



## Planning Matters

Amongst the applications that the Planning Committee has recently examined and commented on, there have been two of significance, both of which the Society has objected to.

The first is the application by the Rye Tennis Club to build a new building for three covered tennis courts on a field to the north of the existing club, between Military Road and the river.

The site is just outside the parish boundary and the current development area but will have a significant effect on the setting of Rye. It will be a very large building comparable to the tin sheds along the Rye Harbour Road with windows at the upper levels along three sides, facing over to the Marsh and both up and down Military Road. It was recently taken to Rother Planning Committee with officers' recommendation for refusal but was deferred for additional information on design and potential future use by the wider community. To date this additional information has not been provided and we continue to monitor the application.

It is interesting to note that the overwhelming majority of the objections have come from local residents but the majority of the letters of support have come from outside Rye and Playden including two from Belgium!

The second application is for a filling station on Udimore Road recently submitted by BP. This is located beyond the new roundabout on the same side of the road as Valley Park.

The application is for four fuel pumps and a small supermarket with parking for 28 cars and will be located at the highest point of the Udimore Ridge and will thus be visible from all directions particularly as there will be a considerable lighting installation required to serve the filling station which will be open 24 hours, 7 days a week. We are concerned as to the effect of the application on the adjoining properties and the wider landscape and how the increased traffic will affect Udimore Road. It is also of concern that the current application does not include any details of the corporate branding that plays such a significant part in any such development as this is considered 'advertising' and will be the subject of a separate application. How Rother can consider one without the other mystifies us.

Other applications we have commented on include the redevelopment proposals for the Skinner's garage site on Fishmarket Road and the new Rye Day Care Centre on Kiln Drive.

Julian Lockett  
Chairman Planning Committee.

## The pump in Pump Street (now Church Square)

Wayne Jones reports that while final repairs are being made, funded jointly by the Society and Rye Town Council, a temporary protective box has been constructed around the pump.

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COACH VISIT TO THE  
WEALD AND DOWNLAND MUSEUM  
Wednesday 11 October 2017  
including a  
GUIDED TOUR OF THE NEW £6m. GATEWAY CENTRE  
opened in May 2017  
and the Gridshell building opened in 2002

**Full details and booking form are being sent to members and are generally available.**

*The following gives background information on the formation and origins, objectives and history of this highly respected open air living museum.*

*The following can be seen in full on the website of the Weald and Downland Museum*

The Weald and Downland Open Air Museum was launched in 1967 by a small group of enthusiasts led by the Museum's founder, the late Dr. J.R. Armstrong MBE. It first opened to the public on 5 September 1970.

The principal aim of the founding group was to establish a centre that could rescue representative examples of vernacular buildings from the South East of England, and thereby to generate an increased public awareness and interest in the built environment.

The Museum promotes the retention of buildings on their original sites unless there is no alternative, and we encourage an informed and sympathetic approach to their preservation and continuing use.

The Museum offers advice to people involved in the conservation of buildings. Where we cannot give advice ourselves, we will attempt to provide suitable contacts with other experts.

As well as illustrating the history of original building styles and types, the Museum has good collections representing country crafts and industries, building trades and agriculture. Objects from these collections can be seen displayed in buildings on the site, and in the open access store in the basement of the Downland Gridshell.

The Museum is a Registered Charity and it receives no regular grants or subsidies. A large number of volunteers contribute to its daily running and many organisations have helped financially or in kind.

#### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum is to stimulate public interest in and to promote and encourage the preservation of buildings of architectural or historical interest and to stimulate public interest in ancient crafts, trades and manufactures. (First object as stated in Memorandum and Articles of Association).

#### KEY AIMS

- To run an open-air museum that inspires and delights its users.
  - To provide lifelong learning based on the Museum's collections and other resources.
  - To ensure high standards of collections care.
  - To pursue research and scholarship.
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## Our visit to Brighton: 30 May 2017

Our visit began in the Brighthelm Centre where we were welcomed by members of the Brighton Society, originally established in 1974 to oppose the proposed redevelopment of Brighton Station and which has subsequently been a very active contributor to plans (or opposition to plans) for other developments that would have materially altered the built environment of Brighton.

We were greeted by the current Chairman, Jeremy Mustoe, with his three colleagues who were to guide us, and over coffee Malcolm Dawes gave a brief exposition on some of Brighton's major redevelopment proposals. Some were appalling and with some (including the plans for the station) the Society's objections were successful. However it was clear that planning rules were not always adhered to. Many of us think we know Brighton well, and even visit often, but our attention is not always diverted from shops and the old centre to look critically at some of the eyesores which now disfigure the townscape – although some of the unsuccessful schemes would have made things even worse. Malcolm drew our attention in particular to the Beetham Tower – a 42 storey monster over the station – and designs by Piers Gough and Frank Gehry. The Society successfully opposed the demolition of the Royal Victoria Children's Hospital, Hove Library and the Hippodrome; the first two have been restored for re-use, but the Hippodrome remains derelict. Further major developments at the Marina are currently being opposed. Height issues are a major stumbling block but planning decisions have been inconsistent.

More details of the Society's work can be found on its website at <http://www.brighton-society.org.uk/>

Following the talk the party split into three groups.

Group one toured parts of Regency Brighton including 1795 Percy & Wagner almshouses, a pleasure ground, curving crescent, Gothic Revival church, slums, brewery, elegant houses and interesting architecture. A wonderful social history. Plus, we compared the architecture of some later buildings including a 1930s cinema.

Group two was taken around the historic Old Town of Brighton between the seafront and North Street and included the well known Brighton Lanes - a warren of narrow passages, specialist shops and historic buildings. Two major new developments are proposed within this area at West Street and new lanes - Hannington's Lane and Puget's Lane - which were shown during the slideshow presentation.

The third group visited the North Laine and included a look at Brighton Station.

The area called North Laine was until the mid Twentieth Century the main location of local industries. The walk included a meander through the terraced streets, twittens and narrow alleys looking at the traces of past industries. Included in the walk was Brighton Station seen in its hillside context, which was extensively restored as one of the first projects of Network Rail. On the way to the coach pick-up point the group walk through some of the streets that have become a mecca for small independent traders.

We were struck by the shabby and unkempt appearance of buildings and streets, perhaps reflecting the steady subdivision of residential buildings and the large student population. There is a major problem with graffiti, whether or not one likes the Banksy "Kissing policemen" on the Astoria's facade (the original, on a pub wall, was sold for a large sum; is this an original or a copy?).

We returned to our coach for an excellent lunch on the edge of the Kemp Town Estate, at Busby and Wilds (recommended!). The name reflects the original architects of the Kemp Town scheme. We had a brief talk from Simon Smith, Chairman of the Kemp Town Society, on the history of the development (begun in 1825), which is much smaller than its surrounding parliamentary constituency. It never made a profit. Thomas Kemp, its originator, ran out of money and the well-known Thomas Cubitt, responsible for many of the Bloomsbury squares in London, completed the development. Many widowed owners were unable to maintain the grand buildings, so that at one stage there were 30 schools, of which only one now remains. One of our party was reminded by our visit that she had been to school there.

The development (square, crescent and two terraces) now has only 5 houses that remain in single occupation, with others divided into up to 12 flats. Maintenance of the houses and the Enclosure, the park-like centre which is open only to residents and guests, remains in the hands of the residents, but the estate has a managing agent and several houses were in the process of being redecorated. Perhaps painted stucco is not a good idea in a marine

environment; repainting every five years (with all the necessary scaffolding) will lead to many more poverty-stricken widows!

The houses are not uniform, reflecting the different builders and dates. Lewes Crescent is the largest Regency crescent in Europe, larger than Bath's Royal Crescent. It has houses in threes, with each third house having Corinthian columns, Arundel Terrace to the East is the most grand but the whole is listed Grade 1. We were led through the tunnel from the Enclosure to the esplanade, now in council ownership, and the contrast in the standard of upkeep between the privately managed estate and the rest was notable.

The Kemp Town Society also campaigns on planning issues (see <http://www.kempton-society.org.uk/>), and it was notable how intrusive were the huge blocks of apartments on the Marina.

Returning via Middle farm at Firle, where cream teas, ice creams and plant purchases were enjoyed by all, we returned to our own conservation area in good order, well schooled in Brighton's architecture, heritage and planning problems and quite proud, perhaps, that our town is so much cleaner and tidier!

John and Helen Griffiths had planned and reconnoitred a superb visit, and we are grateful to them and our Brighton guides who freely and enthusiastically gave of their time.

*Andrew Bamji*

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## ANNUAL AWARDS

Each year the Society likes to make a number of Awards for buildings or works which have improved the appearance of Rye and its surroundings.

The Awards will be presented during our Christmas Party in Rye Town Hall on Friday 1 December.

We are therefore inviting nominations for the 2017 Rye Conservation Society Awards. Proposals will be welcome for the following:

- **A new building of architectural merit**
- **An alteration or refurbishment of an existing building**
- **The re-use of an historic building for a new purpose**
- **A good example of sensitive redecoration and use of colour**
- **Repair using and demonstrating craft skills.**

Suggestions need to be received by **Friday 20 October 2017**.

They should be sent, preferably by email, to the Hon. Secretary:

David Bookless [ryeconservation@gmail.com](mailto:ryeconservation@gmail.com) (by post to 3 Faraday House, The Mint, Rye TN31 7EW).

An ad hoc Awards Committee will then consider the entries.

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