

Regeneration plan for City College

Brighton and Hove City College (still known affectionately to many as The Tech) is proposing big changes for its site in Pelham Street at the northern end of the North Laine Conservation Area.

The first phase will result in a new building on what is now the college car park. It will be smaller than the existing Pelham Tower, with a main entrance from an attractive public space at the northern end of Redcross Street. There will be a training restaurant and hairdressing facilities at street level, open to the public.

Pelham Tower, currently the college's main building, already has more space than the college needs and even less will be needed when some courses are moved out of the city centre to the Wilson Avenue site.

To fund the new building, Pelham Tower will be demolished and the land will be sold for

development as student residences, probably for the University of Brighton. Residents in the North Laine are not happy with this proposal for more student accommodation on their doorsteps, even though it is suggested in the draft City Plan. There are also plans to turn the former Co-op store in London Road into residences. The area is already a magnet for young people looking for night-time entertainment.

A combined planning application is expected soon for the new college and the residences.

Buildings on the site to the east of Pelham Street are also earmarked for demolition and sale to help fund the project. Residential development is suggested here but the college will leave it to the new owners to apply for detailed planning permission.

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Fun, friendly, educational – REGENCY SOCIETY WEEKEND

The Regency Society celebrated the period from which it takes its name with a weekend conference from 14-16 October that covered everything from the cult of sea bathing to sanitation, town planning, food, art and music.

Attended by more than 200 delegates from around the country, the weekend was introduced by Society president Sir Simon Jenkins, chair of the National Trust, with a keynote speech from architectural historian and television presenter Dan Cruickshank. Other speakers included food historian Ivan Day, recently seen on *The Great British Bake-off*; Steven Parissien, director of Compton Verney and author of *Regency Style*; costume re-enactment specialist Lucy Adlington; and Gavin Henderson, principal of the Central School of Speech and Drama.

It also featured two evenings at the Royal Pavilion, two book signings, five guided walks and some unexpected answers to the question "What did the Regency do for us?" – they included women's knickers, cesspits and the bicycle. Many thanks go to our partners, the Royal Pavilion and Museums Foundation and the University of Brighton, without whom it would not have been possible.

The weekend was such a success that we are aiming for another big event in Autumn 2014. If you have thoughts and ideas about its focus and topics or if you would like to volunteer to help with organization or even run an event, please get in touch with Mary McKean at chairregencysoc@gmail.com or call 07513 761213. See pages 4-5 for your feedback and photographs of the event. More photographs are available at www.regencysociety.org.

Can we build our way out of a housing crisis?

Brighton and Hove is in desperate need of more housing – the council has identified a need for 19,000 additional homes but only 11,000 opportunities. Among them is the development of Toads Hole Valley, designated in the draft City Plan for residential, commercial and educational use.

To bring the debate into sharper focus an extra event has been added to our 2012-2013 season. On 14 January, we are bringing together speakers with a range of views.

Rob Fraser, head of planning strategy at Brighton & Hove City Council, will set the context. Phelim Mac Cafferty, deputy leader of the council, will explain why it is supporting development. Michael Ray, former director of planning at Hove Borough Council (and former Regency Society chair) will present the case against developing the site. There will then be an opportunity for questions, before Martin Carpenter, director of Enplan, presents one possible vision for the valley. See page 6 and back page.

New vision for Brighton and Hove's seafront

Our seafront is a world famous magnet for visitors and crucial to the economy of Brighton and Hove – and a new draft strategy delineating six distinct zones from Hove Lagoon through to Saltdean aims to keep it that way.

It reads, "Representatives of other British seaside resorts are envious of what has been achieved but it is essential that continuous improvement takes place to ensure the value of the seafront is not only maintained but enhanced for the city."

The vision is "To develop the unique character areas of the iconic Brighton and Hove seafront to create attractive, sustainable, high quality environments for residents, businesses and visitors throughout the year."

Hove Lagoon to the King Alfred Leisure Centre is earmarked for sport, with a revamped King Alfred as its focal point.

From **King Alfred to the Peace Statue** would become a venue for outdoor events.

The area between the **Peace Statue and the Ellipse Statue** will centre around the i360, with the old arches east and west of the West Pier refurbished and re-opened. There will also be sports facilities.

There will be improvements to the Brighton Centre and around the Palace Pier in the zone running from the **Ellipse Statue to the Palace Pier** (now renamed Brighton Pier).

The stretch from the **Palace Pier to Brighton Marina** will be a hub for family leisure attractions and facilities and will host public art exhibitions. The council also hopes to see a new development at Black Rock.

Finally, **Roedean through to Saltdean** will be for recreation, with seating, a new café and a possible multi-use games area.

The council also hopes to encourage more filming along the seafront, which recently featured in the Channel 4 drama *The Fear*.

The Regency Society will be fully involved in consultations on the new strategy and has already stated its opposition to any development south of the seafront road.

- You can download the draft seafront strategy from <http://tinyurl.com/c2cqtm>.



Developing properties without planning permission – our views

Consultation is under way on the extension of permitted development rights that would allow substantial and significant extensions of both domestic and commercial property in non-protected areas (outside conservation areas) without the need for planning permission.

The Society has responded fully and is largely against these extensions. We have also commented on two of the proposals. The first, to exclude conservation areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest from presumed development rights, has won our support. "We object to the proposed extensions to permitted development rights," we wrote, "but if they are to be enacted, we strongly support that conservation areas... should be excluded."

Another proposal would permit fixed electronic communications equipment, such as super-fast broadband boxes, to be installed, altered or replaced without prior approval. Our response was, "While recognising the importance of providing high speed broadband, we believe that local planning authorities should retain control of the siting of equipment in conservation areas through the requirements of prior approval."

"We do not think that good practice agreements would be adequate to protect the character of such areas, given the many unforeseeable siting decisions that will arise."

- You can download our full response at www.regencysociety.org

Ten miles of history at The Keep

In a muddy field half a mile south of Falmer station, a new building is nearing completion. It is called The Keep and has been designed to house archives from East Sussex County Records Office, Brighton and Hove Libraries and the University of Sussex.

The heart of the building is the strong room – actually on three floors – where the archives will be stored on ten miles of shelving. It is separated from the rest of the building by a firewall giving four hours of protection.

Current archives will only occupy about six of the ten-mile capacity, giving space for an estimated 20 years of further deposits. After that, there is room to build an extension to the south. The rest of the building contains areas where the public can consult documents either via computer terminals or on paper. There will be a family history room, an area for use by school groups and a café. Upstairs are staff offices and a studio for the conservator.

Above that is a plant room containing a vast array of equipment, which will keep the building's contents safe. The strong room itself will be carefully controlled for temperature and humidity. Early in 2013, there will be a 12-week test period for this equipment: readings will be taken every day to ensure that environmental conditions are adequately stable. Only then will any archive items be moved.

Power for the building will come from a biomass generator located a little way from the front entrance. There are two green roofs on the building itself. Around the building there is a low-relief frieze representing aspects of Sussex history.

So far, the project is on time and within budget. Construction work will be complete by the end of 2012. The job of moving in the archives and fully opening The Keep to the public will take a further 12 months.

Overall, it is an impressive project, designed to ensure that documents recording the life of Sussex will be kept safe and accessible for present and future generations. Further details at <http://tinyurl.com/cfdndm>.



The local list

The local list of heritage assets in Brighton and Hove that aren't already included in the national listings compiled by English Heritage is being updated in 2013.

The Regency Society is pulling together suggestions that will be submitted to the council – among ideas on our long list are the French Church in Queensbury Mews, the Faculty of Art at the University of Brighton and the Jubilee Library.

We'd love to hear your ideas too.

Remember that buildings should meet at least two of these criteria:

- Architectural, design and artistic interest
- Historic and evidential interest
- Townscape interest
- Communal value (although this one isn't compulsory)

They should also meet one of these criteria:

- Rarity and representativeness
- Intactness

Please e-mail us with your ideas at regencysocietybh@gmail.com or write to us at:

Regency Society
18 Bedford Place
Brighton BN1 2PT



New ideas for Old Town

Many people will remember Hanningtons with affection. It was Brighton's main department store, located at the junction of North Street and East Street. It closed for business in June 2001.

Fewer people will have been in the store's old service yard, which is just to the west of the buildings that once housed the shop. You can get into it from Brighton Place. Walk northwards past the Druids Head Pub and the entrance to the underground car park.

If recently announced plans are approved, it will soon become Brighton's newest lane. Two

property companies, which own much of the land in the area, want to create Hannington Lane, complete with new, small shops similar to those nearby.

The plan will also create a new entrance to the Lanes from North Street on the site currently occupied by the Timpson Shoe Repair shop – one of the oldest buildings in North Street – which is to be demolished. We'll be looking closely at the design for its replacement when the full planning application is published.

There are also plans to update Brighton Square (pictured). This modern development won a Civic Trust award in 1966. It is sympathetic to its older neighbours both in scale and design. The new plans would involve re-cladding the front façades and adding an extra, set-back floor to some of the buildings. The dolphin fountain would be removed and replaced with trees.

Regenerating City College

From page 1... We have welcomed the proposed public space and improvements to the townscape vistas but we have questioned the sustainability of demolishing Pelham Tower rather than reconfiguring it and are strongly encouraging the retention of the Gloucester Building, as well as the nearby Trafalgar and York Buildings, which date to the 19th century and were designed by the architects Simpson and Son.



"They make a coherent group... and contribute to the character of the area," we wrote. "We hope that developers will look seriously at the possibility of adapting them for residential use in preference to demolition."

• Details of the scheme can be seen at <http://www.ccb.ac.uk/pub>

Never a dull moment learning about our heritage

*Mary McKean, chair of the Regency Society and, with her husband John, the driving force behind the **REGENCY SOCIETY WEEKEND**, shares feedback from attendees and the lessons we learned from putting on the event.*

We wanted everyone to have a stimulating, interesting and enjoyable time at the Regency Society Weekend – and you tell us that's exactly what happened.

As one attendee wrote on the feedback form, "I will remember it for the rest of my life. Everything from the carrier bag to the CD to the entertainment was beautifully carried out."

You especially enjoyed all of the content – particular high points were the presentations by Lucy Adlington and Ivan Day at the Old Ship on the Sunday, Sue Berry's session in the symposium and the soirée in the Pavilion on the Saturday evening, although almost every one of the 27 presenters (speakers, expert chairs, event leaders and musicians) came in for praise one way or another.

"Never a dull moment – informative and illuminating," said one attendee. Another wrote, "It is a long time since I used my brain so often in such a short period! Hard work but so enjoyable!"

One strong impression was the fun and friendliness – from presenters and other participants – that everyone experienced while learning about our heritage.

There was special praise and gratitude for the helpers, who worked quietly and very efficiently behind the scenes to make sure everything happened smoothly. "It couldn't have been so well executed without the voluntary helpers – thanks to them all," said one respondent.

The organisation and catering also won high praise from the people who filled in feedback forms.

Many attendees told us they appreciated spending a whole weekend, rather than just an evening or even a day, looking at our topic from a variety of perspectives and in different ways and locations.

Of the 160 people who had tickets for more than half a day, 52 took the time and trouble to fill in feedback forms – a very high response rate. We very much appreciate this, not least because it will be invaluable in planning future events.

And, inevitably, there are lessons to be learned.

People clearly enjoyed Dan Cruickshank's keynote presentation on the Friday evening, for example, but one or two at the back had a problem hearing all of it.

There was also an unexpected gap for some people between the end of the optional events featuring local experts on Saturday afternoon, which left some at a loose end before the Royal Pavilion was open for the evening.

But overall, there was great enthusiasm, summed up by the person who wrote, "Thank you – it is great to see the Regency Society doing the job for which it was created."

And then came the inevitable question: "When is there going to be another one?"

The answer is 2014, although we'll be offering some alternative events in the meantime.

• Do let us know if there's anything you'd like us to explore – you can e-mail chairregencysoc@gmail.com or call 07513 761213 with your ideas and requests.



From top: Sir Simon Jenkins addressing delegates at the Royal Pavilion; Dan Cruickshank enjoying a book signing; speakers Fred Gray, Sue Berry and Alan Brodie sharing a joke.

...and there were lots of laughs and lots of questions



Left, from top: Lawrence and Shirley Lobo; speaker Prof David Robson, vice president Derek Granger and Simon Jenkins; speakers Ivan Day; Andrew Horswill and Jill Daniels. Centre, from top: Members enjoying the Banqueting Room; the Friday evening; chair Mary McKean makes a point; honorary secretary Martin Auton-Lloyd pours the wine; the Saturday bus. Right, from top: speaker Steve Parissien; speaker Jonathan Woodham; question time; speaker Lucy Adlington with potty.



The past is a model for future developments

Can we build our way out of a housing crisis? we ask on 14 January (see front and back pages). The town planning of the 19th and early 20th century could serve as inspiration for developments such as Toads Hole Valley in the 21st century, suggests David Robson.

The draft City Plan has earmarked Toads Hole Valley, an area of derelict farmland cut off from the Downs by the A27 by-pass (*right*), as a potential location for new housing. This begs the question about the need for housing in our city. How many and what type of houses does the city need and where can they be located?

In contemplating these questions we need to remind ourselves that in Britain we are now building fewer new houses than at any time since the War (currently less than a half per cent of the existing stock) and that it is increasingly difficult for young people to find a home either to rent or buy. We also need to bear in mind that England's population is growing steadily – with four people per hectare, we now have the highest population density in Europe. It is higher than Holland, twice as high as Germany and four times that of France – and the third highest in the world.

If we are to maintain a balanced environment and protect our shrinking countryside, we need to establish denser and more concentrated towns and cities. Our city is squeezed between the Downs and the sea and, at first sight, offers little or no scope for new house building. Of course, we could ignore the problem and assume that other towns in the South East will build the houses that are needed, or we could set developers free to build them on green fields. But a city that cannot grow and change will stagnate. We need to find ways to build new housing, at higher densities, on suitable areas of undeveloped land – and we need to augment densities in existing housing areas to exploit our existing infrastructure.

How dense? Regrettably, much of the city's growth during the 20th century was low density detached and semi-detached houses – that English compromise of one foot in town and one in the country. Houses built typically at densities of about 20-25 dwellings per hectare (a hectare is an area measuring 100 metres square – about the size of football pitch) offer the benefit of generous private gardens. But is this approach really sustainable when land is in short supply?

Low density suburban housing also requires longer roads, more expensive infrastructure and wastes energy. And we have seen that suburbs such as Hangleton or Moulsecoomb have been too diffuse to develop the critical mass needed to sustain such things as shops and social facilities.

In the past, Brighton has seen the development of innovative housing forms at much higher densities. In the great sea-front squares, multi-storey town houses were arranged around communal gardens. Regency Square, built around 1820, contained around 70 houses on a site of about 1.75 hectares, including the central garden – a density of 40 houses per hectare. But each house occupied five or six storeys, with a six-metre frontage and had an area of around 350 square meters – the equivalent of three or more apartments in today's terms. So Regency Square offers a model for living at around 120 dwellings per hectare.

At the other end of the social spectrum, the hillside of Islingword was developed with tight rows of cottages,



mainly on two or three storeys. Every house had a small patio garden and an on-street parking space. The density? About 90 houses per hectare, though many have since been sub-divided to push the density up to about 150 dwellings per hectare.

And towards the end of the 19th century, the Stanford Estate was developed with bigger terraced houses of two and three storeys, with small front gardens and more generous back gardens, creating a density of 50 houses per hectare, though later multi-occupation has increased this to around 80 dwellings per hectare.

Finally, between the Wars, apartment blocks appeared around the city. Furze Croft, for example, occupies three-quarters of a hectare of land and contains 120 apartments arranged on seven stories – the equivalent of 170 dwellings per hectare.

All this demonstrates that many of our best-loved and most successful areas of inner-city housing were built to much higher densities than the later suburbs. If developers need inspiration (one tentative proposal is below), they can look at the squares, crescents, avenues, lanes and mews of the past.

Densities of around 75 dwellings per hectare would sustain family houses with small gardens, mixed with apartments for singles and couples. If applied to Toads Hole Valley, they would furnish well in excess of 1,000 new homes.

If we're going to develop an area like this, let's do it at a sustainable density that offers a sense of urban scale – no more little boxes on a hillside.



Glasgow – a study in contrasts

Alison Minns reports on our study tour, which took Society members through dark and light to a better understanding of two of Glasgow's most famous architects.

Grit/glamour, poor/prosperous, austere/embellished, dark/light, rain/shine, up/down, historic/contemporary, symmetry/asymmetry, Alexander Greek Thomson/Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Mackintosh/Mockintosh... A television programme entitled *Glasgow: The Grit and the Glamour*, set me thinking about our recent Regency Society trip to that city in the context of the contrasts Glasgow embodies.

The main purpose of the five-day visit was to learn more



about the architecture and design of Alexander Greek Thomson and Charles Rennie Mackintosh (CRM). This we certainly did.

Thomson's St Vincent Street Church (*left*) and Holmwood House (*below*) both revealed classically inspired

structures with exquisitely detailed friezes, pillars and wall decoration, picked out in trademark rich maroons, greens, blues and ochres. We came across Mackintosh in a variety of venues and guises, from the functional and fabulous Glasgow School of Art, to the House for an Art Lover (1990s) based on CRM's never previously realised



plans, to his home's interiors re-assembled in the Hunterian, to much more, including the remodelled interiors of the Willow Tearooms

The coloured glass at Mount Stuart (the Bute family pile designed by Robert

Rowland Anderson) was exuberant and spectacular – in the fabulous marble hall, a palette of green glass echoed the spring theme of the stained glass above. Sunlight threw tiny rainbows across the walls. Mount Stuart was a riot of marble, glass and exquisite and quirky wood carvings. I loved it.

A light and dark theme was echoed in some of the Mackintosh venues we visited. A dark, womb-like entrance

hall would lead to an elegant room with cream walls and cream furnishings, enlivened with hints of colour from glass panels or embroideries. Thomson plays a similar trick at Holmwood but he moves between the semi-austere of the family rooms and the more opulent rooms where the owner was to entertain his business guests. Thomson's client was clearly out to impress.

Although we saw the prosperous Merchant City, not all was glamour. We passed some of the early Gorbals tenements (rather fine buildings), the Barras flea market and some gritty areas of Glasgow, carved up by motorways and industrial waste ground. And not all was historic. Zaha Hadid's Riverside Museum (2011), with its distinctive wavy outline, housing the transport collection; Norman Foster's Armadillo Clyde Auditorium (1985); and David Chipperfield's boxy BBC building featured, too.

We were wowed by the curves of Wemyss Bay railway station (1903, *below*) and we encountered diverse modes of transport (prams in the Transport Museum were a surprise). There were taxis, planes, Glasgow subway trains, our coach (bearing the legend *The Regency Society, Brighton* in electronic lettering), a ferry across the Firth of Clyde and, of course, we walked... up that steep hill to the School of Art and (easier) back down again.

To help put what we had seen into context, we visited Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum with its Glasgow Boys, Scottish Colourists and Mackintosh display and I was particularly impressed by the stunning Mackintosh exhibition at the Lighthouse (adjoining CRM's Glasgow Herald building.)



All this intellectual and sightseeing activity was tiring and tough but it was interspersed with simple lunches in CRM venues. Smaller groups sampled the culinary offerings of some excellent restaurants in the evening.

John and Mary McKean had planned the trip with great care and attention to detail. John had thoughtfully sent us a comprehensive reading list before the trip and, with the benefit of his expert knowledge, I believe we are all now able to distinguish between Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his equally gifted artist wife, Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh and, more importantly, between Mackintosh and Mockintosh.

The Chapel Royal's flying freehold

Unexpectedly for a Grade II* building of such importance, the Chapel Royal in North Street has a flying freehold – and the owners of its vaults (*pictured*), which have previously been used only for storage, now want to turn their property into a restaurant/café.

The Regency Society has objected to their planning application because we believe that the proposal is not compatible with the existing use of the building or its historic significance.

We also wrote, "The proposed excavation and installation of a stairway and lift in Princes Place will disfigure the eastern façade of the building and detract from its historic character" and queried the suggested ventilation arrangements, which largely rely on recirculating filtered air.

• You can see the full application at <http://tinyurl.com/c7ahuqn>



Lectures and events for the 2012-2013 season

Highlights include the Antony Dale lecture in the Music Room of the Royal Pavilion on *The life and works of Sir John Soane*, given by **Ptolemy Dean**, right. Many of you will know him as a presenter on BBC2's *Restoration* but he is also an architectural historian who runs a conservation practice. He is an adviser to the National Trust and Surveyor to the fabric of Westminster Abbey. He is also the author of two books on Sir John Soane. There is a charge for this lecture to cover the cost of hiring the Music Room.

Other topics range from Indian textiles to the building of the Dome and Regency colours.

A number of our 2012-2013 lectures will develop themes from the **REGENCY SOCIETY WEEKEND**./



Indian textiles in Georgian Britain

9 January – Rosemary Crill, curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum and author of a history of chintz. The story of chintz lies at the heart of Regency fashion and underscores the links between Britain and India that developed during the 18th century.

Can we build our way out of a housing crisis?

14 January – See page 1 for details.

William Porden and the building of the Brighton Dome

6 February – Geoffrey Tyack on the life and work of William Porden, who designed the Prince Regent's riding hall and stables and the house of his sometime wife, Mrs Fitzherbert.

Quiz night

20 February – Test your local knowledge. Includes supper and wine. Booking form coming soon.

Antony Dale lecture, Music Room, the Royal Pavilion The life and work of Sir John Soane

6 March – Ptolemy Dean

There will be a charge of £10 to cover the costs of hiring the Music Room and a glass of wine.

John Small lecture, followed by the AGM Regency Colour and colour theory

3 April – Alexandra Loske, art historian attached to the University of Sussex, who is currently researching the use of colour in the Royal Pavilion.

Unless otherwise specified, lectures take place on Wednesdays at City College, Pelham Street, Brighton BN1. They all start at 7pm. We have adopted the Breeze Brasserie in Trafalgar Street as our preferred post-lecture watering hole, where you can talk to the speaker over a drink and meet the Society's officers and trustees.

Entrance is free to members – please remember your membership card. Guests and non-members are charged £3 to defray the considerable costs of the lecture series. City College offers full wheelchair access, good public transport connections and ample parking nearby.



John Rank's Diamond Jubilee

This year sees the Diamond Jubilee of our longest-standing member. John Rank joined in 1952 with his mother, Margaret Rowland Rank, and both names appear on the first published list of members in the Annual Report of 1953. John was born in 1930, grew up at Aldwick Place near Bognor Regis, and was educated at Stowe School in Buckinghamshire. His love of Georgian architecture grew out of the houses he knew as a boy and his exposure to Stowe.

In 1962, Margaret bought Sennicotts, one of a cluster of stately homes to the northwest of Chichester, which would be John's home for the next 40 years. Attributed to the architect James Elmes, Sennicotts is regarded as one of the finest country houses of the Regency. John can remember in 1946 accompanying his mother to a ball in the Royal Pavilion, where he first met Antony Dale and Clifford

Musgrave. Later, Dale persuaded them both to become members of the newly formed Regency Society. They also became members of the Georgian Group and went on to play an active role in both organisations.

During its early years, the Regency Society offered a programme of winter lectures and summer visits, mainly to country houses in the South of England. John and his mother hosted two visits to Sennicotts: the first in May 1964 and the second in August 1986. Philip Quick, who was later the Society's membership secretary, recalls the 1986 visit, which was made memorable by the fact that Antony Dale removed his jacket and tie – an unprecedented show of abandon.

Mrs Rank died in 1988 and very generously left a bequest to the Society in her will. In 2002, John handed Sennicotts over to his great-nephew and moved to a cottage in Bosham, which is still his home.

Nick Antram

Nick Antram, co-author of the latest *Pevsner Architectural Guide to Brighton and Hove*, former English Heritage historic regional director for the London region and lecturer to the Regency Society has sadly died after a long illness.

"I got to know Nick Antram when, with Richard Morrice, he was preparing the Brighton and Hove guide and was drafting an entry on the Hove Town Hall, which I designed in the late 1960s," remembers Society vice president John Wells-Thorpe.

"Architectural historians can be dogmatic and even patronising. Nick was neither. I found his unassuming demeanour very engaging, although I never doubted the rigour of the scholarship behind his gentle manner."

Nick's final work was the revision of Pevsner's guide for East Sussex, which is now complete and scheduled for publication in 2013.