



VICTORIA PLANS UNVEILED

Plans for the conversion of the Victoria pub have now been submitted to the City Council with developers seeking to convert the building for residential use.

The move has seemed inevitable since the autumn. Following its closure last year, the future of the Victoria has been the subject of much speculation. Although many residents have been dismayed to lose the facility of a public house in the heart of the Round Hill area, a succession of managers had struggled to make the venue viable.

The possibility of a community-backed venture to take over the pub as a going concern attracted

lukewarm interest and several potential landlords declined to place an offer for the property.

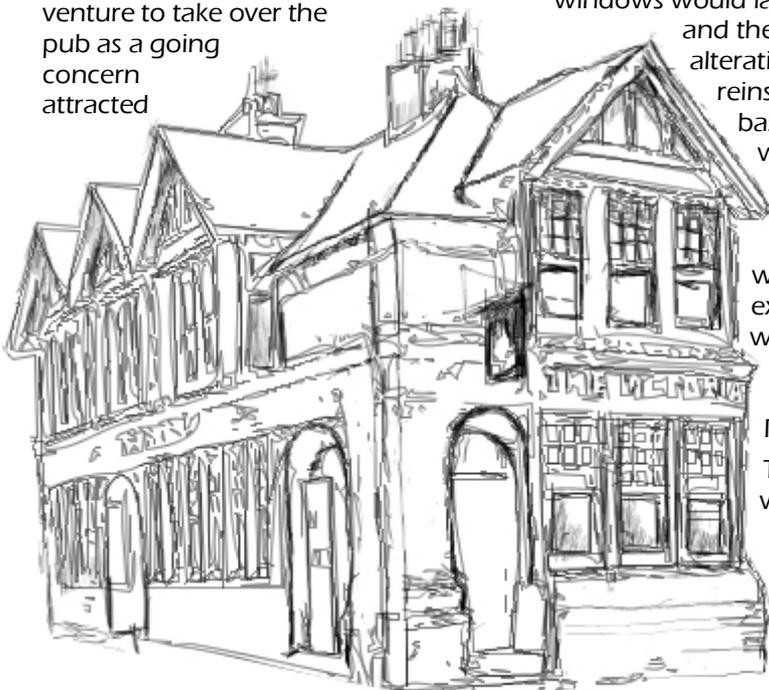
Now the Hardwick Hartey Partnership have put forward their proposals to turn the building into two family houses. The detail of the plan reveals a well-considered approach. The temptation to cram too many living quarters into the building has been resisted and the proposed homes would have relatively generous proportions.

The developers propose very little structural alteration—existing doors and windows would largely be retained and the most significant

alterations would be the reinstatement of basement-level

windows to allow the lower floor to be brought into residential use. This would include the excavation of light wells on the walls facing Richmond Road and Mayo Road.

The existing building would be divided in two with internal walls, creating a three-bedroomed house at the



3 Ashdown Road

Residents face more disruption and concern as commercial activity continues.

4 Sharing the streets

The recent snowfall posed deeper questions about how we use our streets.



5 Trees please

They need little attention but are the backbone of a wildlife garden.

5 New look Introducing the new Round Hill Society website.

6 Wild woollens

Conservation and knitwear in the wilds of Sussex.

7 Eat local Switching to sources of locally-grown food can be satisfying, good value and just downright easier.



VICTORIA PLANS (CONTINUED)



The Round Hill picnic party—coming soon to a street near you!

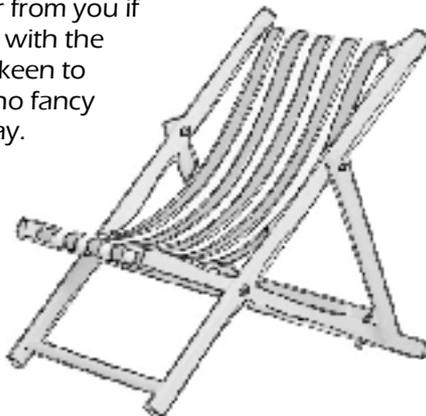
The Round Hill Society is planning a Street Picnic for the summer. It is often said that Round Hill enjoys relatively little public open space and so for one day in June we are planning to take to the street and create a place to unwind and socialise with neighbours on **Saturday 20 June**.

More details will be included in the next newsletter but the day is likely to include:

- live music
- giant board games
- displays and demonstrations
- food and drink stalls
- table sale

We would love to hear from you if you are willing to help with the event and particularly keen to find local musicians who fancy taking a turn on the day.

Please contact **Rob Stephenson** (673511) or e-mail picnic@roundhill.org.uk if you would like to take part.



Richmond Road end of the site and a smaller two-bedroomed property bordering the former beer garden which would be converted into a courtyard for the use of the smaller house. The railings which currently border the garden would be extended around the length of the street-facing frontage.

Both properties would have kitchen/dining areas on the lower floor, living rooms on the ground level and upstairs bedrooms. This type of family housing is regarded as a priority for urban areas such as Brighton and Hove.

The main drawback of the plan is the lack of parking facilities, although the scale of the development and the previous use of the building would not increase pressure for on-street parking to the same extent as other developments which have been proposed for the area.

A target date for a decision on the plan has been set for early March—please see the website

www.roundhill.org.uk

for news and links to the architect's drawings and supporting information for the proposals.

David Guest

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NO PEACE FOR ASHDOWN ROAD

Residents of Ashdown Road and neighbouring properties have been disturbed by continued activities at Raj Motors, the business which is operating from the extensive back-lot adjoining number two.

Late last year, the City Council's Planning Enforcement office confirmed that the company was acting without the required planning permission and that an Enforcement Notice would be served, requiring the company to obtain official permission or seek a new location.

Although business and residential properties have co-existed successfully in other parts of Round Hill, the scale of activity in Ashdown Road and the nature of the work is causing disruption and worry for its neighbours.

At the request of Council officers, residents of affected properties compiled a lengthy litany of the problems forced upon them every day since trading began at the site. After years of dormancy, the site was transformed in October last year when Raj Motors, a car valeting and service operation rented the land to the rear of 2 Ashdown Road. The previously quiet road has been visited by a succession of trucks loading and unloading vehicles to and from the yard at the back of the house. Cars are continually being manoeuvred through the tight opening to the property and vehicles advertised for sale are parked on Ashdown and Richmond Roads.

Concerns have also been expressed over the suitability and safety of the relatively insubstantial structures on the site. It is believed that the eleven garages, hastily patched in recent weeks, have been used to store fuel and



flammable materials. Workers often use the yard for smoking breaks and some residents fear that in the event of a fire, neighbouring properties would be at risk. The restricted access to the site which is now regularly filled with vehicles, is also a cause of worry since the bottleneck would likely provide insufficient escape in the event of an accident. To compound the problem, the narrow Ashdown Road, now even more congested than usual, is likely to be inaccessible for emergency vehicles.

The land which has been let to Raj Motors is also the subject of a current planning application. A proposal to demolish the garages, build three new houses and convert number 2 into three flats, is still under consideration with the City Council despite being submitted in June 2008.

David Guest

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The National Gardens Scheme comes to Round Hill

Some of Round Hill's excellent gardeners are including their gardens in this year's nationwide event. Two gardens in the area are to open on **11 July 2009**.

More details will be available in the June Newsletter and remember, you can always keep up with the latest news on our website: www.roundhill.org.uk.



SHARING ROUND HILL'S STREETS

The heavy snowfall which greeted southern England in early February brought a temporary peace to the streets of Round Hill.

For at least part of the day, steep inclines such as the Crescent and Wakefield Roads were impassable to most traffic and given conditions elsewhere in the city, many motorists wisely decided to leave their vehicles where they stood.



Round Hill in white (by Ted Power)

Instead of the usual routine, the streets were filled with the sounds of children playing in the snow. The noise of traffic was temporarily muffled and the city was taken over by pedestrians.

The difference prompted me, and others too I suspect, to reflect on the degree to which pedestrians are routinely pushed to the borders of Round Hill's streets. Two views of Ashdown Road highlight the difference between a normal day where vehicles occupy much of the pavement and a "snow" day where pedestrians take over the road.



On Wakefield Road too, one pavement is usually unusable due to parked cars and the other often sees frequent encroachments from two or four-wheeled vehicles. The public spaces must be shared by a variety of users but sometimes the balance seems unequal. Given a new start of course, we would no doubt design our streets differently—any conflict is the result of forcing modern life into roads constructed to a Victorian pattern—but given the competition for space in an area such as Ashdown Road, we must all be thinking more deeply about the ways in which we live and the extent to which our choices push against those of our neighbours.



It hardly seems possible that many more car owners could be accommodated in Round Hill but when new approaches, such as a local Car Club run into difficulty because of unthinking behaviour (see back page), it's sometimes hard to see how progress can be made. We live in a society in which one's own transport is often a requirement for employment. Giving up a car is still not a credible option for many families and yet wheelchairs and child buggies might be essential for fellow residents who have to travel out of their way to avoid pavements that have become makeshift car parks. There are no simple answers to the questions of how we use our streets but now the snow has gone, I am left with a sense that we have to continue seeking ways of making our streets a truly shared space for the community.

David Guest

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TREES PLEASE NOTES FROM A WILDLIFE GARDEN

There is an ancient pear tree in this garden, reminding me that this is not just 'our garden' other people before us have dug and planted and hoped and others long after us will do the same. The tree was ancient when we first came here, fifty years ago and now it really is on its last legs (or trunk).

The trunk and twisted branches are gnarled and deeply pitted. Ladybirds and various insects creep into the cracks in an effort to shelter from the worst of the winter weather. Trouble is a woodpecker, an infrequent visitor, arrived and probably ate them, as he flew away looking very satisfied. Life really is tough if you are an insect.

I often wonder why so few people seem to plant an apple or pear tree in their garden. Beautiful blossom, beloved by bees, fruit for picking, or just leaving for the

birds and hedgehogs to scavenge in the autumn. There are fruit trees to fit every size of garden and they need little attention in fact the couple I planted have been given no attention at all and they still flourish (especially the Bramley).

Another tree I would not want to be without is the Silver Birch. This tree tolerates poor soil and grows tall quite quickly. The dainty, light green leaves seem to gleam and dance in the slightest breeze and do not block light from the shrubs growing beneath it.

It produces an abundance of pollen and seeds, in fact a birch is home to hundreds of insects enjoyed by birds. (Only the oak and willow support more.)

Two trees in this garden that have been much appreciated by the birds this winter, particularly during the icy, cold nights of February are a dense Yew and a leathery leafed Bay. I have seen blackbirds and ring doves huddled up close to the trunks, and a flock of sparrows roost in the Bay, protected (hopefully) from the wind chill, by the evergreen leaves.

It's not only birds and insects that need trees to survive, we do too. If your 'carbon footprint' is worrying you - plant a tree. I've read that 'a seventy foot tree releases enough oxygen to support ten people, every day ...'

Wow! That makes me feel just a bit more kindly towards the Sycamores, they seem to grow taller by the minute.

Happy gardening - it will soon be Spring.

Jan Curry



Caught napping A Round Hill resident sunbathing in one of the back gardens along Upper Lewes Rd.

Picture: Rob Stephenson

The New Round Hill website open for business

If you pay a visit to the Round Hill Society website (www.roundhill.org.uk), you may notice a bit of a change. The new versions of the pages are now live and include a number of improvements which we hope will make the site easier to use.

Pages are organised into more relevant sections and we have simplified the navigation to make browsing more intuitive. We have also overhauled the search mechanism to make it easier to find specific search terms and key words. We have added an archives section so that older articles can be retained without cluttering the site.



Other improvements include a full site directory, a page showing the most recent updates and, at long last, a complete PDF library of all past issues of the Round Hill Reporter.

As always, there are plenty of articles, updated regularly on topics relating to the area and links to a huge range of useful online resources.

We would like to hear your views on the site and how we could continue to improve it—so please let us know what you think.



FROM THORN BUSHES TO PULLOVERS



Sheep grazing in winter sunshine near Castle Hill. Picture: Vivien Eliades

the wild flowers that grew in the chalk grassland. The aim is to return the land to this state and get the butterflies back. After we've cleared the thorn bushes and brambles, sheep are brought onto the site to finish clearing, crop the grass and manure the land. I heard that volunteers would be needed to keep an eye on the sheep, so I went on a course to learn how, and am now a "Looker", a person who watches the sheep.

Whilst on the course, I learned that sheep fleeces don't fetch much money and I thought it would be great to get the fleece spun and knit it into a

jumper, so the farmer gave me a couple of fleeces. I hadn't a clue what to do with them, so I contacted the East Sussex Guild of Dyers, Spinners and Weavers.

It seems that it's quite a time-consuming process to spin a fleece and the more I learn, the more interested I'm becoming. I've met two members of the Guild and we've decided that Brighton needs a spinning group. If you'd be interested in joining such a group as a novice or experienced spinner, please contact Sue Craig on info@knittingthemap.org.

Vivien Eliades

Last year, I decided to join a volunteer group. I'm a member of the Sussex Wildlife Trust, so I started with them but they discourage people from travelling long distances and gave me a couple of numbers in Brighton, one of which was the Brighton Conservation Volunteers.

The BCV go out on Tuesdays, meeting on the North side of the Level in Union Road at 9.30am and leaving promptly at 9.45 in a red minibus. The work is varied; mostly scrub bashing in the winter, and we've done stream clearing, stile building and tree planting. The first time I went out I ached for a couple of days—it's pretty hard work—but I had a great feeling of accomplishment and well-being.

All the tools (bow saws and loppers mostly) and gloves are provided, as well as biscuits, but you have to take your own lunch and drinks. They aim to be back in Brighton by around 4pm. If you're interested in volunteering, you can get more information online at www.bcv-online.org.uk and you can contact the BCV on (01273) 736135. You don't need any experience, but you do need to be fairly fit and wear strong shoes and outdoor clothing.

One of the things we've been doing is clearing areas of chalk grassland at places like the Wild Park. Apparently in Victorian times, people used to flock to the Wild Park to see all the butterflies, which themselves were attracted to

Exterior House Painting

Seeking work for the coming summer

Some local jobs:

3 d'Aubigny Road (2004)

85 Round Hill Crescent (2006)

14 Mayo Road (2008)



Rob Stephenson
673511

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EATING LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS

There are four regular farmers' markets, all held monthly, where you can buy a range of locally produced foods:

- Fair Trade and Farmers' Market, Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton. 11am to 4pm on the third Saturday of each month. This one has textiles and other interesting stuff - I got a great duvet cover made by a women's co-operative in India.
- George Street Farmers' Market, George Street, Hove. 10am to 2pm on the 4th Saturday of each month. All goods sourced within 50 miles, and primary produce grown or raised by the stallholder.
- Brighton and Hove Farmers' Market, Ralli Hall, Denmark Villas, Hove. 10am to 3pm on the first Sunday of each month. This one won the title Best Farmers' Market in the recent Sussex Food and Drinks Awards. And finally,
- Lewes Farmers' Market, Cliffe High Street, Lewes. 9am to 1pm on the first Saturday of each month.

You could also try the new market near the top of Islingword Road called Mueslimountain. Learn more at www.mueslimountainmarket.co.uk.

But you could save yourself the travel and get seasonal foods delivered to your door with any of the four local veg box schemes:

- Ashurst Organics (near Plumpton) can be contacted on 01273 812912, or meet them at Lewes Farmers' market.
- Barcombe Nurseries (just outside Lewes) are on 01273 400011, or meet them at the weekly Upper



Box appeal Fresh fruit and vegetables delivered to your doorstep.

Gardner Street Saturday morning market in Brighton.

- Hankham Organics (near Eastbourne) can be reached on 01323 741000 and www.hankhamorganics.co.uk. They supply vegetables to Infinity Foods, North Road, Brighton.
- We Love Local is an online supplier which can be reached on 10273 206865 or www.we-love-local.com.

Rob Stephenson

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That's draft advice

Brighton and Hove City Council have published draft policies on the repair and restoration of historic buildings.

The draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Architectural Features is to be the next section of the Local Development Framework, the group of policies which inform planning decisions across the city.

Comments are invited by 19 March—more details are available on the website: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk.



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Deadline for next Issue:
THURSDAY 14TH MAY

OVER THE HILL...

Have you noticed the sudden proliferation of street lamp posts on the streets of Round Hill? The removal of a post in Richmond Road, which we highlighted in the last issue, was followed by the reinstatement of a new post.

Since then, the steel posts have multiplied: with new steel posts erected next to existing, cast iron lamps which appear to be fully functioning. According to the City Council, this is all the result of an error by the Works Department which will be rectified soon.



The City Car Club vehicle in D'Aubigny Road has been temporarily withdrawn. Sadly this is due to the regular infringements of the reserved parking space. The scheme depends on the vehicle being available at a specified

location and since other road users did not respect the parking space, the car has been removed. Members of the club now have to walk to other locations in Riley Road or Elm Grove, where the designated Car Club bays are not used by residents. City Car Club are also to apply for formal parking restrictions to be imposed on the D'Aubigny bay with the hope that a car may be reintroduced in the future.

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

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