



NEWSLETTER 185 June 2003

Yes and No

Two of the first decisions made by the newly elected Council's Planning Committee relate to controversial proposals for number 128 Kings Road.

For many years the owner of this property allowed it to fall into disrepair. Recently new owners have bought it. They found it in such a bad state that even those few parts which are still standing cannot be preserved. So they applied for permission to demolish the building and replace it with a seven-storey apartment block.

The Society opposed the application on the grounds that the house, a listed building, is part of a 19th century terrace in a conservation area. Giving permission to a development of this kind would amount to rewarding neglect of a listed building and would give the wrong message to owners of similar properties in our area. If the remaining facade is too damaged to be retained, a replica should be built.

The planning committee has given permission for demolition of what is left of the building. This was really just a recognition of the inevitable.

However, contrary to officers' advice, they have refused permission for the seven-storey block of

flats on the grounds that it "fails to preserve or enhance the conservation area."

We welcome this decision and hope that future proposals will include a replica of the original facade.

Both decisions were won with a 7:4 majority. Local councillor Roy Pennington is vice chair of the committee. He voted for demolition and in favour of the proposed new building.

In the News (1)

Not again! Yet another fire on the West Pier, and it seems that this one was almost certainly the result of arson. It started in the collapsed concert hall in the early hours of 11 May. Fire brigade officers took considerable risks to get hoses into the building to damp it down.

Even so it flared up again the following day and burning embers were still dropping into the sea on the Monday evening. It continued to smoulder and smoke for several days after that.

The Argus was full of the news, with comments from Society chairman Roger Hinton who expressed the view that there was nothing left to restore and the time had come to let it go.

There was also an extensive article in the Independent with quotes from SOS leader, Clive Buxton and Society secretary John Gavin who said that it would be nice to see the pier brought back to its former glory, but not at the cost of the changes it would mean for the seafront.

Of course you can't believe everything you read in the papers. In one article the Argus claimed that the planning permission granted for these seafront developments included not only shops and cafes but also "homes". Of course this is not the case.

In the News (2)

The Society's AGM also got national coverage when the Daily Star reported on our the discussion with police inspector, Steve Barry.

He told us that 999 calls have to be prioritised correctly and gave the example of a call to report a drunk who had collapsed on a bench. This would not be dealt with as quickly as a call about a drunk lying in the middle of the road.

So a member asked if should we drag drunks into the road before dialling 999? Inspector Barry was amused but couldn't actually endorse the suggestion!



Let there be ...

The residents of Regency Square have always liked a good moan. In October 1864 Mr J Silverthorne wrote to the Brighton Watch Committee to complain about the "inefficient lighting of the lamp opposite no. 43 Regency Square.

Moving On

Recently a group of vagrants gathered at the top of Regency Square gardens. They were drinking, sniffing glue and making a mess of the area. Some stayed overnight, sleeping on the benches and next morning an even bigger crowd started to gather.

A Society member called the police at 9:30 am. By lunchtime a patrol had arrived and moved them on.

The police have told is that it is important to let them know as soon as anything like this happens. The number to call is

0845 60 70 999
(or 999 in an emergency)

The New Council Takes Over

There have been big changes on Brighton and Hove Council following last month's election.

Locally we now have only two councillors in Regency ward. Previously we had three, all Labour. Congratulations to Roy Pennington who was re-elected. Roy has taken a keen interest in our Society's activities ever since he joined the Council. He only just made it this time, with a Lib Dem candidate just 5 votes behind!

In fact it was Dawn Davidson, another Lib Dem who got the highest number of votes (770), so we now have two parties representing us.

Turnout in Regency was only 35.1%, the second lowest in the whole city; only our neighbouring ward of Brunswick and Adelaide was lower.

Society member Ian Poyser was the Green Party's main candidate in this ward. He came 5th out of nine, just 40 votes behind Roy Pennington.

John Warmington, who served as a Labour councillor in this ward for several years, decided to stand in Brunswick ward this time but was not elected. Many thanks to him for his interest in the Society while he represented Regency ward.

Two of our own committee members stood for election.

Congratulations to Sue Paskins. She was elected as a Green Party councillor in St Peter's and North Laine, with well over 2,000 votes. She is now a member of the Council's planning committee.

Unfortunately she has decided to resign from the Society committee. Many thanks to her for all her hard work in helping to run the Society. We send her best wishes in her new role.

Committee member Ron Bakere also stood in the election. He was a Lib Dem candidate in Goldsmid ward but was unsuccessful; he did attract almost 900 votes but the ward was won jointly by Labour and Conservative.

Goodbye to CAAG?

The initials are not very catchy and the full name is even less so. However, the Conservation Areas Advisory Group has been an important forum which has allowed groups like ours to talk face to face with planning officers about important developments.

It is being suggested that the group should be disbanded as part of a re-organisation of how planning applications in conservation areas are dealt with. The reason given is that the CAAG is taking up too much Council officers' time.

Committee member Ros Boulden represents the Society on the CAAG. She is worried that its demise will make it more difficult for local people to have any input to the planning process.

The Society believes that the CAAG is a valuable part of the planning process and should be retained.

No Ball Games in Clarence Square

Hopefully, by the time you read this, there will be signs in Clarence Square banning ball games. This will help protect the new garden.

Society Contacts

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Sorry Sue!

Apologies to Sue Paskins whose name was accidentally left off the list of re-elected committee members in our April newsletter. Ironically, Sue has now resigned from the committee to take up her new role as a councillor.

Have you paid your sub?

Most members have now renewed for the current year but a few are still outstanding. If there is a cross in the box below we have not yet had your subscription.



To Andrew Walker, Treasurer, RSAS, 9 Chartwell Court, Russell Square, Brighton BN1 2EW

I would like to renew my membership of the Regency Square Area Society for the year 2003/2004 in the category ticked below:

	£
Ordinary member	4.00
Family	4.50
Senior Citizen	3.50
Junior	2.00
Associate (non-resident)	3.50
Business (non-resident)	6.50

Basic subscription _____
Optional donation _____
Total enclosed _____

Name _____

Address _____

Payment by cash or cheque payable to Regency Square Area Society please. Members' details are stored on computer for administrative purposes only.

**A cross in the
box means your
sub is due.**

