



West Pier plans: not good enough

The restoration proposals for the West Pier rely on the principle of 'enabling development' being approved to provide funds for the continuing upkeep of the pier.

The development is likely to consist of a building straddling the beach and part of the lower esplanade on either side of the shore end of the pier.

Representatives of the Brighton West Pier Trust, developer St Modwen and their architects, met the society's committee before Christmas to discuss their outline proposals, for which a planning

application is shortly expected to be made.

We strongly support the Trust's efforts to save and restore the pier and we expect the restoration of the original buildings to be accurate and thorough.

However, we were deeply disappointed by the scale and design of the enabling development, which your committee communicated to the trust. The design is not a distinguished piece of architecture in its own right, suitable for its incomparable position on Brighton's sea front close to the Grade I Listed pier. We asked that an accurate model of the development be

made to help everyone assess its impact precisely.

The trust's chairman has now confirmed to your committee that a specialist conservation architect will be appointed to oversee the restoration of the pier, there will be full public discussion of the proposed enabling development and a model will be available for inspection.

The trust has also stated that it will proceed with a planning application based on the current development design. We will not support that.

The proposed development: West of the pier top and East of the pier below

The series of buildings along the seafront total 70,000 sq ft, shown as grey rectangles in these illustrations. They would be 22 ft tall and 400ft long. Scale can be gauged from Al Fresco, the pier, the shelters and the cars. Previous studies thought an enabling development of 37,000 sq ft would be enough to finance the pier.



John Denman, architect and gentle man, 1914-2002

It is with great regret that we record the death of John Bluet Denman at the age of 87, a founder member of the society, a committee member from 1949 to 1971 and the fourth generation of Denman architects.

He served the society as a vice-chairman from 1974 to 1996 when ill-health made it impossible for him to attend committee meetings. He had been a Japanese PoW



during World War II. His father, John L Denman, was chairman of the society from 1952 to 1966 and president

from 1967 to 1974 and the society owes a large debt of gratitude to the Denman family for all their years of unstinting service.

John was a figure of quiet influence in the society, a person of gentle manner who was always there to be consulted and give wise and firm advice which was very much appreciated by other members of the committee.

We are only sorry that his health did not allow

him to continue as a vice-chairman but his interest in conservation and the built environment remained till the end.

Only last year, brought to the notice of society the vandalised state of the Baldwin family mausoleum at Woodvale which the society now has plans to repair. John will be greatly missed and we extend our sincere sympathy to his family.

Brighton station site: if this is the answer, the wrong questions were being asked

The application for outline planning permission for the development of this large site is likely to be considered by a planning application sub-committee.

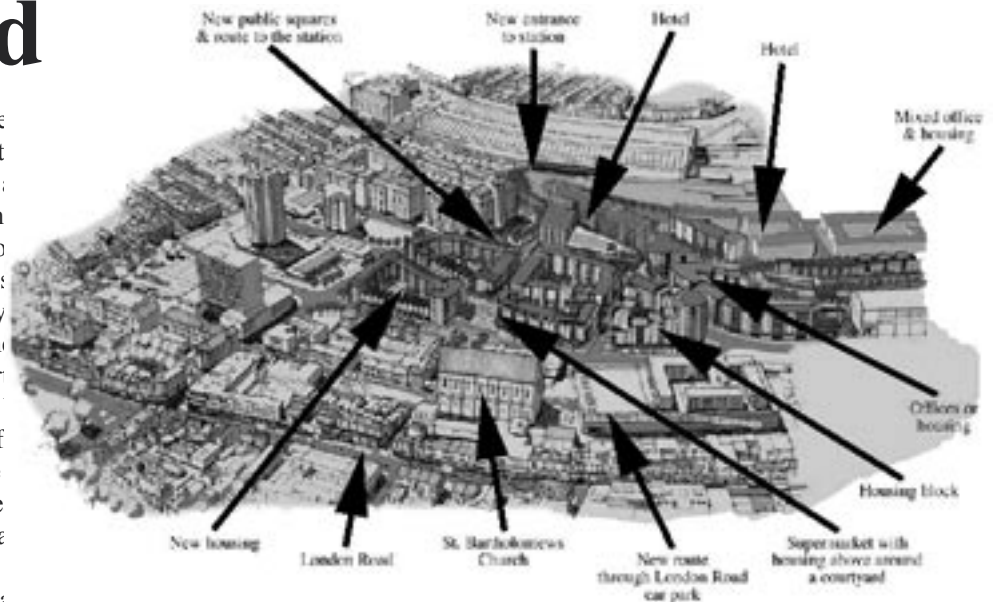
The application documentation consists of drawings and several written reports to the committee. Despite the scale of the scheme and the conservation areas advisory panel and the conservation areas advisory panel it is difficult to assess the impact of the proposal, particularly on the setting of the listed Saint Bar

While for very many years the church, which soared above the former small terraces of juxtaposition – which still exists with the new terraced housing – is likely to be greatly overshadowed by the dense, high blocks in the new proposal. The church will seem less dominant.

One of the outstanding concerns is that the townscape and character of Brighton may be destroyed.

Other matters being raised include:

- Increased traffic movements from the supermarket, which will affect both the main west-east route through the town, access by car to the station and the residential streets in North Laine.
- The impact of the supermarket, with its one-stop shopping, upon the London Road shops and the Open Market.

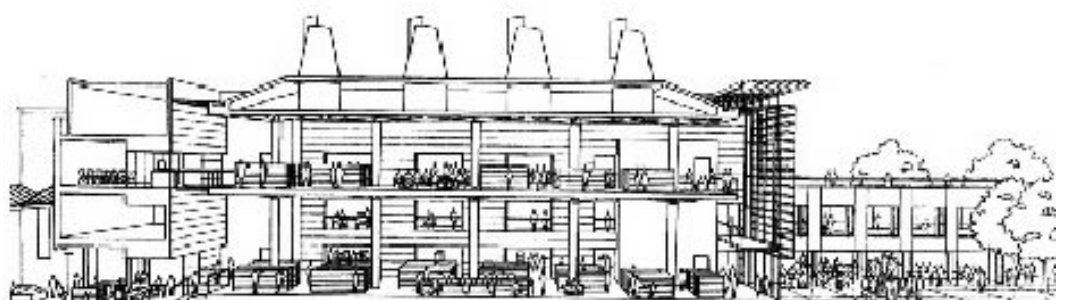


Station site: developers' drawing

Construction of the new £11 million central library in Jubilee Street is expected to start on site in February and the proposed hotel to the south, on the opposite side of the new square, is programmed to start soon afterwards.

The four star hotel will be operated by the myhotel group. Other new buildings will follow, comprising shops and restaurants, housing and offices and will complete the new development.

Library building to start



Hove City Park given go-ahead

On 16 January the planning applications sub-committee resolved 'that the council be minded to grant planning permission' for the proposed re-development of the site of the former offices of the Alliance Building Society in Orchard Road, Hove. This will include demolition of the remainder of the old building and construction of three blocks of three storey offices, three blocks containing a total of 65 flats and a day nursery.

Following a deferral at the committee's meeting last October, when councillors criticised aspects of the scheme and made recommendations for improvements, the applicant had made a number of alterations to incorporate these comments. Strong opposition remained from individual local residents and groups formed to voice their concerns.

Some councillors continued to support objections that traffic already caused problems at peak times in nearby streets and on-street parking would become more congested. The council's traffic planning officer was satisfied that the streets were not at present at full capacity.

There was some unease from councillors about the appearance of the proposed buildings but the council's architects' panel had 'welcomed the development as (a) good quality modern design with high quality materials'. It thought it would set a good pre-



cedent for the whole city.

The Regency Society supported the Conservation Areas Advisory Group's objection to the dominance of the circular office tower and its illuminated feature 'mast' close to the listed Engineerium building. The height of this building has been reduced by two floors and the illumination of the mast deleted from the proposals.

Approval has been granted to a new medical school teaching building on the University of Sussex campus at Falmer.

Despite its site adjacent to the red brick buildings of Sir Basil Spence's original plan the architects for the new building have selected fair faced concrete blockwork and a curved metal roof for this new structure.

Both the design and materials were criticised by the council's architects' panel but the planning officer and most councillors decided not to take its advice, on this occasion.

 brighton and sussex
medical school

Tuesday, 12 March, 7.00pm, St. Paul's Church:

D. Robert Elleray, Rev Gordon O'Loughlin and others

on *A Victorian church: St Paul's Brighton*

Tuesday, 9 April, 7.00 pm, The Music Room, Brighton Pavilion:

Giles Waterfield

on *Victoria & Albert as collectors of Victorian painting*

Followed by the Society's Annual General Meeting

Friday, 10 May, 7.30 pm, Sallis Benney Theatre:

Nicholas Grimshaw on *Structure, space and skin: The recent work of Nicholas Grimshaw and partners*

The tour 2001: Devon's finest

Dartington Hall, built in 1388, has been called the most spectacular mansion in Devon. In 1925 Leonard and Dorothy Elmhurst bought it in a derelict state. Dorothy, a wealthy American, and her husband had two ambitions – to establish a school and to rehabilitate the estate. They established sawmills, cider making, textile milling and they set up studios and arts workshops. Society chairman Gavin Henderson is the artistic director of the summer school and we owe him our thanks for making Dartington our venue for 2001. Well worth a visit.

Our accommodation was in the east and west wing, situated in a medieval courtyard and completely upgraded. Dining in the White Hart dining room was excellent. Modern cuisine, good wines and convivial company – what more could one ask for?

Stella and Tony Mercer organised the tour and were indefatigable in their attention to detail and always good-natured.

Thursday Saltram House, Plympton, Devon (*above*). This magnificent George II mansion is set in beautiful grounds surrounded by a landscaped park overlooking the Plym estuary. We saw important work by Adam, Chippendale, Wedgwood and Sir Joshua Reynolds. The



house was used in the film of *Sense and Sensibility*.

The afternoon was spent admiring the gardens, where we were fortunate enough to be given an excellent tour by the dedicated head gardener. Some of us also visited High Cross House, designed by William Lescaze, an important architect of the Modern Movement.

Friday Lanhydrock House (*left*).

Described as the great house of Cornwall, set in landscaped gardens, parkland and woods, overlooking the valley of the



Fowey. Much of the house was rebuilt after a fire in 1881 but the long gallery survives with its extraordinary plaster ceiling depicting scenes from the Old Testament. Fifty rooms are on show. We visited the 15th century church of St Hydroc before moving to the Eden Project and its amazing array of 100,000 plants from all over the world, placed in biodomes that look like giant bubbles..

Saturday Exeter Cathedral. A perfect example of English Gothic and offers the longest uninterrupted vault of its kind in the world. We were, as on all our visits, lucky in having a knowledgeable and passionate guide. So wrapped up in her subject that we had to curtail her talk. From Exeter to Killerton House. It is an elegant eighteenth century house with a landscaped garden. The house also contains an interesting costume collection, including a dress worn by Queen Victoria – how small she was.

Sunday Castle Drogo (*right*). An interesting Lutyens building built between 1910 and 1930, from which there were spectacular views. The approach provides the illusion



that the castle is actually dateless, which is the secret of Drogo and Lutyens' great achievement. The rooms follow a complex sequence on constantly changing levels. Another great guide enthusiastically related its story, the public rooms apparently being medieval, the dining room late Renaissance and Baroque, the drawing room eighteenth century, and the kitchen modern. In the afternoon we headed for Coleton

Fishacre (*left*), a beautiful Lutyensesque style house with art deco interior. The house was built in the 1920's for Rupert and Lady Dorothy D'Oyly Carte and reflects the Arts and Crafts tradition. Inside were many art deco artefacts and a superb airy and light drawing room with a piano reached by gracefully curving wooden steps.



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