

LOVE AT FIRST VIEW?



The view north from the i360. Image courtesy of the i360

Parked motorbikes, shabby grass, a brown patch of earth, a valiant attempt by three volunteer gardeners to nurture a few plants and flowers. Are these going to be the first things visitors to the i360 see as they start their exciting ride to the top?

The i360 is committed to paying the City Council 1% of their revenue. The i360 organisation has never questioned this sum. The agreement between the i360 and the Council is that the money is to be used specifically for the improvement of the "West Pier" area. That area is the seafront to the west, east and, most importantly, north of the visitor attraction. Regency Square is a key feature of the view north from the i360.

For nearly a year now, members of the Society's Committee have been attempting to persuade the City Council to spend some of the income from the i360 on helping to restore the square to something like its original glory.

As has already been reported, a well-known celebrity gardener has drawn up three alternative plans for the gardens. They could look spectacular - but the local community does not have the thousands of pounds necessary to do such work. Our area is reliant on the City Council to help us make Regency Square a key feature of the first part of the ride up the i360.

What was the Society's Newsletter reporting in July 1995? It was this:

The Council is making a bid for "Challenge Funding" from the Government to restore Regency Square to its former glory... No, this doesn't mean removing the underground car park. But it would involve new railings, restoring the gardens, improving the car park and street lighting."

Yes, the car park was "improved", at vast cost to the City Council, in 2013 (a delay of just 18 years). Let us hope that we will not have to wait another 18 years to have the gardens brought up to a standard which visitors can enjoy and of which we can be proud.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AT WORK

On 11 June, several Society committee members attended the breakfast at Al Fresco to "welcome" the first of the i360 cans (elements of the i360 column) to Brighton. Trix Webber and Nigel Rose took the opportunity to speak to some local movers and shakers. They stressed the need for improvement of the Regency Square gardens as these form an integral part of the "attraction" which is the i360.



From left to right: Rachel Clark, Chief Executive of the West Pier Trust in conversation with Trix Webber, Finn Scott-Delaney, Business Editor of the Argus chats to Nigel Rose.

JOIN THE FACEBOOK CONVERSATION

The Society now has a Facebook page. If you don't have a Facebook account, you can read news and views by just clicking on

<https://www.facebook.com/regencybrighton>

If you have an account, join in the conversation. If you prefer, you can still contact the Society's Webpage:

<http://regencybrighton.com/contact/>

GOODBY TO A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

At the end of July, BUPA will be closing its offices in Russell Mews. The gates either side of the BUPA undercroft car park will be closed to both vehicles and pedestrians. A sad loss for those who have, since 1990, enjoy walking between Russell Square and Preston Street. Let's hope that the offices will not be vacant long as the risks of vandalism, squatting and general deterioration are high in our area.

GOODBYE TO ANOTHER NEIGHBOUR

By November, the West Pier Project (the hostel run by the City Council at Nos. 14, 15 and 19 Regency Square) will be closed. It is not known what will happen to the residents. A few residents have been troublesome in our area. Many have not. Many need continuing psychiatric care and it is hoped that they will continue to receive the support they need.

The Committee of the Society is very concerned about the use to which these three houses will be put. It would be good to see them used as hotels, flats or even well-run hostels for families. Members of the Committee are working hard at contacting councillors on the Housing Committee, our local councillors, the owners of the properties and others in attempt to find out the future use of these buildings.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

17 Stone Street (BH2015/01841) The developers of this vacant plot have submitted new plans for a building of two flats. Previously the application had been for three flats. The previous application had been turned down by the City Council on the grounds of over-crowding.

The Society's Committee welcomes new homes in the area but are disappointed at the bland appearance of the proposal. The Committee will make no comment on the application.

21 Castle Street (BH2015/01568) The homeowner has applied to add one storey to the property and to create a roof-terrace at the rear. Although the committee regrets the loss of

a pitched roof, the property is sandwiched between two bland 1950s industrial properties. The new roofline will make an interesting "stepped" appearance between those two buildings. The Committee will make no comment on the application.

8C Clarence Square (BH2015/02198) The applicant wishes to build an extension at roof level and a terrace at 2nd floor level. This has already been done at 7 Clarence Square - when, and whether legally or illegally, is not known.



View from Sussex Heights showing the rear of properties in Clarence Square

The opinion of the Committee is that the proposed structure would considerably detract from the 19th Century roof-scape. It would cause overlooking and possibly noise for the residents in the north-west corner of Russell Square. The Committee will therefore oppose the application. You can comment directly to the City Council on this application by clicking on: <http://tinyurl.com/ojkkdt4>



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GREY OR GREEN?

The i360 organisation has applied to remove two of the original planning requirements (BH2015/02431):
(a) to recycle grey water and rainwater;
(b) to provide a wind turbine at the head of the tower.

Many people will be glad that the turbine is to be removed. This lessens any risk of wind noise and the chance of finding seagull corpses littered along the prom - neither eventuality being particularly likely to happen. However, all is not lost as the i360 designers have now calculated that the movement of the pod itself will generate a large quantity of energy for use on the site.

Why waste good rain-water if it can be used to flush toilets and hose down flag-stones? Grey water is more problematic. The water meter on the i360 site will be very busy and ensure that the cost of dealing with the grey water does not fall on the community in general.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 31 July at 3.00pm. Cherubs Kitchen at the Regency Tavern will be hosting the next Cameo Tea (with cakes). Price £5.00. No booking needed.

Please contact any member of the Society (details in box below) if you would like help in getting from your home to the Regency Tavern.

Sunday 2 August at 6pm. Pride Sunday Revue: "La cage aux folles" with Allan Cardew, David Rumelle & Hayden Chene.

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