



NEWSLETTER 213 May 2006

i360 – The Doughnut in the Sky!

It is not that long since the West Pier Trust was threatening to ruin our seafront with large buildings that would have blocked off large sections of the sea views. A lot of people objected and it seems that the directors of the West Pier Trust have listened.



Their latest proposal is very different: a towering column built on the root of the old pier, with a doughnut shaped viewing capsule (the “pod”) that will rise slowly to the top giving what will surely be spectacular views of the city, the downs and the coast.

It’s All About Money

Many plans have been put forward in the past for the pier, some exciting, some horrendous, but they all had one thing in common: they didn’t work financially.

Why? They failed to generate enough cash year by year to maintain a restored pier in the future.

This new scheme takes a radical approach. The aim is no longer to re-build the old pier, though that may still happen one day. For the moment the plan is to build something completely new.

The thousands of people who are expected to pay their £8 a time to see the views will provide the cash to run it and provide a return on the investment.

They will also give a much needed lifeline for the Trust which, as the owner of the site, will receive a rent. Currently the trust has no significant source of funds, but needs money to tidy up what remains of the old pier.

What the i360 will definitely not do is finance a restoration of the Brighton West Pier. It will allow the Trust to remain in existence, and to continue its search for a way to do that.

Down on the Ground

Everyone will naturally look up when they see the i360. As its neighbours we need to be concerned about what it will be like on the ground.

It is a sad irony that construction of the base for the new column will probably involve removing the only part of the old pier which has been successfully restored. That is the decking at the root end which was restored by members of the old West Pier Society.

In its place will be a platform from which passengers can board the pod for their ride to the top.

On its return journey the pod will disappear below the platform so that passengers can exit into a new building housing a Heritage Centre, and, of course, a café and shop. It is difficult to see the full detail of this building from the artist’s impressions currently available.

The building does not seem to rise above the level of Kings Road, though the boarding platform may have a raised section. The lower level building will occupy a larger area than the present root end of the pier. This means the existing steps down from the promenade will be moved. The building may also extend further onto the beach than the present structure.

The existing “rock shop” will be retained and serve as an “information centre” with disabled toilet facilities. A matching building will be the ticket office. Seating will be provided for those waiting to board.

Noise and Crowds

The column will take two years to build, but only the second year will involve work on site. So we will be living next to a building site for 12 months.

Once the ride is in operation this part of the town will probably become busier. The architects responsible for the scheme believe that on average visitors will spend an hour on the site, including the 20-25 minute ride itself. This means that a visit to the i360 will only be part of a day out in Brighton. As a result visitors will not need to park right next to it.

The pod will operate like a conventional lift with a counterweight; it should not make any noticeable noise.

What Do You Think?

The i360 plans, while not ruling out a rebuilt pier in the future, must be viewed in their own right: a new 21st century attraction on Brighton seafront. Maybe you love the idea; maybe you hate it; or maybe you don’t care. Please let us know.

The Society must decide how to respond when the planning application is published which will be fairly soon. Let us have your views: email hinton@clara.net or write to Roger Hinton, 39 Regency Square, Brighton BN1 2FJ.

Gridlock

Drivers trying to park in the Regency Square carpark often queue right down the western side of the square even sometimes blocking the exits. This causes complete gridlock: local traffic cannot get out of the square into Preston Street. Emergency vehicles would be delayed in reaching nearby properties.

At our suggestion the Council installed a sign indicating how far back queuing was allowed, but it is regularly ignored.

We are asking the police to try to enforce common sense and stop drivers blocking the road.

It's All Offensive

The Council recently removed some graffiti from the wall of a property near the junction of Regency Square and Preston Street. But only some!

The policy is that property owners are responsible for cleaning graffiti. The Council will only remove it if it is offensive or racist.

Perhaps we can't expect the Council to clean up every bit of graffiti that appears, but it does seem a pity that if Council workers are on the spot with the necessary equipment, they can't leave it looking clean.

And what about property owners who don't bother? Can't the Council do anything to encourage them, such as cleaning their properties and then charging them the cost?

All graffiti is offensive and should be removed as quickly as possible. If it is not, it simply attracts more.

Kingscliffe Society Outings

18 May – Canterbury

14 June – Mottisfont Abbey, Romsey

For details call 321794

Casino Gets Approval

Plans for a casino in the Metropole exhibition halls in Cannon Place have been approved. However, some conditions have been imposed:

- It must be started in the next three years.
- £20,000 must be paid to provide CCTV cameras and a link to the Police.
- No development until a detailed Transport Statement has been drawn up setting out a sustainable alternative to the use of the private car for the hotel in general and the casino in particular. This must be agreed by the Local Authority.
- Amplified music or other entertainment noise must not be audible at any adjacent residential premise.
- Noise generated by plant and equipment should be at least 5 decibels below the night time background noise level at the site boundary.

We are disappointed that the Council did not take up our suggestion that staff should not be allowed to exit into St Margaret's Place late at night, causing potential disturbance to residents.

BUPA Goes Green

The health insurance firm, BUPA occupies a large office building between Russell Mews and Regency Mews. They have applied for permission to convert most of the car park below the building as further office space.

Parking spaces for 27 staff will be lost. BUPA is promising to introduce a "green travel plan" to encourage staff who previously had spaces to stop bringing their cars to work.

Your New Committee

Following the AGM in March your Society committee is made up as follows:

Chairman:	Roger Hinton	Regency Square
Secretary	Vacant	
Treasurer	Andrew Walker	Chartwell Court
Members	Ron Bakere	Sussex Heights
	Ros Boulden	Abbotts
	Margaret Brisley	Sussex Heights
	Diana Dunn	Clarence Gardens
	John Gavin	Hove
	Brian Smith	Regency Square
	Warden Swinfen	Abbotts
	Traude Tappin	Preston Street
	Lucho Zuidema	Regency Square

Situation Vacant

No one stood for election as Society secretary at the AGM. John Gavin, our previous secretary, has now moved to Hove. However, he has offered to act as secretary until we find a replacement.

The job involves attending committee meetings once a month; they last between one and two hours. The secretary writes brief minutes, simply recording what items were noted and what decisions made. He / she also distributes an agenda before each meeting.

If you would like to find out more please contact the chairman. You would be welcome to attend a committee meeting before deciding whether you would like to take on the job.

Society Contacts

Chairman: Roger Hinton ☎321794 ✉ hinton@clara.net;

Secretary: vacant

Treasurer: Andrew Walker ☎700340;

Web site: www.regencybrighton.com