

Regency Square Area Society

NEWSLETTER 45  
DECEMBER 1986

## THE MAYOR TO SWITCH ON THE LIGHTS



The Society's very own Christmas Tree has just been erected in Regency Square.

The Mayor of Brighton will come at 7 pm on Tuesday 16 December to switch on the lights.

Please come along if you can. After the switch on, members of the society committee are planning to go to the Regency Tavern for a pre-Christmas drink. We will be very pleased to see you if you would like to join us.

The tree, the lights and the electricity supply have all been donated to the Society by members. Many thanks to them and also to the Council workmen who helped us put the tree in place.

A permanent support for the tree has been fitted into the green for the Society by Brighton Council. This means that trees can be put up in future years. The cost of this support will be met from Society funds.

## HOTEL GEORGE IV

At last there is another planning application for the George IV Hotel in Regency Square. The three large houses at the top of the square have been empty for far too long.

Last April two members of the society committee had a meeting with the Planning Officer. Our aim was to tell him of our concern that Council policies on hotel re-development were resulting in properties like this one standing empty.

The new application is for conversion of two of the houses to self contained flats. This will involve building a large extension at the rear. The third house is to be re-furbished as a smaller hotel.

The hotel part of the scheme may well just be a sop to the Council's desire to discourage the loss of hotel bedrooms.

The Society is unhappy about this part of the scheme. A similar scheme was approved for the Portland House Hotel. It proved difficult to find anyone willing to take on the hotel part of the Portland House site.

It is now being run as a hotel but it has not been re-furbished properly. In fact the present owners have defaced the front of the building by removing the tops of the pillars at the front door and painting the lower half of the building in a non-standard colour.

Our worry is that if the George IV application is approved, the hotel part will stand empty for a long time. It would be far better if the whole site could be developed as flats now.

We are writing to the Planning Committee to express our concern.

## THE WEST PIER

Many thanks to Don Phillips of the West Pier Trust for his talk to the Society in October.

He told us that the shore end of the pier will soon be restored. This will mean that it can start to be put to use to earn money towards the remaining restoration work.

He was less clear about exactly how it will be used. The Trust's plans are not yet firm. It is possible that the pier deck will be leased out to a commercial management firm which will then run it as some kind of shopping or leisure centre.

The Society welcomes the restoration of this fine pier. However, we will be watching closely the plans for how it is to be used to make sure it will not create a nuisance.

## UNTIDY WORKERS

If you look at what used to be the Portland House Hotel in Regency Square you will notice that something has changed.

The name which was on the top of the building has disappeared and a new top floor has been added to the top two houses.

Conversion is well under way into self contained flats. There are also plans for five town houses in Regency Mews.

Those who live close to the site are less than happy about it at the moment. The builders who are doing the work seem to have little regard for neighbours, or for general safety precautions. Cables and hoses are often draped across the pavements; sand is left uncovered and blows all over the street; pieces of masonry and all kinds of rubbish fall into neighbouring porches and basements.



## HOW TO IGNORE CONSERVATION RULES AND GET AWAY WITH IT

There is a double fronted house in Castle Street with bow windows which is used as a motor cycle showroom.

It used to be a residential house without bow windows. The new owner put in the windows and changed its use without planning permission. The Society is opposed to the loss of residential property in this area.

We therefore asked the Planning Officer to enforce the planning law. This he has done insofar as the owner has now applied for "regularisation" of the change of use. It seems likely that this will be granted.

We are very unhappy that property owners can be allowed to force the Planning authority's hand in this way by doing something and then applying retrospectively for permission.

## SNOOKER CLUB IGNORES THE PLANNERS

Also in Castle Street there is the case of the snooker club.

They applied for permission to extend their opening hours from 11 pm until 2 am. The Society organised a petition of local residents who were opposed to the new hours.

The Planning Committee turned down the application. Even so the club is now opening regularly after midnight and causing disturbance and sleepless nights for neighbours.

This blatant disregard for the planning laws is totally unacceptable. The society is pressing the Planning Officer for immediate action.

## OFFICES OFFICES!

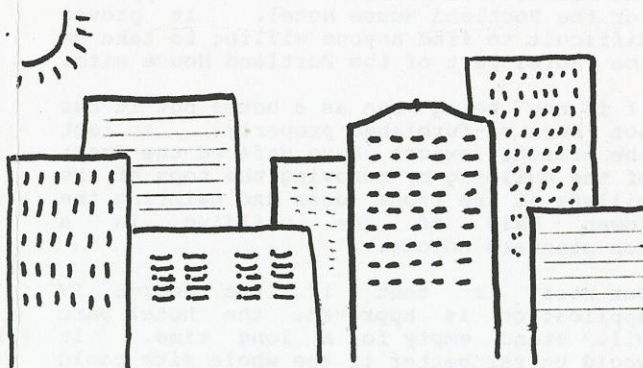
"London's office property market ... could be heading for a bust" according to Clive Branson, editor of Chartered Surveyor Weekly.

What about Brighton? It is interesting to note that Hargreaves Construction have applied for permission to build sheltered housing on a large site on the Brighton/Hove border. They had originally included offices in the scheme but that part has now been dropped.

It is Hargreaves Construction which owns Regency Mews. They have permission for a very large office building but there are no signs of them starting work.

The Society originally pressed for a housing development on that site, including some sheltered accommodation.

We await the eventual development of the site with interest but also a little impatience; at present it is an eyesore, especially from Russell Square.



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!  
TO ALL OUR  
MEMBERS



## DON'T JUST MOAN. DO SOMETHING!

There they are again, the plastic bags full of rubbish lining the pavements and the gutters, making the area look like a slum.

And we look at them, and we moan to each other about how the Council ought to do something, or the landlord ought to do something or the rubbish dumpers ought to do something.

Well actually there is something that anyone can do to help keep the area clean.

Telephone the Council on 550567. Tell them that there has been some rubbish dumped in the street. Tell them exactly where it is (eg "outside number 103 Russell Square") and ask them to come and move it.

This will have two results. Firstly the rubbish will probably be moved.

Secondly, if enough people do it often enough, maybe the Council will start to think seriously about solving the problem.