

i360 will
be Britain's
highest
observation
tower

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Wind turbines to be installed around Brighton

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Final plans submitted for the Marina tower

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Developer's new role for old cinema

A millionaire developer has bought a landmark former cinema for £2.2 million.

Businessman Mike Holland said he hoped to turn the Astoria in Brighton into offices, shops and flats. The Grade II-listed building in Gloucester Place was at the heart of city life for decades but has been empty for ten years. It was saved from demolition in 2000 but plans to reopen it as a cinema and concert venue never came to fruition.

The previous owners, Yes/No Productions, the company behind theatre show Stomp, made more than £1 million on the property after selling it to Mr Holland for £1.9 million plus VAT.

The idea of converting the Astoria provoked a mixed reaction from councillors who hoped to see the building still used for the arts.

The building, latterly used as a bingo hall, closed in 1997 and has had several false dawns. Schemes to turn it into a bar, a multimedia centre and to restore it as a cinema have all fallen by the wayside.

Colin Dibley, who has championed the reopening of the cinema after founding the Astoria Moving Picture Trust, said the building could hold offices and flats without losing the large auditorium. "I'm glad somebody else is taking it over. It's about time the Astoria came out of hibernation," he added.



Mr Holland said the internal art deco features protected under the Astoria's listed status would be "quite easy to work around". The Astoria is the latest Brighton and Hove landmark to be acquired by Mr Holland. His company Cherrywood Investments spent £5 million renovating Stanmer House in Stanmer Park after leasing the property from the city council in 2002.

Cherrywood turned the 18th century stately home into a venue for conferences, weddings and civil partnerships.

The Astoria opened in 1933 and ran as a cinema until 1977. The building was then used as a bingo hall until 1997. The Astoria Moving Picture Trust sought listed status in 2000 to stop it being demolished to make way for flats. Eventually bought for £1 million in 2001 it was hoped to use it as a venue for concerts and films. However, the plans stalled as projected costs reached £6 million.

New offices for Maslen Estate Agents

Maslen Estate Agents are to expand in the New Year with the addition of 2 new offices.

They have recently acquired the successful and highly respected agency, BHF (Brighton & Hove Flats) at 176 Church Road, Hove. It will re-open under the Maslen banner on 2nd January.

Nicholas Wall - presently managing the Woodingdean branch - will head the Hove office, ably assisted by current staff. Nicholas says "this is a great opportunity for the company and brings the business to the very heart of the city."

The second office is situated at Brighton's Fiveways and was formally occupied by another Estate Agent. The office is being totally refurbished and is scheduled to begin business mid January. Paul Wilkinson, who has

a wealth of agency experience and knows the area and market in great detail, will manage the branch.

Ben Hawley has been promoted and will now be negotiator in charge at the Woodingdean office.



Left to right: Ben Hawley, David Maslen and Nicholas Wall.

Says David Maslen "We will now be able to offer the high levels of service the company is renowned for to a much wider market and the new offices will provide us with the much needed room to expand".

The company is also to provide their own 'Mortgage Advice and Arrangement' service. Owned by David Maslen, it will be run as a separate company, fully authorised by the 'Financial Services Authority'.



David Maslen
Maslen Estate Agents

Market Trends

Last year saw property prices stabilise after the boom of recent years. Prices cooled towards the end of the year but the

interest rate cut in December actually proved a positive sign for the market. With further cuts expected this year, we're optimistic that the market will hold firm. Brighton remains a very popular place to live with plenty of buyers but as always, realistic pricing is key to a successful sale.

The shift in property availability throughout last year and other factors including the interest rate rise and the crisis at Northern Rock, seem to have rocked the UK housing boat. However the population migration from London and relative lack of local development is keeping a good level of demand in the area.

The introduction of Home Information Packs (HIPs) had the most direct impact on the property market, changing the way people buy and sell houses. The planned introduction of HIPs in June 2007 distorted the market as vendors rushed to meet the initial deadline. This happened again as changes were made to bring in a more gradual approach, starting with four bedroom properties in August and three bedroom properties in September. By the end of the year, HIPs was extended to apply to all homes in the UK, with each phase causing unusual fluctuations.

In the last quarter of 2007 the increased number of properties for sale offered more choice with less pressure to buy quickly, leaving us with a buyers' market.

However, the forecasted interest rate cuts and Brighton and Hove's continued popularity indicates a good year ahead for the local housing market.

What's on!

Some local events scheduled during the next month.

- 06 Jan **Brighton Records and CD Fair**
12 noon, Brighton Centre.
- 08 Jan **Dressing Up** - Early years workshop,
10:30am-12 noon, £4.50 -
Brighton Museum.
- 13 Jan **Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra**
Weber, Brahms & Dvorak, violin,
2:45pm, £7-£24,
Brighton Dome Concert Hall.
- 16 Jan **Demon Barbers** - Five man
a-cappella group singing, 7:45pm,
£12, Great Hall, Brighton College.
- 18 Jan **Idomeneo** - New Sussex Opera,
7:15pm - St George's Church.
- 25 Jan **Burns Night Charity Dinner Dance**
fundraising for CLIC Sargent Charity,
7:30pm, £35 - Old Market.
- 27 Jan **Ghost Tour** - Some spooky stories
about Preston Manor., 2:15-3:15pm,
3:40-4:40pm, £6.50 adult, £3.50
children - Preston Manor.

Please note: It is advisable to check dates, times and venue before travelling as each event is planned well in advance.

The fight to save those green and pleasant spaces

Story by Adam Trimmingham, courtesy of Brighton and Hove Leader.

Brighton has one man to thank more than any other for the preservation of the Downs behind the resort. Without the foresight of Sir Herbert Carden, the Downs might have been carpeted with housing in the same way as they were along the coast at Peacehaven.

Sir Herbert, an influential and wealthy solicitor, served on Brighton Council from 1895 until his death in 1941. He said that in the 40 years after he became a councillor, Brighton bought more than 12,000 acres at a cost of £800,000.

To keep the price low, Sir Herbert bought the land himself and transferred it to the local authority at cost price.

Once he said: "I went to London to buy a few acres at Hollingbury and when I got there I bought the lot."

Brighton Council added to its stock of downland after the Second World War when it bought the Stanmer estate from the Chichester family.

But there have been substantial chunks taken out of the Downs in the last half century for housing and roads.

Whole estates such as Woodingdean and Hollingdean have been built on downland. The same happened in Hove and Portslade with building at Hangleton and Mile Oak.

The development of Woodingdean was particularly unfortunate because it took some of the highest downland within the borough boundaries, whereas Bevendean was largely created in a valley.

In the late 1950s, councillors agreed to make part of the Stanmer estate available for the establishment of Sussex University.

Only this year, the Government has agreed to a new stadium for Brighton and Hove Albion at Falmer.

But the development which had most impact on the Downs was the Brighton bypass, built in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The seven-mile dual carriageway was built entirely on downland. Although designed to

have as little impact on the countryside as possible, it still can be seen and heard for a long way in many places.

Other roads have also been widened to take more traffic over the years, notably Saddlescombe Road and the Falmer Road north of Woodingdean.

The Downs were designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty 40 years ago and now are likely to become a national park.

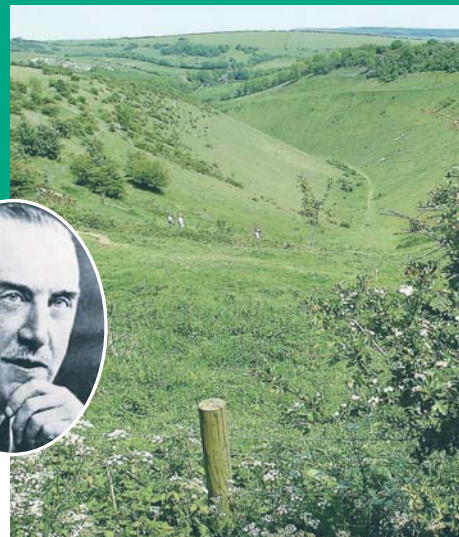


A27 Southwick tunnel in 2002

This will give them more protection and should tilt the balance against more building on the slopes.

Considerable improvements north of Brighton have been made by the National Trust, one of the main landowners.

Its land at Newtimber Hill was augmented greatly with the purchase of Saddlescombe, the Devil's Dyke and the Fulking escarpment from Brighton Council in the 1990s. The Trust is trying to eradicate scrub and to recreate the



Above: The Devil's Dyke. Inset: Sir Herbert Carden

lovely, springy natural turf for which the Downs are famous.

It is also in partnership with other organisations including the city council in bids to get more people using public transport to reach the Downs such as the 77, 78 and 79 buses to the Dyke, Ditchling Beacon and Stanmer Park. Sir Herbert would be surprised and disappointed today to see how much building there has been since his death on land he thought to be protected.

But if he stood in Saddlescombe and looked around, he would be pleased to find that hamlet much the same as it always was.



Brighton bypass in 1991

Open your garden for charity

Following the success of its 2007 open gardens event last summer, The Sussex Beacon has plans to double the size of the event this year. The charity is appealing for new garden owners to join the Garden Gadabout event in July 2008. With financial support from The Argus Appeal for the costs of publishing the brochure, the charity plans to expand the event to 40 gardens or more.

Volunteer garden owner, Andrew Doig, says "Some of the garden owners who joined us for the first time in 2007 event were a little apprehensive about what to expect, but afterwards reported being very pleased to have taken part.

In all 22 gardens opened in July 2007, attracting 2,600 visits and collecting more than £6,000 for the charity. The volunteer-led event now has plans to double in scale this summer. Organisers have already had 30 offers from garden owners and want still more to join in. "The size of a garden is not that important. We are looking for gardens of all sizes. Interesting garden designs, interesting

planting or just a special atmosphere created by the garden owners is enough to please visitors", says volunteer Andrew Doig.

Anyone who enjoys showing people their garden should consider joining us. It is a very sociable event and it is a great way to get to know friendly people in your neighbourhood."

The Sussex Beacon has a splendid and accessible website detailing all the gardens open www.gardengadabout.org.uk

Last year some gardens had as many as 200 visitors in a day.

Garden owners should contact Andrew Doig on 01273 692770 andrew.doig@hotmail.co.uk



School changes sealed by vote

Brighton and Hove's controversial new secondary school admissions system has been given the green light.

The city council's planning committee gave approval for a £2.5 million extension at Vardean School in Balfour Road, Brighton, which is vital to ensuring the admissions policy can work. The new building will provide space for an extra 150 pupils. It will cover a predicted shortfall of places in a new catchment area which will be shared by the school and neighbouring Dorothy Stringer School, in Loder

Road, from September 2008. It is understood the school has also been offered Government funding to open a sixth form and headteacher Andy Schofield has expressed a keen interest in building the facility. There had been concern among parents that if the extension was not approved their children might have had to attend schools outside of the "golden catchment" area, so-called because of the exam success of the two schools. Councillors from the Conservative, Labour and Green parties voted unanimously in favour of the scheme

at the meeting in Hove Town Hall. Letters of objection had been sent by 97 residents in streets near the extension. Conservative councillor Ken Norman, who represents the area, said: "I usually like to support my residents but I can't see that this is going to make a great difference to people's lifestyles." The council promised the extension in March in a final effort to ensure the controversial school admissions system, based on catchment areas and using a lottery to decide oversubscription, was given the go-ahead.

Marina tower stands tall but there's room for view

Article courtesy of Brighton and Hove Leader

Developers hoping to transform Brighton Marina have formally submitted their planning application.

The scheme envisages almost 1,250 flats built in five complexes, alongside 850 already given the go-ahead in a separate development.

Brighton and Hove City Council planners and residents' groups were consulted over the final plans, which are designed to allow sea views through the development from Kemp Town.

Explore Living, the residential arm of construction giant Laing O'Rourke, has submitted its application for the £320 million project to the council after 18 months of work.

The developer has described the proposed site as "a place to live, work and play" with roof gardens, shopping units, a doctor's surgery, post office, bank, a new square and a transport interchange.

Together with the Brunswick Developments project, which has a 40-storey tower building as its centrepiece, the Explore Living scheme would mean a total investment of more than half a billion pounds and almost 2,000 new homes at the marina.

Since Explore Living's plans were revealed in May, architects have changed designs to ensure sea views from outside

the marina are retained.

The most notable change is to the 28-storey Marina Point building on the site of the current petrol station.

While the upper floors of the original design resembled a shuffled pack of cards, the final application has protruding floors spread through the length of the building, producing an effect like a Jenga puzzle.

The redesign means the tower would have 148 flats, ten fewer than previously planned.

Buildings at the south-western end of what is currently the Asda car park have been lowered and another 700sqm of roof garden added.

The supermarket's new home would be one storey shorter than initially planned, to improve views from the cliff-top path. The changes leave the 13 buildings in that complex with 716 flats, eight fewer than before.

A quayside block has been reduced by one storey and its corners cut away with the loss of 16 flats to improve views.

The 241 flats in that part of the development, which would house a relocated McDonald's, would have more private space and 255sqm of extra green rooftop.

Four blocks overlooking the sea wall have been given balconies. The development includes more

than 500 affordable homes.

The buildings are designed to use 81 per cent renewable energy.

Almost £1 million has been earmarked for public art and the same for investment in education in east Brighton.



The new design at Marina Point aims to keep sightlines to the sea from Kemp Town intact.

BRIGHTON - NEWS IN BRIEF

Sign up for 'Children's Festival' mailing list

In 2008 children will be able to choose their own Journey in a special, one-off show commissioned by Brighton & Hove Children's Festival and JourneyOn. Sign up to our mailing list now and be sure not to miss out on next year's Children's Festival events.



Children on last year's JourneyOn treasure hunt.

In 2007 the Children's Festival and JourneyOn teamed up to create a Treasure hunt in central Brighton. With the help of a beautifully illustrated map, hundreds of children and their parents walked around central Brighton solving clever clues and riddles in the hunt for buried treasure.

In 2008 the same team will be creating Choose Your Own Journey, an interactive performance for children, which takes its inspiration from the popular 'Choose your own adventure' series of books in which the reader chooses the fate of the characters. In this promenade production children will be able to make choices about which characters they would like to follow, creating their own unique stories.

Choose Your Own Journey is just one of the highlights of Brighton & Hove's Children's Festival which will take place from 14-19th April 2008 and will offer over 2000 opportunities for children of up to 11 years of age to take part in a series of free workshops, events and activities.

To sign up to the Children's Festival mailing list e-mail childrens.festival@brighton-hove.gov.uk with your name and address or phone the JourneyOn team on 01273 291021.

Flushed with success!

Toilet attendants and cleaners in Brighton & Hove are celebrating being the best in England. The city has climbed to second place in the UK Premier League of Local Authority toilets, narrowly beaten by the Scottish Highlands.

The 2007 Loo of the Year Award results have just been released and the city has been awarded 27 awards, two more than last year.

Seventeen other loos received four stars. They include the toilets in Blakers Park, Lower Promenade at West Street and The Colonnade which were entered for the first time and Hove's Grenadier, Aldrington Recreation Ground, Ovingdean Undercliff and Queens Park play area which all improved their scores.

Edge of city sites earmarked for turbines

GONE WITH THE WIND

Story courtesy of Brighton and Hove Leader

Hundreds of wind turbines are to be installed around Brighton and Hove and across Sussex.

A study has been launched to identify sites for wind farms in the county, looking into wind speeds and the viability of each location. The £10,000 study, sponsored by the South East England Development Agency, will pinpoint spots where wind turbines could be located.

The county has pledged to put up around 750 turbines by 2016, including 22 standing at 70 metres high, 20 at 30m, 300 at 20m at schools and colleges, and 400 small turbines on homes. It is estimated that this will generate 32 megawatts (MW) of electricity each year - enough to power 15,500 homes.

In Brighton and Hove, large wind turbine facilities are likely to be placed at the edge of the city.

Large industrial sites such as Shoreham Harbour have also been earmarked as potential locations for large wind turbine facilities. Plans to build up to five turbines at the harbour are already under consideration.

However, a scheme for wind turbines to be placed outside the city council's King's House in Grand Avenue, Hove, was withdrawn last week only hours before the controversial proposals were due to go before planners.

A report of city planning guidelines reads: "In Brighton and Hove, the large-scale production of renewable energy is likely to suit major mixed-use developments, prime commercial and service districts such as those in the city centre and London Road and Lewes Road area and large industrial sites such as Shoreham Harbour."

Natural beauty

Some of the highest wind speeds in the whole of the South East are on the South Downs and regional planning guidelines suggest the areas of outstanding natural beauty could be used for small developments with one to four turbines.

This would be allowed if a developer "avoids or minimises the impact through careful siting and design".

The study is being led by the city council with the help of Sussex Sustainable Energy Partnership, which has already identified the number of wind turbines needed for the next ten years.

The Sussex coast looks the most likely site for wind turbine developments as average speeds of 6.5 metres per second are recorded - the level required to make wind turbines commercially viable - and fewer planning restrictions are in place.

Both Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council said any planning applications would be assessed on their own merits. West Sussex County Council has estimated that onshore wind could provide 11MW of electricity by 2010. This could come from one small wind cluster of four to ten turbines, three large single wind turbines or ten small single turbines.



Did you know?

Brighton Marina

The Idea of building into the sea for pleasure was first realised with the construction of the chain pier in 1823.

In 1963, over 120 years after a marina was first suggested, the idea was conceived of a harbour at Kemp Town, along with a marina, entertainment, conference and residential facilities.

In 1971 work began on the construction of what would become Europe's largest marina requiring the reclamation of 120 acres of land from the sea.

In 1978 Brighton Marina was finally opened by HM the Queen.

In 1985 Brighton Marina, under new ownership, the construction of the Village Square, shops and restaurants commenced. Development continued in 1968 with the addition of a bowling complex, fitness centre and casino.

In recent years the marina has seen more development with a 'Waterfront' complex, additional housing, shops, restaurants and a hotel.

An update on our last issues' Did you know?

We would like to thank Mr Tony Murphy for pointing out that the statue of George IV originally stood where the War Memorial now stands. He has kindly provided us with an old photograph of the statue being moved. Apparently George IV did not endear himself to the local population so the decision to move him from his prominent position was not opposed.



Work to start on Eye after delay

Work to construct the Brighton Eye has been delayed by four months.

Construction on the landmark seafront tower, officially known as the i360, was due to start on July 23. It is now anticipated that work will not get under way until the end of the year, with completion still expected in 2009.

The 172m-high needle tower with an ascending and descending circular viewing platform will be built at the foot of the derelict West Pier.

Geoff Lockwood, of the West Pier

Trust, said the delay had been caused by legal loopholes. The trust had not anticipated a process involving the relinquishment of a 1930s lease agreement would be so tortuous.

The needle tower will be built off-site but the first stage of work will involve parts of the charred remains of the pier being dismantled.

The i360 will be Britain's highest observation tower, providing panoramic views over the Channel, the South Coast and the South Downs.

The pod, which will be able to hold

125 people, will be nearly ten times the size of a London Eye capsule.

The scheme was given the go-ahead by planners last year after the Noble Organisation, owner of the Palace Pier, dropped its objections.

The trust said it hoped the creation of i360 would eventually lead to a new pier being built.

"The council, the developers and the West Pier Trust are working together to make all the necessary arrangements and agreements that are essential before development can properly start on site."

