



NEWSLETTER 214 June 2006

Meet the i360 Designers!

On Wednesday July 5th there will be a meeting for Society members to meet representatives of the West Pier Trust and Marks Barfield, the architects who have designed the i360.

It will be at 7:30 pm in the Sandringham Room at the Hilton Metropole Hotel.

This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about the project, and to let the developers of the i360 know what we, its potential neighbours, think about it.

What Do People Think?

In the last newsletter we described the i360 plans and asked for members' views. Very often when we ask for views we get little or no response. On this occasion we have had quite a few replies.

Most people who responded are against the scheme for one reason or another. Here is a taste of some of the comments:

"..seems a little bit dubious to me. At £8 a time a family of three would spend nearly £25. It may go well for the first week or so – but after that ???"

".. the latest act of desperate self justification on the part of the West Pier Trust ... Brighton's greatest asset is its miles of unbroken promenade ..."

"Why does anything have to be built? Just dismantle the old pier and leave everything else as it is."

"It is obviously far too big... The West Pier Trust have just become another firm of developers seeking to pay their own salaries..."

"..traffic problems in Regency Square ... will get worse once this new attraction is built."

"I do not want to look out of my window and see this hideous thing."

"Gale force winds ... would impose an intolerable strain on a 600 ft tower like this unless it has strong support (rods, chains or suchlike, discreetly omitted from published illustrations.)"

BUPA Withdraws

BUPA has withdrawn the planning application to build additional office space on their car park in Russell Mews.

No Congregating!

As a result of our attempts to find out more about the Council run hostels on the west side of Regency Square, we have received a letter from Ian Long, the Council's Director of Housing.

One of the things he says in the letter is that residents of the hostels "are not permitted to congregate on the

green in the square" Those who "persistently break this rule can be evicted."

Residents of the hostels are also asked "not to congregate on the steps or outside the entrance to any buildings in the square. One resident has recently been evicted for anti-social behaviour."

It is possible of course that people who are not hostel residents may congregate and drink on the square. If this happens "project staff will call the police."

"Any concerns or complaints about residents' behaviour can be directed straight to the project." Call the project manager on 01273 294655 between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday. At other times (24 hours) call the project office on 01283 294657.

More Hostels?

A major concern for local people is that other hotels in the area could be converted to use as hostels.

A hotel cannot legally be used as a house in multiple occupation (HMO) unless planning permission has been obtained. Change of use can only be obtained in two ways.

The first is an application supported by evidence that the hotel is no longer viable as a hotel or other type of holiday accommodation. The evidence needed includes proof that the hotel had been extensively marketed at a competitive price for the past year.

The second is that the premises have been used as an HMO for several years without any objection made. This seems to be how some of the existing hostels in Regency Square were able to get approval.

The Society has concerns about some hotels in Regency Square where it is not clear whether they are still trading as hotels, or whether they are in fact operating as hostels. One establishment was visited by a planning officer in December last year who

confirmed that it was operating as a hotel. We are keeping the situation under review.

Radio Day ...

... a chance to visit the studios of BBC Southern Counties Radio while they are “on air”.

We have organised a visit to the local BBC studio in Queens Road. It will be on the morning of Saturday 9 September (exact time to be confirmed).

The visit is free but numbers for the visit are limited to ten people so you must book a place if you want to come. You can book by contacting Andrew Walker (☎ 01273 700340).

Book early to avoid disappointment!

Nestbox News

Last month, society committee member Brian Smith and Graham Roberts of the Sussex Ornithological Society, went onto the roof of Sussex Heights - in extremely strong winds - for the annual ringing of the new peregrine falcon chicks.

The three chicks were measured, weighed, photographed and a feather taken from each so that their DNA could be recorded. Throughout the procedure both parents flew overhead making an incredible noise.

The chicks hatched at the beginning of May and we have one female who weighed in at 890 grams and two males who weighed in at 655 and 590 grams.

It should now be possible to see the new chicks getting their flying lessons. Unfortunately the smaller of the two male chicks fell off Sussex Heights on 14 June. It was rescued and taken back up to the roof.

Some excellent pictures taken when the chicks were being ringed are now on the Society website: www.regencybrighton.com/birds/2006/diary/

Best Seats in the House for £10

Members of the Society have been offered seats at the forthcoming London Philharmonic concerts at the Brighton Dome, at a special price of £10.

The first two concerts are on 21 September (Schumann and Beethoven) and 2 November (Haydn, Mozart and Tchaikovsky).

You can buy the tickets at the Dome box office but you need the special “Regency Square Offer” form. Contact Roger Hinton if you want a copy (☎ 01273 321794 ✉ hinton@clara.net).

No Sooner Said Than Done

A member noticed recently that the double gates at the top corner of Regency Square had been left open by Council gardeners who had been working there.

She mentioned it to committee member Ros Boulden who phoned the Council and suggested that they should be locked in case any young children ran out into the road.

She then wandered up the road to have a look at the unlocked gate and by the time she got there a Council worker had arrived, locked it and departed.

Many thanks to the Council for a fast response.

Society Says “No” To Doors

The Society has objected to a planning application by the Hotel Una in Regency Square for a new front door. The building is listed and the door is not in keeping with the style of other doors in the square.

We hope that the Council will enforce conservation standards in an area where most property owners work hard to protect Brighton’s historic seafront architecture.

Members' Meeting

The i360

Your chance to meet representatives of the West Pier Trust and the designers of the controversial viewing column proposed for the West Pier site.

7:30 pm, Wednesday 5 July
Sandringham Room
Hilton Metropole Hotel

Secretary Wanted

Can you help to run your local society?

The Society still needs to find a new secretary. John Gavin, our former secretary is standing in at the moment, but since he has now moved away from the area we need to find someone to take his place.

The job involves attending a committee meeting once a month, lasting between one and two hours, and writing brief minutes to record what decisions were taken. The secretary also distributes an agenda to committee members before each meeting.

If you are interested you would be welcome to attend a meeting as a guest before making a decision.

Contact Roger Hinton (☎ 321794) if you would like to find out more.