



Epsom Civic Society

Newsletter

*Shaping the future,
safeguarding the past*

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ACTING CO-CHAIR'S REPORT

Dear Members

Since our previous Chair, Margaret Hollins, retired at the AGM in April, Karen Overington (Hon. Secretary) and I have been sharing the 'Acting Chair' role while we actively continue the search for a replacement. As has been mentioned many times before in these newsletters, we strongly encourage members of the Society to consider joining us on the Committee to help us to shape the future of Epsom. It need not be particularly time consuming or onerous (we have one committee meeting a month) and the more people that are involved, the less the individual workload. If you would potentially be interested please do contact me finance@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk or Karen secretary@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk. As you will see from later articles in this newsletter, planning policy and individual planning applications continue to be a key focus of our work. Hardly a day goes past without a government announcement of one sort or another relating to planning controls, all with a clear focus on making it easier for developers to secure planning permission for new houses.

Big announcements such as the publication of the revised **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) in August this year garnered a lot of attention both in the mainstream and professional media. By introducing a rules-based system that fast-tracks home building near transport hubs, encourages building on urban plots, and restores strict land supply targets, the NPPF shifts the focus of power away from local councils and the communities they represent towards central government.

Perhaps getting less attention in the media, but due to come into force at the end of this October, is **legislation** that will set out a prescriptive set of national rules for determining planning applications. The vast majority of applications will be delegated to officers with referral to Committee only for those major schemes that raise significant planning matters. It also heralds the end of member call-in powers even where there have been significant objections lodged. The Government's latest ideas, currently the subject of consultation, would give **regional strategic mayors the power to pre-approve key proposals** (>150 homes, >15k m² commercial, >30m height) and to 'call-in' local council decisions in the interest of growth (i.e. potentially over-rule them, subject to being consistent with planning law and local development plans). Whether there will be a strategic mayoralty in Surrey remains to be seen, bearing in mind that the reorganisation into unitary authorities (East Surrey in Epsom's case) is still in progress. Introducing a new layer above the unitary authorities would recreate two tier local government, but further removed from local control – and all in the name of 'devolution'! The government is falling far short of its own new housing targets and clearly sees the planning process as the main block on delivery. As a result, the fact that Epsom & Ewell has not met its housing targets for many years puts it in the firing line for new building, and we are seeing a number of developers take advantage of the lack of an approved local plan to put in speculative

applications for building on parts of the Green Belt. While the plans for the field above Langley Bottom farm have been known about for some time (the appeal hearing against planning refusal begins later this month), new applications have been made, or are expected, for Downs Farm, Priest's Hill and land off Burgh Heath Road. Developers prefer greenfield sites as they are easier to manage and provide economies of scale that are not available for smaller infill sites in existing built-up areas, and the companies seeking planning approval typically look to sell-on the sites once they have 'added value' by obtaining planning permission.

At our Committee meeting in July, we discussed the state of the local housing market and noted that, despite the stated urgency of the housing shortage and the need to speed up the planning process, building on many of the major sites that have been granted permission in the past few years has not yet been started. Some examples:

- The highly controversial Guild Living / L&G residential home on the hospital site facing Woodcote Green Road has not progressed beyond demolition of the existing buildings, and it seems the site may have been sold back to the hospital

- The proposed block of flats at 24-28 West Street seems similarly stalled, with the pre-existing shops demolished and the site boarded-up.

- Demolition hasn't even started at the former police and ambulance station sites in Church Street, where a residential care complex is planned. Moreover, even when building work has begun, in a significant number of larger cases it has paused or stopped completely, with the property/properties only half-built. Examples include:

- The re-development of the old South Hatch training stables on Burgh Heath Road

- The conversion into flats of the old Chalk Lane Hotel – this has been going on for years!

- The new houses at Langley Bottom Farm. Some sites have been built out (e.g. the blocks of flats replacing the old Atkins office blocks) or are active progress (e.g. on Waterloo Road), but enough are on hold to suggest to us that there is a more general problem with the housing market locally.

Recent news items highlighting a slump in private sales of new build houses, builder incentive schemes to avoid price cuts, a dramatic rise in stocks of houses for sale and stockpiles of unused building materials suggest to me that the housing market (in the South-East at least) has reached an impasse where the increased costs of building (energy input, labour, inflation etc.) cannot be passed on to buyers through increased prices, so developers face making losses where they have overpaid for land plots. There is clearly still demand for housing from buyers, but not at current prices.

However, sellers are not cutting their expectations, since a fall in house prices to market-clearing levels would put a number of owners into negative equity, and bankrupt many builders and developers. The cost of moving, including stamp duty, and mortgage rates that

are higher than in the past few years is also reducing transaction levels and contributing to the stand-off between buyers seeking lower prices and sellers seeking to maintain property values.

At the heart of Epsom Civic Society's objectives is the protection and enhancement of the heritage and green space of Epsom. Our concern is that pressure to grant permission for new homes to meet quotas could result in the permanent loss of fully performing green belt, even if the housing market evidence suggests that the approved houses will not actually be built in the short term. Against this backdrop, there is clearly doubt as to whether releasing green land will alleviate the current housing shortage. Once permission has been granted, there is no way back as, even if it lapses after 3 years if not used, the precedent will have been set for future applications. Worse still, if a developer can demonstrate they have started a development, even just digging a couple of foundations trenches, then regardless of whether their scheme is completed that permission remains extant indefinitely.

If there is to be a more strategic mayoral authority for Surrey with planning powers, it would make sense to wait for it to look at housing provision and site allocations across the whole county rather than have our local council being rushed into short-term decisions that have long-term consequences for an area like Epsom that is already relatively highly developed and populated.

Although it would be easy to get the impression that the Civic Society spends all its time on planning matters, we do pursue the interests of the area in other fields as well! Recent examples of this would be our sponsorship of the 'Places & Spaces' children's art exhibition at The Horton, which Karen Overington reports on later in this issue. We also have a report from Ishbel Kenward on the latest of our walks around Epsom guided by Ian West, this time along South Street.

Also in this issue Simon Alford continues his series on Epsom's Conservation Areas with the story of the near destruction of what is now the Adephi Road Conservation Area. We have the usual sections on recent planning applications of interest/concern, Tree preservation issues and on The Downs. Please do send us your comments and let us know if there is anything else that you would like us to cover in our newsletters (or any improvements you would like to see).

If you are reading our newsletters online but are not a member, please do join us. The cost is only £3 per year for an individual, or £5 for a whole household, and there is an easy [online application process](#). The more members we have, the more influence we have in making representations with local authorities.

Finally some sad news. Alan Baker, who was Vice-Chairman of the society from 2001 until his retirement in 2019 (and a member of our Committee for even longer) died in June at the age of 98. We will include a more detailed obituary in our next newsletter, but meanwhile our thoughts are with his widow, Margot, and wider family.

Nick Lock (Hon. Treasurer)

Ian West Walk

2nd August – South Street and West Street

Despite a very hot afternoon, we had an enthusiastic group of ECS members looking forward to learning some more of Epsom's history and we weren't disappointed. We are very fortunate that Ian West is prepared to give us his time and expertise to show us how to see beyond the modern alterations. On this occasion, we covered South Street and West Street, a small part of Epsom with a lot of history. Ian pointed out buildings from the Spa period through 18th and 19th century. We learnt about the property magnate Mr Wood the butcher. We also heard about the comparatively recent kind-hearted family with squirrels in their loft who asked for a squirrel cage to keep them out of the house but allow them to shelter from the winter weather.



Too often we walk along the pavement and only see the shop fronts, cafes and pubs missing the detail and clues to the origin of the buildings. This walk did of course include Sicily [previously The Magpie], McCafferty's [previously The Albion and originally a 1700s Coffee House] and The Marquis of Granby [originally Horse & Groom] renamed in 1700's.

Ishbel Kenward



Wins and Setbacks in the fight to keep our Borough leafy

It's been a summer of highs and lows for the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board (EETAB), with the exceptionally dry and hot weather presenting an unprecedented arboricultural challenge.

The good news is that a herculean watering effort by EETAB volunteers and local residents who have responded en masse to the sight of wilting newly planted street trees in their locality has spared the vast majority of the stock planted by Surrey County Council (SCC) in recent years from near certain death.

The bad news, however, is that the extraordinary summer we've just had has placed considerable strain on the Borough's tree stock in general – with even mature specimens that would previously have been considered largely immune to dry spells showing clear and serious signs of stress.

Only time will tell how lasting the impact will prove – but that uncertainty, in itself, has amplified the importance of not just valuing our existing tree stock, but also ensuring that environmentally friendly promises made by developers for new landscaping come to fruition.

In an era when active monitoring of planning compliance by local authorities is increasingly sporadic, EETAB has decisively stepped into the breach. Notable recent interventions include:

- **The Green Gables redevelopment in Ashley Road**



Along with ECS, EETAB has been keeping a keen eye on this development, prompted initially by the mysterious disappearance of a street tree – a felling denied in equal measure by SCC, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) and the developer – and then by the appearance of a high boundary fence where ecologically enriching soft landscaping had earlier been promised. Following tenacious EETAB lobbying a replacement street tree has now been planted, the high fence removed and the promised soft landscaping is now largely in place, with only one tree missing, of which EEBC's enforcement function has been made aware. Other environmental omissions, including bird and bat boxes, water harvesting, drainage, car park surface type etc, are still to be resolved, with EETAB pressing these issues with

both the developer and EEBC.

- **9 St Martin's Avenue**

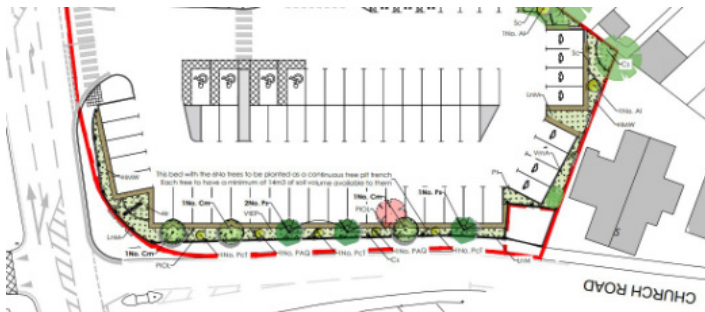
This semi-abandoned property that had turned into an effective wildlife site has been purchased by B3 Homes which plans to renovate the larger house fronting St Martins Avenue, demolish the smaller house to the rear and build 3 new homes within the grounds. Works got off to a poor start, with two large and significant trees – a mature Sycamore and a mature Cypress species – being felled without section 211 Conservation notification, with no one taking responsibility for the works. Further vegetation clearance took place with EEBC officers eventually attending and stopping works following urgent EETAB demands for the Council's intervention. Other good quality and mature trees remain onsite and EETAB has requested that these be considered for emergency Tree Preservation Order protection. Unfortunately, however, the Borough tree officer has declined, stating that Conservation Area status (that did nothing to protect the initially felled trees) offers sufficient protection. EETAB have been in contact with B3 homes and are closely monitoring the site.



- **Epsom Cemetery**

EETAB members met with Borough officers and councillors in July to discuss environmental concerns over extensive sometimes excessive pruning works which were carried out to the boundary hedges this spring. The productive meeting discussed the reasons behind the works, the extent of future works and its programming,

and whether a more selective and sympathetic approach could be adopted. Borough officers were receptive and embraced EETAB's offer to provide hedgerow pruning technique training and expert identification of young trees within overgrown hedgerows for selective retention. EETAB offer of carrying out a young tree maintenance programme in the Autumn was also well received



● **ALDI store development on the former Dairy Crest site in Alexandra Road**

EETAB has forcefully questioned whether the high boundary fence that has been erected along the Church Road boundary complies with the 'approved' (on appeal) landscaping plan which strongly implies a stretch of tree and hedge that would be visible from the Church Road highway. In addition to seeking a site meeting with the supermarket (no response has yet been received) EETAB has shared its concerns with the EEBC, prompting the response that: "The Council has been made aware of this alleged breach so it is on the radar. We would expect a discharge of condition application to be submitted shortly where we would deal with any issues arising from this."

● **Yellow Box, East Street**

Following EETAB's urgent request for enforcement action to be taken by EEBC over the disregard shown by building contractors towards the retained trees at the frontage of the site, deep mechanical excavations in the immediate vicinity of their root protection zones were halted following a planning officer's site visit. After further lobbying, large concrete blocks causing inevitable soil compaction near the base of the tree's trunks were also finally removed. As this newsletter went to press, badly

needed new topsoil had just been applied to the excavated areas, which should help improve the compromised trees' chances of survival. EETAB will be monitoring the completion of the approved landscaping scheme, and has already placed it on record its belief that, if the retained trees die, the expectation should be on Yellow Box to replace them.



Finally, the ever-popular Ecofair, organised by Sustainable Epsom & Ewell, will take place at Epsom Methodist Church, Ashley Road, on Saturday 26th September. EETAB will have a stall promoting all things 'Tree' across the borough and will be presenting the new 'Rosebery Park Tree Trail'. Please come and see us.

<https://sustainableepsomewell.co.uk/>



Climate Change Adaptation in Epsom and Ewell: What the Borough Council Must Do to Build a Resilient Future

Climate change is no longer a distant threat. Across the UK, rising temperatures, more intense rainfall, droughts, heatwaves and pressure on critical infrastructure are already affecting communities, businesses and local authorities. The Climate Change Committee's (CCC) A Well-Adapted UK report, the fourth independent assessment of UK Climate Risk published in May 2026 argues that adaptation must now sit alongside emissions reduction as a national priority. Without urgent action, climate impacts will become increasingly costly and disruptive to everyday life. [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk), [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk)

For Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC), the challenge is particularly acute. The Borough is particularly vulnerable to extreme heat, flash flooding, water scarcity, infrastructure disruption and biodiversity loss. Situated within the wider Southeast, one of the UK's most water-stressed regions, Epsom must prepare for a future in which drought become more frequent and severe. The CCC warns that adaptation progress across the UK remains inadequate and that current planning and delivery are failing to keep pace with increasing climate risks. [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk), [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk)

The Growing Risks Facing Epsom

The Southeast region is expected to experience hotter summers, more intense rainfall events and longer periods of drought. These risks are very relevant to Epsom's and have been lived through this summer. Heatwaves pose health threats, particularly for older people and vulnerable populations. Heavy rainfall can overwhelm drainage systems and cause surface water flooding. At the same time, prolonged dry periods place pressure on water supplies, parks, street trees and local ecosystems. The CCC identifies heat, flooding and water security as among the UK's most urgent adaptation priorities. The borough's built environment is especially vulnerable to heat. Many homes, schools, care facilities and public buildings were designed for a cooler climate and can become dangerously hot during summer heatwaves. The CCC highlights that rising temperatures are already affecting health outcomes and that public buildings require measures such as cooling, shading and climate-resilient design. Without intervention, overheating risks will increase significantly in coming decades.

Prioritising Heat Resilience

One of the key objectives of EEBC or future East Surrey Council would be to ensure Epsom improves heat resilience. This requires a combination of physical improvements and policy changes.

Expanding and targeting urban greening programmes, including street trees, pocket parks, green corridors and green roofs would reduce urban heat island effects, provide shade and improve air quality whilst also mitigating surface water run-off in urban areas. The CCC emphasises the value of nature-based solutions as cost-effective adaptation measures that can simultaneously improve biodiversity and community well being. [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk), [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Planning policies should also require new developments to demonstrate resilience to future climate conditions. New buildings should maximise natural ventilation, include external shading and avoid designs that increase overheating risks. Retrofitting existing council-owned buildings with cooling measures, reflective surfaces and improved insulation should

become a priority investment programme. These actions would protect residents while reducing future adaptation costs.

[sbs.eco](https://www.sbs.eco), [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk)

Managing Flood Risk More Effectively

Although Epsom does not experience the large-scale river flooding seen elsewhere in the UK, surface water flooding remains a growing concern. Climate change is increasing the intensity of rainfall, meaning drainage systems designed for historical conditions may become inadequate.

The CCC argues that flood resilience investment must increase significantly across the country to prevent flood risks from worsening. Local authorities therefore have a critical role in ensuring that development decisions do not increase exposure to flooding. New housing and commercial developments should be required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), permeable surfaces, rain gardens and water storage features that slow runoff during extreme rainfall events.

[sbs.eco](https://www.sbs.eco), [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk)

Existing urban areas also require attention. The borough should identify flooding hotspots, improve drainage maintenance and work closely with Surrey County Council, Thames Water and the Environment Agency to improve resilience. Mapping vulnerable infrastructure, schools, transport routes and care facilities would help prioritise investment where flood related disruption would have the greatest social and economic impact. The CCC repeatedly highlights the need for more coordinated planning across sectors and organisations. [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk), [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Securing Water Resources

Water security is one of the most significant long-term climate challenges facing the Southeast. Hotter, drier summers combined with population growth are increasing pressure on already-stretched water resources.

The CCC identifies the risk of water shortages as a major national concern and calls for stronger action on efficiency and demand management. EEBC should therefore make water conservation a central component of adaptation planning. New developments should meet ambitious water-efficiency standards, while public awareness campaigns can encourage behavioural changes that reduce consumption. [sbs.eco](https://www.sbs.eco), [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Council-owned properties, leisure facilities and public buildings should undergo water-efficiency audits. Rainwater harvesting systems, drought-tolerant landscaping and smart monitoring technologies can all contribute to reduced demand. These actions would not only support climate resilience but also reduce operating costs over time. [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk)

Protecting Nature and Biodiversity

Climate adaptation is not solely about infrastructure. Healthy ecosystems are among the most effective defences against climate impacts. Trees provide cooling, wetlands reduce flood risk, and diverse habitats are more resilient to environmental change.

EEBC should use adaptation planning as an opportunity to accelerate biodiversity recovery throughout the borough. Enhancing green spaces, restoring habitats and connecting fragmented ecological networks would help wildlife adapt while delivering benefits to residents. The CCC stresses that adaptation and nature recovery should be pursued together because both objectives reinforce each other. [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), [theccc.org.uk](https://www.theccc.org.uk)

The borough should also ensure that any future local plan

embeds biodiversity net gain and climate resilience requirements. Every major development should contribute positively to environmental resilience, rather than increasing vulnerability to future climate conditions. [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk), theccc.org.uk

Embedding Adaptation into Decision Making

Perhaps the most important lesson from A Well-Adapted UK is that adaptation cannot remain a standalone environmental initiative. The CCC concludes that adaptation efforts across the UK are often fragmented, piecemeal and insufficiently integrated into decision-making processes.

theccc.org.uk, theccc.org.uk

EEBC should therefore embed climate adaptation considerations into every major decision involving planning, housing, transport, asset management and public services. Climate risk assessments should become standard practice, with clear adaptation objectives and performance measures. Progress should be monitored regularly and reported publicly to ensure accountability. theccc.org.uk, gov.uk

Learning from the Summer 2026 Heatwaves

The extreme heat experienced during the summer of 2026 demonstrated that climate change is already affecting communities across England. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) identifies heat as one of the UK's most urgent climate adaptation priorities, warning that risks to people, buildings and infrastructure are increasing and require practical action rather than further planning alone. theccc.org.uk, theccc.org.uk, sbs.eco

For Epsom and Ewell, the heatwaves highlighted vulnerabilities in schools, care homes, healthcare facilities, public buildings and local infrastructure, as well as increased risks for older people and other vulnerable residents. Extreme heat is becoming one of the most immediate climate hazards facing the borough, alongside flood risk and water scarcity.

theccc.org.uk, sbs.eco

The CCC's A Well-Adapted UK report makes clear that adaptation cannot be delayed. Epsom and Ewell should focus on practical measures such as cooler schools, better protection for vulnerable residents, greener streets and public spaces, more heat-resilient buildings, and coordinated heatwave emergency planning. Taking action now will help ensure the borough is better prepared for the hotter summers and more frequent heatwaves expected in the future.

For Epsom and Ewell, the events of summer 2026 highlighted vulnerabilities among schools, elderly residents, care homes, healthcare facilities and public buildings and reported issues with infrastructure.

Some of the key heat related necessary adaptations include:

- Adapting schools for a hotter climate
- Protecting vulnerable residents
- Increasing cooling measures in urban areas
- Preparing council services and Infrastructure

An overview of key issues related to extreme heat and potential adaptation solutions and responsibilities are summarised in the table below.

Issue	Adaptation Solution	Lead Responsibility
Overheating classrooms and potential school closures during heatwaves	External shading, improved ventilation, tree planting, green roofs, cooling refuges and heatwave response plans.	County Council, schools, supported by Borough Council planning policies
Increased health risks to vulnerable people (older residents, children, people with medical conditions)	Heat vulnerability register, welfare checks, cooling centres, targeted communications and emergency support during heat alerts. Identify and create cooling refuges.	County Council, NHS, Borough Council and community groups
Social isolation during heatwaves	Community resilience plans, volunteer networks and neighbour welfare checks.	Borough Council, voluntary sector and residents
Urban heat island effect in town centres and built-up areas	Street trees, pocket parks, green roofs, green infrastructure and reflective surfaces.	Borough Council, developers and property owners
Overheating homes, care homes, sheltered housing and hospitals	Shading, passive cooling, improved ventilation, reflective materials, retrofit programmes and heat emergency procedures.	Property owners, care providers, NHS, County Council, housing associations and Borough Council
Public buildings becoming unusable during extreme heat	Retrofit passive cooling measures and designate selected facilities as community cooling hubs.	Borough Council
Water shortages during prolonged hot, dry periods	Water efficiency measures, rainwater harvesting, drought-tolerant landscaping and reduced consumption targets.	Water companies, residents, Borough Council and regulators
New developments creating future overheating risks	Require climate resilience assessments, overheating assessments, sustainable drainage and green infrastructure through planning policy.	Borough Council
Limited preparedness for future heatwaves	Develop a borough-wide Heat Resilience Strategy, climate risk audits and coordinated emergency response plans.	Borough Council with County Council, NHS and infrastructure providers

Conclusion

The Climate Change Committee is clear that the UK is not adapting quickly enough to climate change. For Epsom and Ewell, climate adaptation is a local priority, with increasing risks from heatwaves, flooding, water scarcity and environmental damage. theccc.org.uk, theccc.org.uk. It is clear that **heat resilience and more generally climate change resilience cannot be delivered by a single organisation**. The borough's response will require action

from multiple organisations. The Borough Council can lead through planning policy, modification to structural design and management of public spaces and council assets; Surrey County Council is responsible for areas such as schools and social care; and residents and businesses must also adapt homes and workplaces. Building resilience now will help ensure Epsom and Ewell remains safe, healthy and prosperous in a changing climate.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

After a lull over the summer, planning activity has resumed, although most of the cases mentioned in our [Spring Newsletter](#) have still not been determined.

Specifically we mentioned the proposed [Oak Glade Nursing Home](#) (near the roundabout at Christchurch Road and Chertsey Lane – planning application number 26/00002/FUL) where we had raised objections about the use of the land for a care home rather than housing. This case was due to be decided at the Council Planning Committee on 9 September, but has now been deferred. We also mentioned the proposals for [Swail House](#) (25/00368/FUL), which we also considered to be unsuitable: this application is on the agenda for 9 September and should therefore be determined by the time this newsletter is distributed.

Worryingly, there has been a significant increase in proposals to build on green belt land. We have previously reported on plans to build 110 dwellings at [Farm View Langley Vale Road](#) (26/00027/REF), which were refused by the Council Planning Committee. The developers have appealed the decision and the public inquiry hearings for this commence on 15 September. In addition there are now plans for new housing at Priest Hill, near to Ewell East Station, and at Downs Farm. Both of these are currently at the pre-application stage:

Priest Hill Open Space, Cheam Road. (26/00955/SCR) The consultants for developer Coldunell have applied for a '[Screening Opinion](#)' to enable the full application to be lodged without an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA). There is one [document](#) submitted with the application with a review of the various environmental impact criteria and their relevance to the forthcoming outline application for 300 dwellings. No other supporting material is provided. The covering letter notes that the site "is located within the Green Belt and the Council has confirmed that it accepts the site is Grey Belt" and that it "displays none of the characteristics, environmental sensitivities or impacts identified in Schedule 3 and therefore...(an) EIA is not necessary". The consultants assert that the "applicant has undertaken technical assessment work with respect to the site" and that "taking into account the technical assessment work undertaken ... it is fully anticipated that any impacts arising from the development can be mitigated effectively". The technical assessment itself has not apparently been provided – at least it is not included on the Council's planning portal.

Assertions made in the consultant's letter cannot be tested if the Council has not been provided, as a minimum, with the technical assessment documents on which they rely, so issuing a screening opinion without them would leave the Council exposed to a legal challenge. We have therefore encouraged Council officers to require sight of the technical assessment work and to engage in consultation with in-house and external experts as appropriate before issuing a screening opinion. We have also made a request under the Freedom of Information Act (Fol) to Epsom & Ewell for copies of all documents and emails received from Coldunell and their advisors, and of emails and any written advice from officers to prospective applicant

Downs Farm, 140 Reigate Road Ewell Surrey KT17 3BX (26/00741/SCR)

The developers here are Dandara, and they have also requested an [EIA Screening Opinion](#). No documents were posted on-line in connection with the request so the

Society made a submission to the Council requesting that supporting documents be uploaded onto web site (or requested from applicant if not available). We questioned whether a screening opinion could be issued in the absence of such information. Supplementary information was subsequently uploaded, but only relating to dust, noise and potential for site contamination. The Council Officer's report on the case considered but dismissed the Society's submission that issuing a decision should be delayed, and a decision that no EIA would be needed was made on 27 July. We have made an Fol request to Council for copies of all documents and emails received from Dandara and their advisors and emails and any written advice from officers to prospective applicant in order to try and understand the basis for this decision.

We are also aware that a developer is considering a development of 50 houses on land between Beech Road and the new South Hatch racing stables, off Burgh Heath Road. This is land still designated as Green Belt in the revised local plan, and we have made a submission that it should remain that way.

Other planning applications where we have raised objections:

1 And 2 Gilletts Cottages, Headley Road (26/00812/FUL)

These cottages can be seen from the children's playground at Langley Vale Wood, and the latest proposals represent a scaled down version of those refused in October 2025. While the applicant would appear to have addressed one of two reasons for refusal (absence of an up-to-date bat survey and potential impact on biodiversity) the Society is of the view that the extensions constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt due to its excessive scale and massing, which is intrinsically harmful to the Green Belt's openness and setting. An objection has been lodged on grounds of harm to the openness and setting of the green belt.

Land Adjacent To 105 -107 Dorking Road, Epsom (26/00827/FUL)

These proposals have been the subject of discussion with officers prior to submission resulting in a reduction in the size of the dwelling from a three to a two bedroom house. A previous application (25/001133/FUL) was refused on grounds of harm to character of the area, harm to neighbour amenity, substandard amenity space, failure to secure biodiversity net gain. In the new application, the relationship of the remaining garden space to the house and adjoining roads is still be considered to result in a poor standard of amenity for future occupiers and neighbours. We will therefore be lodging an objection.

Land To The Rear Of Danehurst Court, Alexandra Road, Epsom (26/00949/OUT)

This is a proposed infill development to the rear of existing flats. Indicative floor plans and elevations show significant potential for loss of privacy to users of back gardens in dwellings to southeast of application site, especially given the projecting first and second floor balconies facing a dwelling known as Craig Eran on Ashdown Road. We have therefore lodged an objection on the grounds of visual intrusion arising from proximity of building to site boundary.

One planning appeal has been determined recently: McDonalds at 36 - 40 High Street, Epsom, has been refused permission for 24 hour opening.

Places & Spaces Art Exhibition

As mentioned in our summer newsletter, we were delighted to sponsor the art exhibition at The Horton. Judging took place on the 16th of June. There were over 30 entries, including drawings, paintings, sculptures and models.

It was decided there would a winner and a highly commended for each of the three age groups. Prize giving took place on Saturday 20th June and was attended by friends and family of the entrants, Civic Society committee members and Epsom & Ewell mayor Lucie McIntyre.

In the 7-11 age group the winner was Poppy with her interpretation of trees on Epsom Common. The winner in the 12-14 age group was Miriam, with a drawing of horses in a field near her home. The 15-18 age group winner was Elena with an etched print of her family home.

Karen Overington



Poppy - Trees on Epsom Common



Miriam - Horses in a field



Elena - Etched print of family home

The Downs

As usual, there is no further progress to report on the long-running sagas relating to content for the 'new' noticeboards (now at least 5 years old and some showing their age) but (hooray!) a couple of the older spoil heaps have gone. Two of the training gallops with artificial surfaces were recently resurfaced, and for a while there was a large pile of new material in the 7th furlong car park which I feared would result in yet another left-overs spoil heap, but happily this time it was all used up! Less happily, the leftover plastic liquid containers and other random piles of waste material are still where they were. So we will be raising the matters yet again at the next Downs Consultative Committee meeting in October. As I commented in my previous Downs report, the period running up to a meeting seems to be when some progress is actually made, so hopefully we will see more action this time.

The Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators meeting was held in June where it was agreed that Councillor Steven McCormick should continue to Chair the group, and £75,000 of reserves was allocated to resurface the Viewpoint Car Park in Grandstand Road. There was also some discussion of the potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation on governance arrangements for the Downs: replacing Epsom & Ewell with East Surrey as the local authority could potentially result in a loss of local input and influence. <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/g1934/Printed%20minutes%2022nd-Jun-2026%2018.00%20Epsom%20and%20Walton%20Downs%20Conservators.pdf?T=1>

Another reorganisation could also impact the Downs – this time at the Jockey Club, which is the long-term

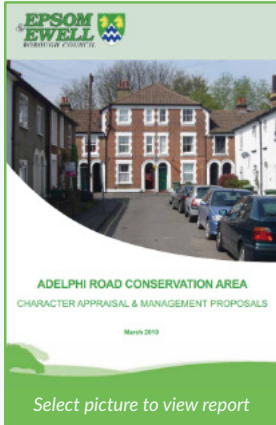
leaseholder. Jim Allen, the General Manager of the racecourse (and Vice-Chair) of the Conservators, has opted to take redundancy and will be leaving his role in October, after only two years in office. Under the new arrangements, Amy Starkey will become regional manager for the Jockey Club's 'London hub' which encompasses Epsom Downs, Sandown Park and Kempton Park racecourses. Jim has said he is sure that the current five year plan to revitalise The Derby will survive his departure (the aim is to push attendance back up to 100,000). We hope so. <https://www.racingpost.com/news/industry/the-jockey-club/five-year-plan-to-rejuvenate-the-derby-set-to-stay-despite-the-upcoming-departure-of-epsom-general-manager-jim-allen-aMlpZ0f0AC7i/>

Like the rest of the borough, the Downs are suffering from the prolonged lack of rain and as well as the brown grass in open areas a number of trees have succumbed to the heat – it has become quite an obstacle course to use some of the paths through the woods. The racecourse turf itself is a luxurious green as it is regularly watered to keep it useable.

Nick Lock



Adelphi Road: The Conservation Area that almost never made it...



In the second of our new series of features focussing on how the Conservation Areas that we take for granted today helped turn the tide against an orgy of post-War destruction of our Borough's once infinitely richer architectural heritage, ECS committee member for heritage and conservation, Simon Alford, focuses on the unlikely survival of Adelphi Road ...

Epsom and Ewell boasts no fewer than 17 overarching Conservation Areas (CAs) – an exceptional number of an authority of its size – and, somewhat ironically, top of the alphabetical list that is proudly proclaimed on the Borough Council's website is Adelphi Road.

Today, CA designation implies a reassuring degree of permanence as well as official appreciation of architectural worth and historic value – not least because of the additional CA planning restrictions that aim to protect whatever it is that has been judged to make the area special and 'worth saving' in the first place.

It's important to remember, however, that the value we place on our built heritage today is a relatively recent phenomenon...resulting in the weird paradox that sometimes the very authorities that now champion our heritage were once leading the charge to destroy it!

That's maybe not so surprising when you consider that, even as late as 1971, London's now iconic Covent Garden came within a whisker of being bulldozed to make way for what GLC planners excitedly proclaimed would be a complex of "high-rise buildings, new roads and a modern commercial centre".

Yet it's still hard to fathom that in the early 1970s Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) was fixated on the benefits of obliterating the vast majority of today's

planners saw the 'car as king' and placed the importance of unimpeded traffic above just about everything else.

Had the Northern Loop been built virtually all of Adelphi Road (including the Rifleman Pub) and the southernmost end of Hook Road (including the now partly redeveloped former National School and the new developments to its left, as well as the cottages in the other side of the road) would have been swept away to create a massive roundabout that would also have swallowed up the nearby weather boarded cottages in East Street.

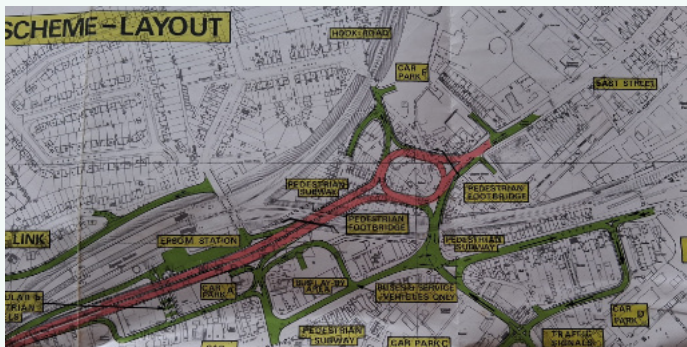
The huge gyratory system would have provided the main intersection for an extensive network of new and widened local roads to a diverted A24 that, from East Street, would have continued as a dual carriageway behind the High Street, across where Epsom Square/ the Ebbisham Centre now stands. The dual carriageway would then have traversed Waterloo Road by way of an elevated flyover that would have continued alongside Station Approach and crossed West Street (where several more Georgian buildings of historic note would have been sacrificed) – before returning to ground level and running parallel to railway line until beyond the Wells Estate and then dissecting Epsom Common and rejoining the current A24 near Ashted.

Unsurprisingly, the plan triggered widespread local outrage. Heritage campaigner and Epsom & Ewell History and Archaeology Society stalwart Ian West still vividly recalls the ensuing battle that pitted a wide coalition of residents and some Residents Associations against the then RA Council leadership.

"A group called ACE (Action Committee Epsom) was formed and, with the help of Woodcote Residents' Association, they raised £3,000, which was a lot of money in those days," explains Ian. "ACE then employed consultants to professionally challenge the proposals and the fight went all the way to a Public Enquiry – at which the Inspector concluded it was very finely balanced, but narrowly came down on the side of the road. That decision, however, was subsequently overturned by the Minister because, having re-examined the facts – prompted by a major review of similar road schemes across the country that were proving prohibitively expensive – Epsom's scheme was mercifully one of those scrapped.

"Virtually none of today's Adelphi Road CA would have been left standing had it not been for ACE and a sympathetic Secretary of State who fortuitously needed to make cuts anyway – yet just quarter of a century later, in 1999, EEBC decided that pretty much the entirety of the area it had worked so hard to destroy in the 70s was worthy of Conservation Area status!"

Despite the retention of Adelphi Road itself, not all the buildings in the vicinity were so fortunate.



Adelphi Road CA to make way for the Town Centre (A24) Inner Relief Road (also known colloquially as the Northern Loop) – one of a series of heritage-destroying but mercifully never realised ring-roads designed to divert traffic from Epsom Town Centre in an era when



Notable casualties of the never-built ring road included Epsom's first cinema – the Electrical Theatre Company – which was built in 1910 at the junction of East Street and Hook Road (where the advertising hoarding now stands) but demolished in readiness for road widening in 1953 when the Detroit-style dreams of post-war town planners were just starting to ferment.

Another building that would surely have been included in today's conservation area had it only survived the 1970s was 'Sweeps Cottage' – a charming and locally loved 18th Century terrace that stood at what is now the entrance to the Yellow Box storage facility before being bulldozed in highly questionable circumstances in the autumn of 1973...despite an outcry by local campaigners who initially seemed to have triumphed in their frantic efforts to save it.

"On the Thursday prior to Sweep's Cottage's demolition a building preservation notice was issued by the predecessor of English Heritage and hand delivered to EEBC, which only had to fix it to the building to ensure its preservation," recalls Ian West. "That notice was handed into the Town Hall by an inspector of historic buildings who was a close friend of mine, so I can be certain when it arrived – but on the Saturday I was shocked to see demolition men at work. They told me they'd only been hired to pull down the building on the Friday and were on a special bonus to complete the job by Sunday night.

"When I contacted the Council the following day they didn't initially realise I knew precisely when the preservation notice had been delivered, but when presented with the facts claimed they'd been too busy to send anyone to affix it to the building that Friday – to

which my response was that someone had clearly had the time to inform the building's owners! Why else would the demolition gang have been commissioned at such short notice to complete the job before the notice could be affixed on Monday morning?"

It is sobering to think that the needless loss of Sweep's Cottage was just the tip of a far more devastating iceberg that, but for the tenacity of local protestors, would have left Epsom Town centre permanently disfigured by a dual carriageway and its very own mini-version of the Croydon Flyover...

The Council's own Adelphi Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal of 1999 notes that 'almost all of the area's buildings contribute to the area's special historic character and appearance and there is much of historic interest' – though Ian West still laments the loss that had then only recently occurred of the building that used to stand at the left of Adelphi Road's entrance, which used to be a mirror image of the Rifleman Pub.

"Adelphi Road was the only road with a completely symmetrical entrance in the Borough, and while the late 1980s building that replaced what had latterly been a fish and chip shop isn't awful it still needlessly destroyed something that was previously perfectly balanced," he explains. "I'd definitely contest the justification that was given for its redevelopment that the building was of 'low quality, not suitable for refurbishment and beyond economic repair', and would like to hope that the same decision would not have been made today."

Viewed in the context of what nearly came to pass, however, maybe we should simply count our lucky stars that Epsom narrowly dodged a far worse bullet!

All photos courtesy of Bourne Hall Museum



Plough & Harrow - 1911-1920



East Street - Red Lion



Adelphi Road - 1980



Adelphi Road - 1971



Interested in tracing your family tree or exploring local history?

The Epsom & Ewell Local & Family History Centre, based at Ewell Library in Bourne Hall, holds census records, trade directories, newspapers, maps, photographs, war memorial records and much more.

Volunteer experts can help you trace your family tree or explore local history (open Tuesdays 10am-12noon, Thursdays and Fridays 2pm-4pm) — or explore hundreds of

fascinating articles online at: <https://eehe.org.uk/about-us>

Those online resources have been a helpful aid in Epsom Civic Society's own research for a new series of features on the Conservation Areas of Epsom & Ewell. See pages 10 & 11 of this newsletter for a special focus on Adelphi Road, and its narrow escape from the bulldozers in the early 1970s. The introductory feature – which gave an overview of the often fraught battle to save our built heritage in the 1950s, 60s and 70s – can be viewed in the Summer edition of this newsletter at:

<https://epsomcivicsociety.org.uk/newsletters/>



SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thank you to those who have paid 2026 subscriptions already following my note in the last Newsletter.

If you haven't already paid and were not in when your Road Representative called to collect subscriptions, they will have left a small envelope with his / her name and address for you to arrange payment in a way that suits you. If paying by cheque, please make this payable to 'Epsom Civic Society'. You can pay online by Bank Transfer (*Epsom Civic Society* Sort code 20 29 90 Account No 20353078) or PayPal as detailed on the brown envelope. Select individual (£3) or household (£5) membership as appropriate or pay a different amount if you wish to make a donation.



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