison Committee, but a planned November meeting has been deferred to January 2026.

Poundland / Former Woolworths - High Street

This site has been vacant for over two years, but after a legal delay about a section 106 condition relative to waste storage and collection - on ongoing difficulty in town centre locations - permission now granted for 10 units of accommodation on 1st and 2nd floors and rear of ground floor with a reduced ground floor retail area than formerly. It is important that this site is soon brought back into use

Other Planning Information

63 Dorking Road

Former licensed premises, White Horse and Lava Lounge



- Approval granted for conversion to Sainsburys' Local Store.

17 Milburn Walk

Solar panels to front and part side elevation roofs.

Refused

McDonalds - High Street

Society objected to application to extend opening hours beyond 1am, the Police also have objected on the grounds of likely to promote increase in anti-social behaviour

Various Sites For Telecommunication And Moving Sites Advertising Site In Town Centre

ECS objected to placing these unnecessary hubs in locations of Church Street, High Street, Station Approach and Ashley Avenue. They were refused by the Council and then dismissed at appeal.

Oak Glade Nursing Home

A proposal has been put forward by Nexus Planning for the south of Oak Glade which is by the roundabout at

Christ Church Road and Chersey Lane for a development of a 70 Bed Care Home.

They asked residents for their views and opinions early December and will be submitting a planning application to the Council by Christmas 2025.



The site is located within the Green Belt, however it has been agreed that the site comprises 'Grey Belt' land which is a concept brought in by the government in December 2024 which deems the land to be poorer quality Green Belt and suitable for development.



24-28 West Street

This development drags on now that the site has been cleared. The original builders went into liquidation and now the new builders have to go through the process of negotiations with Network Rail, who are not known for their speed of communication or dealing with planning applications. So this could be a long process.

The developers have also put in an application to modify an obligation contained within a S106 agreement attached to the original approved planning application.



This has been refused by the planning department.

The new builders also failed to put the application for the scaffolding licence onto the hoarding - this ran out on 5th November. New notices have now been put up by SCC after a complaint was made by a resident.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

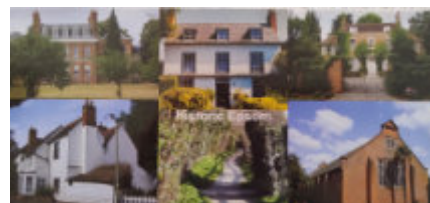
2026 Subscriptions are due in January. If you prefer to make payments online, please pay your subscription [£5 for a household or £3 for individual] in January, just a few weeks away or even now, if you think you might forget. You can make a bank transfer -

Epsom Civic Society, Sort code 20 29 90 , Account No. 353078 - giving your surname and postcode as reference. Alternatively you can use PayPal by going to our website www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk , follow the link 'Join us' and select the PayPal option at the bottom of that page. Select individual (£3) or household (£5) membership as appropriate, or pay a different amount if you wish to make a donation.



EPSOM POSTCARDS

I have Epsom postcards to give away. Some of you may remember Piers Nicholson who moved to the West Country a few years ago. Piers took pictures of Epsom and made them into postcards that were available to buy in a number of shops in town. When he left, he donated two boxes of postcards to Epsom Civic Society.



As few people send postcards these days, there are still a good number languishing in my cupboard. If you or anyone you know collects postcards, you would be very welcome to as many as you like. Otherwise, they will be recycled sometime in the next few months.



Ishbel Kenward – Membership Sec..

01372 438361 membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

Chair: **Margaret Hollins**

Vice Chairman: **Vacancy**

Hon Secretary: **Vacancy**

Hon Treasurer: **Nick Lock**

Other Committee members:

- **Simon Alford** (Heritage)
- **Michael Arthur** (Planning)
- **Eleanor Bland** (Minutes, Events)
- **Mark Bristow** (Webmaster)
- **Ishbel Kenward** (Membership)
- **Jan Lanigan** (Events)
- **John Mumford** (Planning)
- **Aurélie Paoli** (Climate change and sustainability)

Hon Archivist: **Vacancy**

Hon Photographic Archivist: **David Rowe**

Newsletter Editor: **Steve Bridger**

Publicity: **Vacancy**

Hon Auditor: **Brian Atkinson**



Please send any letters or comments for consideration to: Newsletter Editor: publicity@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

All of our newsletters are available on our website: www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk