



NEWSLETTER 215 September 2006

i360 – The Debate Goes On

What is it about the West Pier? It seems to have the ability to generate more differences of opinion than any other local issue.

About 40 members and guests had a very useful meeting in July with architect David Marks, co-founder of the London Eye Company and designer of the Brighton i360, which, if approved, will be built at the shore end of the pier.

He described it as a “vertical pier”, intended, like the original West Pier, to provide an enjoyable experience. It would be 12 feet in diameter and 600 feet high, about half the length of the old pier, with coloured lights and a wind turbine at the top.

Once planning permission has been obtained, the tower would be manufactured off site and then construction on site would take 12 months. Disruption and noise would be kept to a minimum; for example, instead of using pile drivers it would be screwed down.

Geoff Lockwood of the West Pier Trust said income from the Eye could be used to regenerate the pier; it

was hoped to rebuild the concert hall and reconnect the “sea island” to the mainland.

There was a certain scepticism in some of the questions. Would it really attract the number of visitors projected? What about the increased pressure on parking? And the potential danger to motorists driving along Kings Road and seeing a pod suddenly rising out of the ground? And the effect on the peregrine falcons at the top of Sussex Heights.

What Do You Think?

We have received more views by post and email. Here are a few extracts:

“It looks like a great idea to us. Once it is up we think it would blend in well.... We do hope the Society can see its way to backing the plan.”

“...we will be objecting on the grounds of so many people roaming around our little square, the imposing tower, etc. Where is the 'provision of coach parking area' to be? Around the square? Lord forbid !!!”

“We are horrified by the artist's impression of the proposed i360. It would destroy the Regency feel of the area and would be utterly incongruous on a Regency seafront... traffic congestion will undoubtedly only be made worse by the erection of this tower... the West Pier Trust is supposed to be concerned with the restoration of the West Pier to it's former glory. The i360 is certainly not a traditional feature of the pier.”

“As both residents and hoteliers we welcome the i360 and are very impressed by this creative solution to compliment the regeneration of the west-pier..”

What Does the Society Think?”

With so many different views expressed by our members it is not really possible for the Society to say, “Yes we support it” or “No we object”. So the committee has decided that the Society should not express a specific view for or against.

However, this has not stopped us from commenting on the detail of the planning application. Here are the main points from the letter we have submitted to the Planning Committee:

Noise: if permission is granted there should be a condition that mechanical noise from the pod and the wind turbine should not be audible above general background noise.

Public Address System: if there is a PA system in the queuing area at street level it should only be used when absolutely necessary – no music or regular announcements!

Coaches: the application suggests there will be four a day; we would like to see a planning condition limiting the number to around that level.

Cars: if this scheme is to go ahead traffic will increase and there should be a serious attempt to solve the problem of gridlock in Regency Square, caused by traffic queuing back from the car park entrance.

Views from Regency Square: there should be no obstruction of views by structures, other than the column itself; the glass screens around the base should be kept clean.

Birds: there is concern that the wind turbine may pose a threat to local birds, especially the peregrine falcons; we think the Council needs to take expert advice on this, and also push for alternative energy sources such as solar panels.

Where Will the Coaches Stop?

If you have looked at the i360 planning application on the council web site you will know that it is very detailed. One of the few points not covered in detail is the location of a drop off point for coaches.

The Council is considering somewhere along Kings Road to the west of the pier, to avoid coach passengers stepping off into the cycle path.

We have suggested they consider an alternative location, the existing pull in on the north side of Kings Road by the war memorial, which is immediately opposite the pier.

Coach passengers could cross the road by the under-pass. As a result the under-pass would need to be upgraded and then regularly cleaned and maintained. This would be a real improvement for the area.

No Consultation for the Heights

The Council Planning Department circulated letters widely inviting comment on the i360 plans, including addresses in Bedford Towers and Cavendish House.

Residents of Sussex Heights have complained that they did not receive a letter. Many of them will see the new column towering above them when they look out of their windows. So they should have been encouraged to submit their comments.

Where to Find the Plans

If you want to see the i360 plans in all their detail you will find them on the Council web site (www.brighton-hove.gov.uk). Select "Planning" and then "Planning Register" and put in the application number BH2006/02369.

If you are not an Internet user you can see the plans by visiting Hove Town Hall in person.



What Are Pavements For?

This photo was taken in Russell Square recently by society member Tom Mackillop. It prompted some thoughts about pavements and what they are used for. A survey of our area resulted in this list of uses:

- Storing rubbish (in and out of bags)
- Cycling
- Storing rubbish bins (mainly shops, bars etc.)
- Getting rid of used chewing gum
- Eating off (mainly birds)
- Smoking on (mainly workers at break time)
- Standing on while creating graffiti
- Extra seating (bars, restaurants etc.)
- Standing on while answering the call of nature (men only)
- Parking
- Advertising (A boards)

Question: what have we forgotten?

Nimrod Ping

We are sad to report the death in July of Nimrod Ping, who had been a councillor for this area and who lived in Regency Square.

Over-crowding in Castle Street?

New live / work units have been built in the former council yard at the east end of Castle Street.

Some neighbours are worried that these are being used to house far greater numbers than originally intended. This results in noise, and other disturbance for those living nearby.

David Lepper, our local MP, will be visiting the site this month to see the problem for himself.

Are You Up To Date?

Thanks to all those members who have renewed their subscription for the current year. A special thank you to those who have sponsored the Society web site (www.regencybrighton.com).

If there is a subscription renewal form in the envelope with your newsletter it means your subscription is now due. Please help keep the society going by returning it today.

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Answer: pavements are for walking on (if you can face it)!