

Tree preservation orders stump developers' hopes

Tree preservation orders have been applied by Epping Forest District Council to all the formally planted trees in Potters Close, off York Hill. The orders extend to trees at the bottom end of the garden of 11 Woodbury Hill, which runs down to the top end of Potters Close. No 11 Woodbury Hill recently changed hands and is now the subject of a planning application to be extended at two storey level on three sides.

Southbank. Further preservation orders have been slapped on trees in the garden of 98 York Hill – Southbank - which fronts the southern side of Potters Close. Southbank is the subject of an appeal against a second application to build two houses fronting York Hill. Both applications have been rejected by Epping Forest District Council.

Unless the Department of Environment inspector – and/or the Secretary of State – rules otherwise, options for development at both 98 York Hill and 11 Woodbury Hill are now considerably reduced provided the TPOs stand – and are complied with.

Hills Amenity Society's planning specialist, Brenda Harris, writes: The HAS works to preserve Loughton's Conservation areas. The York Hill, Woodbury Hill and Staples Road areas have become a sought-after area to live in and residents are reminded that council permission is required to prune or fell any trees or remove any hedges in this area. It should also be remembered that permission is required for the alteration of properties.

Hills tree Warden Ian Locks writes: A most interesting initiative by Epping Forest District Council was a meeting at Theydon Bois village hall on Saturday 3 February. The public meeting was called to discuss a Community Tree Strategy for Theydon Bois and included workshop sessions on the forest, special places, community involvement and street trees. The meeting was jointly sponsored by The Conservators of Epping Forest, Theydon Bois Parish Council and the Theydon Bois Rural Preservation Society.

This could be a most interesting exercise, possibly jointly sponsored by the HAS with Loughton Town Council and The Conservators. As the above items suggest, EFDC seems to react with TPO's when planning applications are in the wind. Would it not be better if there was a more coherent and longer term strategy for both preserving – and planting? Your views would be most welcome. Please contact me, or any member of the committee.

Street lamps

Loughton Town Council has agreed in principle to start the replacement of non-conforming lamp-posts in the three conservation areas at the rate of two or three a year. The sites to be upgraded will be selected by the EFDC conservation officer.

The folk who lived on the Hills – 100 years ago

Committee member Jane Fox asks: Who lived on The Hills more than 100 years ago? All is revealed in the 1851-81 census books in Loughton Library. Handwritten entries give the address of each household with names of the occupants, their ages, marital status, occupations and place of birth. Even paupers are identified together with anyone classified as deaf-and-dumb, blind, an imbecile, idiot or lunatic.

An alarming entry for The Hills area is recorded in the 1871 census. Relatives of the large Street family, who in 1851 had the monopoly as the village chimney sweeps, were living in a tent on forest land near the old Wheatsheaf pub. Twenty-five-year-old Thomas Street, an agricultural labourer, and his wife Hope, 24, had six children including twin boys. On the census night, Sunday 2 April, their youngest daughter, Annie, was only four days old.

A fascinating picture of life on The Hills emerges from these census books in the library's Essex Local History Section. The 1981 Loughton Census is on microfiche and the census for 1901 should be available next year.

Famous Hill people

In his book "Reminiscences of a Loughton Life", Percy Ambrose mentions Mrs Varley Roberts "who wore impressive hats and was one of the managers at Staples Road school. Before moving to Woodbury Hill, the Varley Roberts lived at Eaton Villas, in one of three pairs of large semi-detached houses occupied by Loughton's wealthier inhabitants.

These villas, which had semi-basements for the servants, and stone steps leading to the front doors above, were on the High Road and close to the Methodist Church. Mr Ambrose makes no reference to the contribution made by J. Varley Roberts to the development of British broadcasting.

Support the lifeboat Table Top Sale – 31 March Mike Evans – he was Father Christmas at the Hills carol singing last year – urges Hills residents to support the lifeboat Table Top Sale. It takes place at the Wesley Hall Methodist Church, High Road, Loughton on Saturday 31 March. Doors open at 10.00am and the sale closes at 3.00pm.

If you witness illegal dumping...

Lyn Orton, secretary of the Hills Amenity Society, writes: During my six years as secretary at the Epping Forest Conservation Centre one little gem was when one of the staff members witnessed a car dumping rubbish in the forest. Best to let them drive away – don't confront them! He sorted through the rubbish and found several addressed items. To our absolute glee he collected the rubbish and returned it to the owners' doorstep!

Illegal tippers have no respect for this beautiful area. Please do help to stamp out this practice which is completely unnecessary. The EFDC tip in Chigwell, just past the station and golf club, is open during most daylight hours every day of the week. If you see illegal tipping of waste, take the number of the car and dial the Environment Agency free emergency number 0800 80 70 60. If you would like to discuss the incident call 01189 535000 – the regional switchboard for the Thames Area.

Conservation areas and the value of your home

Town Councillor Chris Pond, deputy chairman of the Hills Amenity Society, writes:

Estate agents will tell you that a conservation area can add five or 10 percent to the value of your home. This is not “snob value”, rather a recognition that conservation areas have a special character which is deserving of preservation and enhancement. For confirmation of this, just note the references in the property section of the local papers with phrases such as “situated in one of Loughton’s conservation areas”. So keeping the Hills conservation areas in good order is in the interests of all of us. Here are a few tips on how we can all help to do this:

- ? Do not keep **dustbins, wheely bins and rubbish sacks** in front gardens
- ? Never leave **rubbish, builders’ rubble or lumber** on your frontage and if any is dumped in communal areas, call Epping Forest District Council on 01992 564000 x3050) to have it removed.
- ? To have **graffiti** removed call 01992 564272.
- ? Defects in **pavements or street furniture** should be reported to EFDC on 01992 564000. The council’s policy is to replace defective street furniture within three months.
- ? Do not park **commercial vehicles** in the conservation area overnight or at weekends.
- ? In the York Hill and Staples Road conservation areas **fences and hedges** are protected. If you notice hedges being uprooted or fences altered, consult the EFDC conservation officer on 01992 564119. If you think planning permission has not been obtained.
- ? Do please **pick up litter** whenever you see it. It takes little time and effort – and having a litter-free environment is worth so much.
- ? Wherever possible park vehicles off the road – and keep the number of vehicles per household to a minimum.
- ? In the Staples Road conservation area **doors and windows** visible from the road are protected and may not be altered without permission. Try to persuade your neighbours to repair old windows and doors – and to replace out of character pvc jobs with traditional designs and materials.
- ? **Complain**...if there is something detrimental to the environment. Complain to the person – or organisation – causing the problem...bother councillors (there’s a handy list in each edition of *Think Loughton* . If EFDC is slow to act, call a district councillor or tell a member of the Hills Committee.
- ? **Plant flowers**...in front gardens, tubs and window boxes.
...and ask a neighbour what looks unsightly on your propertyand put it right!

Committee Members

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