



## NEWSLETTER 285 JANUARY 2014

### 67 Preston Street

The City Council has refused permission for conversion of 20 Regency Square (the southern part of 67 Preston Street) to a house in multiple occupation. The building has become an eyesore.



Its present state deters potential restaurant customers from lingering in the street and is unpleasant for local residents to pass by.

In 2005, the previous owners were given permission to convert the northern part of the building (foreground of photo) into basement offices and a ground floor restaurant. These would have been a welcome addition to Preston Street.

In 2012, the present owners submitted a very sketchy amended application for “multiple occupation in part of the building” and including “alterations to external walls and shop front”. There is no mention of commercial use. This application was refused, as was a second, slightly amended application later the same year. Since then, there has been no attempt to upgrade the northern part of the site to a restaurant and offices. This is a missed opportunity.

The Society has submitted a request to the City Council for Listed Building Enforcement Notice to be imposed on the owners. A council officer has confirmed that the City Council is considering doing so.

Such an order would require that the owners repair and restore the premises. If this were not done, the City Council would be entitled to carry out the work at the owners’ expense or to prosecute the owners.

### i-i-i-360

#### Report from Society Chair, Trix Webber

Three members of the Society’s Committee met Councillor Jason Kitkat on January 16th to talk about the West Pier Site. We wanted to convey how angry local residents and business owners are about the dereliction at the root end of the pier, which has been getting worse for several years. We suggested that if the building is not started by the end of August 2014, with all finance in place, the i360 project should be abandoned.

We also wanted to make the point that if the i360 does not go ahead, the views of local people about any alternative developments must be taken into consideration.

While many of us love the i360 design, others feel that there does not necessarily have to be a large scale development of the site. The West Pier could be left as a picturesque ruin, and the root end initially simply tidied up. Above all, the West Pier site is a part of our city’s history which must be preserved and enhanced.

Councillor Kitkat could not give any definite news about the i360, but we felt that he had understood our concerns and would take them into consideration in the forthcoming deliberations about the future of the site.

**Stop press:** On 18<sup>th</sup> January, a headline in the Argus read: “i360 back on track” with the news that the City Council is proposing to loan £36M to the developers.

**The Society says:** this must not mean even more delay in improving our local environment. Members of our Committee, along with representatives from the Regency Society and the Brighton Society, will be having a further meeting with Cllr Kitkat in early February. Watch this space.

### A Bouquet

Congratulations to the Royal Sovereign in Preston Street. The two inside rooms are now one and all on the same level giving much greater comfort to their customers. The outside looks most attractive.

## News in brief

The Society's Committee has been assured by the Brighton and Hove City Council that:

- ☺ the unsightly white car park sign at the top of Regency Square will soon be removed;
- ☺ ever-open gates into the Square will be fixed;
- ☺ all yellow lights in Regency Square will be changed to white lights;
- ☺ composting bins will be delivered to Regency Square in February;
- ☺ every effort will be made to install white lights throughout Preston Street;
- ☺ parking charges in the Regency Square Car Park are to be lowered;
- ☺ ☹ ☹ (depending on your point of view) communal recycling bins will be installed throughout the RSAS area in February – the Council is continuing to consult with RSAS about exact positioning of these containers.

The West Pier Trust has assured the society that:

- ☺ the Portacabin on the root end of the Pier in January will be removed in January.

## Meet the Committee

Co-opted member Angelo Martinoli is the owner of the Casalingo Restaurant in Preston Street. Angelo was born in Italy, on Lake Como and studied hotel management and catering in Chianenna, although most of his practical experience was gained in Switzerland where he spent time working at the Palace Hotel in Lucerne with Anton Mosiman. More experience followed on cruise liners and North Yemen.



Angelo took over the restaurant in 1988 after having worked there for the previous 10 years. At that time, in 1978, Angelo recalls that the street had 63 shops, of which 46 were restaurants. Angelo has two children, Bianca and Claudio. Eight months ago Bianca presented Angelo and his wife, who have lived in Westdene for 32 years, with a beautiful grandson, Joseph.

Angelo has very generously offered to sponsor the new hedge which is soon to be planted in Regency Square. The hedge will mask the unsightly concrete wall which separates the top garden from the middle garden.

## Dates for your diary

30-31 January: Chinese New Year Celebrations in Preston Street. Look out for dragons at lunchtime!

25<sup>th</sup> February 2014: A few tickets left for *The Winslow Boy* by Terrence Rattigan at the New Venture Theatre at 7.45 pm. Tickets £7.00. Please contact Suzanne Hinton as soon as possible and by 28 January at the latest (Tel. 01273 321794).

24<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 2.00pm: Guided visit of the Metropole Hotel and Exhibition Halls + afternoon tea. £12.00 inclusive. For details, contact Julie White ☎ 07540874455 or ✉ [jcw40@aol.com](mailto:jcw40@aol.com)

24<sup>th</sup> March 2014 7.30 pm: AGM at the Metropole Hotel. Room and speaker to be confirmed.

## Our neighbours on the BBC2

29<sup>th</sup> January at 7:00pm: Watch out for the "Regency" edition of The Great Interior Design Challenge. Three amateur designers were invited to make over three rooms in three Regency Square homes.

The three home owners are sworn to secrecy about whether "their" designer has won the heat or the competition, so tune in on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

There are more details about the programme at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03tcc6f>

## Hotels into hostels

The Society is concerned that hotels in our area might be turned into more hostels. It is unlikely that our mixed community could absorb more than the three-house hostel which already exists in Regency Square. Cllr Jason Kitkat will be attending the next Society committee meeting, so more details on the subject next month.

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