



ROUND HILL REPORTER

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THE BEGINNING OF THE ROAD

The Co-op and Sainsbury's have moved out, property developers are drawing up plans and Brighton and Hove City Council are launching a "master plan". Are we about to see a new London Road?

In April, an announcement in the Argus invited local residents to talk about plans for a "bright new London Road". From a specially refurbished unit in Vantage Point, developers St James's Investments invited comments and discussion about plans to develop the northeast corner of London Road.

Having purchased several properties in the area bordered by New England

Street, New England Road and London Road, St James's Investments are now forming proposals for a major development. As plans are at an early stage, there are few details of the shape that proposals will take, but it is likely that the development will be a mix of retail, office and residential uses. As with the New England project, developers will favour the inclusion of a supermarket and SJI staff are quick to point out that Tesco have expressed an interest.

For anyone who has encountered St James's Investments before, this will come as no surprise. The plans they developed for Hammersmith were centred on a proposed Tesco store. Proposals for a major development in Lowfield Street in Dartford, eventually scrapped by Ruth Kelly in 2004, also included a large Tesco. Ongoing consultations in Bexleyheath are following a familiar pattern and now there is talk of a Tesco on London Road. Many residents are already asking if we need another



Open Market
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Pocket Park
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Wild perfume
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London Road: The shop fronts hide a fascinating and eclectic mix of buildings



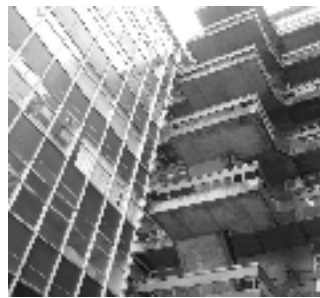
supermarket so close to the new Sainsbury's store.

However, nobody would deny that the area is in need of development. Many of the shop fronts on London Road are shabby and Elder Place and Providence Place to the rear are uninviting. Then there is the problem of New England House. For many small and start-up businesses in the city, this building provides valuable facilities which are in short supply on the south coast. A purpose-built business centre, the place has wide corridors to

accommodate fork-lift trucks and is a haven for a range of multimedia, fine art and light industrial companies. But the structure itself is ugly and dated and projects a depressing image of the area to passengers arriving by train. By its sheer size, it dominates the area to the east of London Road.

But this area is only one part of the London Road corridor and as part of the aspirations to reinvigorate the London and Lewes Road

gateways to Brighton, the City Council is about to embark on a major consultation. Expected to take up to a year and a half to complete, this exercise will be a chance to consider how proposals put forward by St James's Investments will harmonise with other redevelopments including the old Coop, City College and the Open Market.



This will also be the opportunity to address other issues such as the division between North Laine and London Road. Trafalgar Street marks a very definite end to the pedestrian routes through North Laine. A successful linkage through to London Road stands to encourage pedestrian access to the city centre and increase prospects for the independent traders that make the area special.

The master plan might also address the faded and sorry appearance of the London Road. For much of its length from St Peter's to Preston Circus, the garish shop fronts hide the most fascinating and eclectic collection of buildings. A chance to re-design the London Road could present the opportunity to restore this beautiful façade.

St James's Investments are to release the results of their consultations over the summer. Brighton City Council are planning to make the initial consultation documents available on their website from 19 May.

David Guest

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Who are St James's Investments?

Long term partners of Tesco, St James's Investments are a property development company with big ambitions, owned and run by Christopher Borkowski.



Some of their recent projects include:

2003—Tesco supermarket in Thame (proposals did not come to fruition);

2004—a major development including a Tesco store and residential buildings on a site near Hammersmith Town Hall (proposals were turned down in the face of vehement local objections);

2004—a large-scale project, including a flagship Tesco store, retail units, residential and office buildings at Lowfield Street in Dartford (proposals rejected on appeal to the Secretary of State in 2008 but revised plans are in development);

2007—a second proposal for King Street in Hammersmith, including a Tesco "department" store (proposal was one of three submitted for consideration—a rival bid was selected);

2007—a £400m retail and housing scheme including a 80,000 sq ft Tesco supermarket as well as a library and other shops and cafés (proposals approved).

SJI and Christopher Borkowski have also been involved in preliminary talks on a number of other developments including a Tesco campus in Bexleyheath and the regeneration of Sittingbourne town centre.

A POCKET PARK FOR ROUND HILL?



Anyone who has lived on Round Hill for a short while will know that there is no easily accessible public open space, especially if you have a baby or toddler in tow. The walk down to the Level or even to Saunders Park is challenging, and the destination not necessarily great for adult or small child. But where could Round Hill residents with small children go that could provide a small, secure play space and a breath of fresh air on a sunny day. If you have a garden there is no problem, but if not . . . ?

Well how about the eastern end of Sylvan Hall Estate? It is all wrong for safe play and access right now, but it is central to Round Hill and owned by our city. A few tens of thousands of pounds could alter the levels and create gated access for local parents and small children to find a quiet, safe place in the sun for a little rest and recreation.

During the recent snow some people built a snowman

there, and after the grass was cut two children were spotted playing there, but there is no easy way in, nor any easily accessible, level space for little ones to roam and parents to soak up some rays. But there could be.

Perhaps the idea is horrific to some, perhaps their gut reaction is, "No change!".

Please let us know what you think - for or against. E-mails or letters to the editor would be grand.

I think it would be a valuable asset, which could be misused, but would probably be well-used. I think some nearby folk will hate the idea, but others without outdoor space will be keen. But what I think hardly matters. If twenty people think its a good idea, then we could pursue the Council for permission and grant bodies for the money to make it real. Please respond.

Rob Stephenson



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WHAT IS HAPPENING TO BRIGHTON'S OPEN MARKET?

At the Round Hill Society's AGM in November 2006, Pat Mears of the Open Market Trader's Association unveiled plans for an £11m European-style market and arts & crafts centre. The vision embodied a large rectangular structure, stretching from London Road to Ditchling Road, in which French markets, Farmers' markets, Craft Fairs and educational activities such as cookery lessons could be held.



Also in November 2006, Brighton and Hove City Council undertook a survey on the use of the market, which was found to be used more for the purchase of food items, as opposed to non-food items: 77% of the shoppers interviewed purchased food and vegetables, 43% purchased dairy produce, 36% bought fish, 28% bought meat and 16% bought flowers. The average-spend per

shopping trip worked out at £8.61 per visit. There were more shoppers from "BN2 3" (which includes Round Hill) than any other postcode area. 47% of shoppers arrived on foot, 29% by bus and 18% by car.

In summer 2007, information was gathered from successful market redevelopments around England, including Old Spitalfields Market and Borough Market in Southwark near the banks of The Thames. This research, together with the experience of Brighton's market traders, has fed into a complete plan, drawn up by Lomax Cassidy Edwards, the architects behind Brighton's £14 million, award-winning Jubilee Library.

Web Links

www.visitspitalfields.com

An independent guide to Old Spitalfields market

www.boroughmarket.org.uk

The London market which traces its history back to Roman Britain.

Little has been posted about the progress of the plan in The Local Press or on The Council's web site, so when I visited the Open Market on 10th May 2008, I asked Pat Mears for a brief update.

I was pleased to learn that, far from retreating from the scheme described to Round Hill residents, The Market Traders Steering Group was now earmarking £18 million for their vision, and was keen to push ahead with the regeneration plan. The extra £7 million partly reflected the addition of a fifth storey to the flats proposed for Francis Street, which make up a large part of the enabling development.

I also asked Pat Mears if he knew anything about the future of the vacant Coop Department Store, which was at one time being considered as a temporary home for the Open Market while new facilities are being built. The old Coop Department Store building has NOT been bought by St James's Investments, who have been floating a Tesco Superstore as the centrepiece of a scheme to develop the north-west end of London Road towards Preston Circus. The Coop is in fact in negotiation with Somerfield Supermarkets with a view to purchasing their site for a food outlet. They have vacated several of their Department Stores and will need to calculate how much they expect to get in disposing of these assets before finalising their plans for the purchase of new food outlets.

For a fuller description of the vision for the new Open Market, see The Round Hill Society's website at www.roundhill.org.uk or refer back to Issue 26 (Dec 2006) of the Round Hill Reporter.

Ted Power

Exterior House Painting

Now pricing and taking bookings for 2009.

Some local jobs:

3 d'Aubigny Road (2004)

85 Round Hill Crescent (2006)

66 Richmond Road (2006)



Rob Stephenson
673511



GOING SOLAR *New legislation is likely to make it easier for householders to set up their own solar panels but local authorities will have greater powers to deny applications in conservation areas such as Round Hill. Two members of the RHS committee express the arguments on each side of the debate.*

I like living in a Conservation Area because it means that the modernisation (or desecration!) of the area which was rife a few decades ago has been stopped in its tracks, and we are now free to enjoy the beautiful Victorian architecture which surrounds us.

Can you imagine, for instance, what the regal sweep of Round Hill Crescent would look like with a large satellite dish on the front of every house?

Conservation Areas are about protecting us from such unsightly things. If people wish to have Sky TV then the dishes must be strategically placed, out of sight, at the back of properties, where they cannot be seen from the road, and their presence can often be masked from neighbours' views by garden trees etc.

Recently, however, new considerations have begun to spring up with people wanting such things as windows in the roof, solar panels and wind turbines in order to increase their room space and help cut energy bills. Whereas I can empathise with such wishes, my view is that the same rules should apply as they do with satellite dishes – if these can be accommodated at the rear of properties without upsetting neighbours, all well and good, but they should not be allowed to blight our street-scape.

I am told that there are now conservation-design solar panels, for instance, and that consideration is being given to allowing these on roofs facing streets. As far as I am concerned this would be a dangerous precedent to set and would open the floodgates to all sorts of inferior installations in the long term. I would venture to suggest that tunnel vision on all matters Green cannot be justified in every environment.

I do believe that if you live in a Conservation Area you should appreciate that it has been designated as such for good reasons and respect the limitations which this imposes on its residents, much as one has to with listed buildings.

There is an alternative, of course – to do away with Conservation Areas altogether! Do we really want to go down that route?

Jean Brennan

The law changed recently regarding solar panels, making it unnecessary to apply for planning permission. This doesn't apply to us in Round Hill though because it's a conservation area, and at least one has already been turned down. One wonders what it is that we are trying to conserve? Will we end up with beautiful Victorian houses that nobody lives in because they can't get power?

In these times of rapid change and uncertainty - on the brink of irreparable climate damage and a global energy crisis - surely every effort to reduce CO₂ emissions should be welcomed and encouraged, whether or not it will be visible from your window? I'm told the roof in question, the one denied planning permission, can only be seen from the top of Whitehawk Hill with a zoom lens camera!

True, although there is international scientific consensus, there are still those who say that climate change is not happening, or that it is not human-induced. True, although Peak Oil* is mostly accepted**, energy experts and governments are still quibbling about the exact point at which it will occur. The point is: Do we have time to faff about here? What if the majority of scientists are right? What if many of the experts are right and we are about to, or have already passed the peak of oil production? Isn't it about time we pulled our socks up?

When people talk about conservation but still park cars outside their Victorian houses and help drive away local businesses by shopping in Sainsbury's, one wonders what their motives really are. It seems the biggest challenge could be our resistance to change. This is something we all have to face together. But the risk of hindering the process of valuable, positive change far outweighs any of the risks associated with offending our neighbor's taste in roof tiles.

What's so bad about visible solar panels anyway? Better that than another smoggy power station!

Jo Nearn

*"Peak oil" is the term used to describe the situation when the amount of oil that can be extracted from the earth in a given year begins to decline, because geological limitations are reached. Extracting oil becomes more and more difficult, so that costs escalate and the amount of oil produced begins to decline. - For more information see www.theoil drum.com

**other than those who think oil is not a fossil fuel, but something the earth just produces endlessly!





ORGANICS, BIODYNAMICS AND RHUBARB

Attendees at Round Hill's recent wine-tasting evening enjoyed an array of organic delights selected by Ben Walgate of Festival Wines (www.festivalwines.co.uk).

Ben explained the theory behind wine tasting and provided a fascinating insight into the process by which organic wines in particular are grown, matured and prepared for market.

We also discussed current trends in biodynamic wine production, in which the end product forms part of a holistic approach encompassing earth, climate and even phases of the moon.

The wines we tasted, complete with Round Hill tasting notes:

Clos Lapeyre Jurancon Sec *A rich, honey flavour with slight citrus*

aftertaste. Made from a grape unique to its region of SW France.

Daruvar Sauvignon Blanc *Fresh, fruity Croatian wine which reminded us of tropical flavours.*

Tsantali Merlot *Greek wine from vineyard inspired by monastic winemakers. Silky.*

Bodegas Aroa (Derrieri) *Earthy, intense produce of biodynamic methods.*

Grande Maison 'Cuvée des Anges' Monbazillac *Creamy dessert wine.*

Raymond Boulard Blancs de Blancs Champagne *Soft and full champagne with a hint of rhubarb. Good rhubarb, though.*

All were enjoyed with excellent food provided by Rob.

David Guest

GREAT WINES ON THE DOORSTEP

Round Hill is lucky to have on its doorstep one of the best ranges of organic wines and beers in Brighton. Red, White, Rosé on Ditchling Road specialises in good quality organic brands.

Here are a couple of favourites:



Barra of Mendocino Zinfandel—the Barra family started growing grapes on arrival in California from Piedmont Italy and only began bottling their own wine when grape prices took a downturn in the 1990s. Since then, the business has grown steadily within the "Mendocino" region of California where the hot summers and cool nights enable the Barras to let the fruit hang for longer on the vines, reaching full maturity in a gentle, natural fashion;



La Fortuna Sauvignon Blanc—a Chilean wine from La Fortuna

farm south of Santiago. The vineyard produces a range of wines based on different varieties, all grown organically and hand-picked. Their award-winning Sauvignon Blancs are crisp and lemony.

red white rosé

126 Ditchling Road
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- * *organic & fine wines, beers, spirits*
- * *large selection of conventional wines, beers & ciders*

Low sulphur wines

wide champagne range
continental beers
friendly advice

WEEKLY PROMOTIONS



NOTES FROM A WILDLIFE GARDEN

IT'S THE PERFUME THAT DOES IT



This time of year, our garden and anyone else's, if they grow honeysuckles, are heady with perfume - beautiful during the day, breath-taking in dusky twilight.

It's the time of day when sitting in the garden is perfect - it's too late to do things, just relax, breathe deeply and enjoy.

I soon discover I am not alone, frogs and toads rustle through the undergrowth, hopefully I think they are hunting for slugs and snails, to eat.

And then I become aware of numerous moths, different sizes, different colours - more muted than butterflies but lovely just the same. They, like me have been drawn to the perfume that seems to pervade the whole garden. I've read, the average urban garden can attract over one hundred species of moth over the year. What a thought.

They are joined by nameless other midge type creatures. I peer into the fast fading light and realise the garden is just as alive now as it is in the day.

...and then the bats - the only flying mammals. I am not afraid of them but I can understand why some people are. They are so quiet and yet so flittery. They swoop around jerkily in a group, separate, only to reform and appear again, as they patrol the area for food - what food - midges and moths of course.

Bats look like tiny, damp, crinkled leather gloves that have been flung up into the air, I am sorry they move on so quickly - gone - and only the scent of honeysuckle remains. When that too fades, its place will be taken by white flowering jasmine, daintier



flowers than honeysuckle but with a perfume just as strong. It really is, the perfume that does it.

By the way, the Garden Moths Count takes place between June 21st and 6th July. For details, see: www.mothscount.org. Clothes moths ough, garden moths cheers. The garden moth pollinates flowers and provide larvae for young birds. (A brood of blue tits will consume about 15,000 caterpillars.)

Oh and watch out for the red, black and white daytime flying garden tiger moth. Their numbers have fallen 90% since the 1960's but there are usually a generous number on the Round Hill - waste destructors, felled trees, pesticide sprayed grabbed garden sites and bat attacks, notwithstanding.

Go on, plant a honeysuckle, they're worth it !

Jan Curry

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Crescent

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Tel: 07938 034093

juliana@brighton-acupuncture.co.uk
www.brighton-acupuncture.co.uk

Quick escape?

If you feel like getting out of the city this summer, don't forget that the number 79 bus runs right up Ditchling Road at about half past the hour from 10.30 to 17.30 until the end of September.

From there, Ditchling Beacon and the downs are only twelve minutes away...



THE ROUND HILL SOCIETY

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Deadline for next Issue:
THURSDAY 14TH AUGUST

OVER THE HILL...



The Victoria Pub was up for auction in April but failed to achieve its reserve price of £350,000. Round Hill residents await to see what happens next. It would be a pity to lose such a local landmark and many in the area believe that with the right management, the pub could be a success. Given its location, there may also be scope to turn part of the premises into rooms for community use. The Round Hill Society would be interested to hear your ideas for the building.

Meanwhile, the RHR has learned of plans to turn the recently purchased 2 Ashdown Road into apartments. Since the property includes substantial adjoining grounds, planning proposals will be awaited with interest.

Plans to develop Marcia's hairdressers received a set-back earlier this year when an application to turn the shop back into a residence was rejected. There were a number of reasons for refusal, including the design of a dormer window.



ROUND HILL DIRECTORY

WINDOW CLEANERS

Col Scarratt T: 243366, M: 07759 9699514
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Bishop Window Cleaning T: 07939 161904

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Chris Nesbitt Plastering, bricklaying. T: 07867 864619

Earthwise Construction green design, construction & renovation (Contact Ben East). T: 0845 680 0015

A Team Builders Ltd Plastering, damp proofing (Contact Giles Walker). T: 385478, M: 07725028393

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CAR REPAIRS

Auto-bodycare Service Centre 25 Ditchling Rise,

T: 696030

Please send your recommendations (or warnings!) including your own details for verification, to the editor.

The Reporter is published by the Round Hill Society to keep residents in the area in touch with local news, events and each other. Every effort is made to present a fair and balanced view, while aiming to accept any material from Round Hill residents. The opinions expressed in The Reporter are not necessarily those of the Round Hill Society.

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