

EPSOM & EWELL HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY



THE FIRST 50 YEARS: 1960-2010

Conservation

One of the objects of the Society, as set out in the Rules, is to use its influence to achieve the preservation of objects, buildings and sites of archaeological and/or historical importance within the area that it covers. This involves the study of local planning applications to assess their effect on the conservation of historical buildings and other environmental features, and possibly making comments and presentations at public enquiries. These activities under the general heading 'conservation', have always been considered an important function of the Society.



The stables at The Durdans

The Society has made representation on over 150 planning applications during its existence with some of the most significant being the Goodship and Saunders site in Ewell Village, extensions at Woodcote Park, the Stoneleigh Inn, Waterloo House, 13-15 High Street (Ewell), The Durdans and the Cheam Motor site.

More recently EEHAS joined the fight to prevent the conversion of the Grade II listed indoor riding school at the Durdans into offices: currently negotiations are underway to lease the site to a racing trainer, bringing the school and stables back into equine use.

An engraving of the Spa period Assembly Rooms



We are always on the lookout for buildings of sufficient merit to be listed, or added to the Register of Buildings of Local Interest. In 1994 we were able to have the ice house in the grounds of the former Convent of the Sacred Hearts in Epsom listed Grade II and were instrumental in having four buildings added to the Register in February 2000.



EEHAS members outside the Ice House in the grounds of the former Sacred Hearts Convent during excavation and renovation in 1994

The Society's conservative campaigns have not always been successful. However, much has been achieved in getting planning applications modified to remove their most objectionable features. Although we could never agree that the best use that could be found for Waterloo House, the oldest surviving spa assembly rooms in the country, was to turn it into a pub called The Rat and Parrot and ignore the original layout of the two assembly rooms, our criticisms, and those of English Heritage, Epsom Protection Society and other bodies did lead to some improvement in the plans before the developer pulled out of the deal. The building is now known by its original name of The Assembly Rooms.



The National Counties building with its origins in the late 17th century has been restored and is again known by its original name of *The Assembly Rooms*

Building Recording

If an interesting building is in danger of demolition, it is important to record details of its construction before it disappears. Recording can be useful also in respect of monitoring changes in the appearance of a building, or as a means of study of a special feature or building type. This was a particular useful activity in the early days of the Society, when so many historic buildings were under threat, and much good work was done under the direction of Ian West in association with the Surrey Domestic Buildings Research Group. A prominent member of the DBRG was Joan Harding, at one time a Vice-President of N.A.S. Photographs of the interiors of buildings under threat have been taken by Bill Gibbs and Charles Abdy and currently a project is underway to photographically record building frontages starting with the High Street areas of Epsom and Ewell.



Above and below- Upper Mill, Ewell - Renovation or rebuilding?



Fitznell's Manor, Ewell - before restoration



Fitznell's Manor, Ewell - following restoration