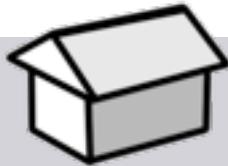




The Round Hill Reporter

Issue 39
March 2010



Come again? *The previous plan was approved in July but developers put in another proposal for Princes Road - page 4*

Neighbourhood on ice

A freezing winter brought picturesque scenes and a little slice of chaos to Round Hill's steep slopes

For days the streets were quiet and cars lay abandoned on slush-filled roads. A new population of snowy figures collected on spare corners and open ground and streets were taken over by sledges as for a second winter, Round Hill was thick with snow.

The chaos seemed to continue for weeks and with each thaw, the streets iced over. The answer for many was to stay at home in the warm as much as possible while outside, vans slid on the ice, colliding with parked cars. Groups of neighbours battled to dig out drivers stranded on the steep roads. Wakefield Road was blocked for hours by a van stuck at the top of the slope. Locals struggled with the passengers to free the vehicle, only for it to immediately slide again to a new resting place. A lorry stuck at the corner of Princes



and Mayo Roads was eventually towed over the hill by two tractors. Footpaths became slippery with some roads virtually impassable on foot. The freezing

conditions brought chaos to many but also some respite – visits were postponed, plans rearranged – and for some, the snowfalls brought a brief hiatus to hectic lifestyles.

As the winter weather eases and normal life resumes, questions are now being asked about the City Council's response with a review scheduled for March.

The authorities are also seeking views on where new grit bins should be placed for use in future freezes and residents in the area have been replying with ideas for locations in the hilly terrain of the district.

View from the hill

Ten years old, Singing group, Level news, Community Garden

● This year we celebrate ten years of the Round Hill society. The group was formed in 2000 with the intention of providing a focus for community activity and a voice on local issues. The inaugural meeting was held late in 1999 and the first issue of the Round Hill Reporter published in February 2000.

● As part of our celebrations of the anniversary, we are planning a street party for late summer. Preparations are under way and after the overwhelmingly positive response to last year's event, we are hoping to return to D'Aubigny road for the occasion. The provisional date is Saturday 11th September 2010 and we would love to hear from anybody who would like to be involved. Ideas are also welcome - please contact the editor to share your thoughts.

● Plans for redevelopment of the Level were opened to consultation over the winter and now two designs have been shortlisted. Both include petanque courts and flower gardens. One design concentrates on restoring the Level to its appearance in 1930s when the play area and pavilions were originally constructed. An alternative plan features an extended play area with the skate park relocated to the north west corner of the park. The plans form part of a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in March. Although funding to the tune of £250,000 has already been secured, a further grant is needed if the ambitious plans are to go ahead.

Vivien Eliades Bodywork



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The power of touch can transform our lives.



Meanwhile, work on Saunders Park has begun - the play area is to be transformed with a brand new design and contemporary facilities.

● There was a fantastic turnout for this year's carol singing procession in December and a huge amount raised for this year's charity, the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Round Hill's residents again proved their generosity and christmas spirit providing £215.30 in just over an hour. Singers enjoyed an array of instrumental support as well as a fun walk and a joyful way to mark midwinter. Some enjoyed the singing so much there have been suggestions for some sort of choral society or maybe some warm-up sessions in advance of next year's singing. Please contact Carol Hall if you would like to know more (details on back page).

● The Lewes Road for Clean Air group have had a busy time since their launch last year. There have been a series of meetings and events, including a "bike train" running from the Level to the Universities at Falmer. The train aims to gather sufficient cyclists to occupy a lane of the dual carriageway, making the journey safer and more attractive for bike riders and is an experimental project to inspire more people to switch from four wheels to two.

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ESTATE AGENTS

Let the music begin...

Organisers of the Lewes Road community garden project are mourning the loss of Gordon Stalker, a prominent member of the campaign who was brutally murdered at his home in Elm Grove in February. The garden itself meanwhile has continued to stay open despite the threat of imminent closure. Property developers obtained consent last year for a mixed residential and retail development on the site. Although they gave permission for the temporary use of the land as a garden, they are now planning to begin development work. Tesco is rumoured to be in talks with the developer, Albion Minos, who have worked with Sainsbury's in the past.

And then there was...more darkness. The ongoing saga of illuminating Round Hill continues. Last year there were problems when work crews were sent out to replace historic street lamps in error. The problem was resolved by lighting officials and the city's conservation office but over the last twelve months, residents have been unable to get faulty lights repaired despite lengthy wrangles with bureaucracy, leaving some areas of the neighbourhood cloaked in darkness.

Pedestrians in Round Hill continue to face obstructions as they traverse the area. In some parts of the neighbourhood, pavements are routinely filled with parked cars and this is causing particular problems at the lower end of Wakefield Road where Sylvan Hall residents are only able to gain access to the Laurels with great difficulty. Vehicles are regularly parked in such a way as to block the pedestrian entrance to the steps leading to this corner of the estate. Residents in Crescent Road have also raised issues with local councillors. More households are leaving recycling boxes and refuse bins on the pavements throughout the week, causing problems for users of wheelchairs and child buggies.

It's the last chance to comment on the City Council's **Core Strategy**. The final draft was published in January and is open for closing consultation before it is adopted as part of the city's Local Development Framework. The strategy will inform future planning decisions and defines a detailed vision for Brighton and Hove through the next decade and beyond. Residents have until 22 March to respond on www.brighton-hove.gov.uk.



The Round Hill web site now boasts a fantastic directory of local music teachers and courses. This is a unique and valuable resource for the city as a whole and reveals the vast range of musical talent on the doorstep.

Students can choose from the Bouzouki (Cornwall Gardens), Saxophone (Upper Lewes Road) or Mandolin (Bear Road) as well as a huge range of other instruments. There are details of singing teachers too as well as links to other useful sites.

Learning a musical instrument is enjoyable and challenging, bringing entirely new skills and ways of thinking. If you want to expand your horizons or if you are a teacher and would like to be included on the list, see our website: www.roundhill.org.uk.



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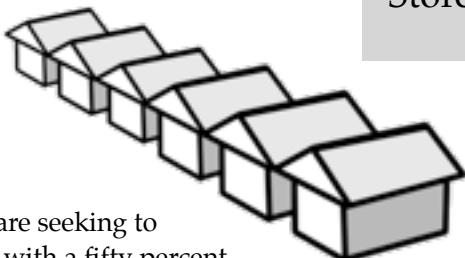


Hit for six

Yet another planning application for Princes Road

Stunned neighbours on Princes Road are now facing a sixth application from property developers Carelet. The fifth application was granted last July, giving the go-ahead for a terrace of four small houses on the tiny patch of land perched on the railway embankment. Now, in a surprising twist, the sixth application seeks permission for six three-storey homes.

In the application papers, Carelet seem to admit a mis-judgement in their previous application, stating that it is not economically viable. Now they are seeking to improve on their profit margins with a fifty percent increase in the size of the development. The new proposal is entirely within the footprint of the application that was approved, which would make for a much more cramped dwelling space for the prospective residents. In the new plans there is also substantially



Application	2009	2010
Houses	4	6
Double bedrooms	8	12
Storeys	2	3

less open space available for gardens attached to the proposed properties.

The row of six houses is somewhat taller than the previous application and the upper floors will now overlook the gardens of the houses on Princes Road. Due to changes in the design, the proposed structures would also be closer to existing dwellings.

In general, the new proposals are similar to the previous plans. An additional bedroom is added to each property by raising the roof level and including a garret room with dormer windows on the top floor. Each property is narrower than before but the designs for the gatehouse on Princes Road are unchanged.

Parking for the proposed properties is a sticking point for locals. Car owners in Round Hill will readily attest to the difficulty of parking on the street in the evenings and with no proper provision for the new houses, any increase in the number of prospective residents is bound to increase the pressure.

Other aspects of the submitted proposal have sparked outright anger. As part of their application, the developers accuse the neighbourhood of fly-tipping on their property, a claim that is particularly cheeky given that it was local residents who were forced to call on the City Council to compel Carelet to properly secure and clean up the steep entrance to their plot.

The unexpected change of plans has raised speculation over the developer's position. In a sluggish property market, the difficulties of developing a site which is small and difficult to reach could rule out the capital backing needed to realise the project.

The recommendation from officials is expected in March and the plan is likely to go to the city's planning committee in the following weeks. A huge amount of information is available on our website, including sample letters and history of previous applications.

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References available

Bloomers

Green spaces face extinction

Is it time to bid goodbye to the city's gardens?

A recent report commissioned by the government found that garden grabbing is a significant threat to communities in the South east. The report, published by Kingston University in January, found that local authorities wrongly believe they are unable to stop developments on garden land which in recent years has been categorised as "brownfield" property.

The findings are no surprise for Brighton residents who have witnessed a string of cramped developments. When one plan is approved, it is cited by the next applicant, leading to a domino effect. This was illustrated recently when the approval of four houses in Princes Road became a key factor in the decision to build on the allotments between Springfield Road and London Road station. Residents were left with the impression of a cascade of decisions that have slipped out of the control of planners.

Round Hill has seen several backland or "in-fill" developments in recent years and while some, such as Belton Close, have been well-received, the rate of new building is likely to accelerate. In the last few months, permission has been granted for new properties behind Princes Road and Ashdown Road, bringing fears that the character of the area will be changed more fundamentally. As green spaces between houses are eroded, the grain of the neighbourhood is disturbed, its historical character lost and broken up. This is particularly an issue for conservation areas such as Round Hill. Although its Victorian street pattern has so far been largely preserved, the neighbourhood has suffered from the planning decisions of previous decades which have led to the loss of period features and gaps plugged with unsympathetic buildings.

The City Council however has, in recent decisions, shown its readiness to approve this sort of development. This is partly down to the pressure that is placed on local authorities by the South East Plan, a regional strategy which identifies the priorities for house building through to 2026. Brighton and Hove is required to provide a net increase of over eleven thousand properties, equating to five hundred extra homes every year. Most of these will need to come from 'windfall' sites, applications that are not part of larger

strategic developments such as the New England quarter.

Maintaining this level of growth demands an aggressive policy on the part of planning authorities, encouraging developers to fit new properties into increasingly unsuitable spaces. The Kingston report does hold out some hope, highlighting how more forward-looking authorities have implemented specific policies on garden development, recognising the value of these green spaces for the community.

In contrast, the Open Spaces policy recently approved by Brighton's cabinet proved inadequate and inconsequential for backland developments in Round Hill, indicating that in this part of the country at least, the prospects for garden lovers are disappointingly bleak.



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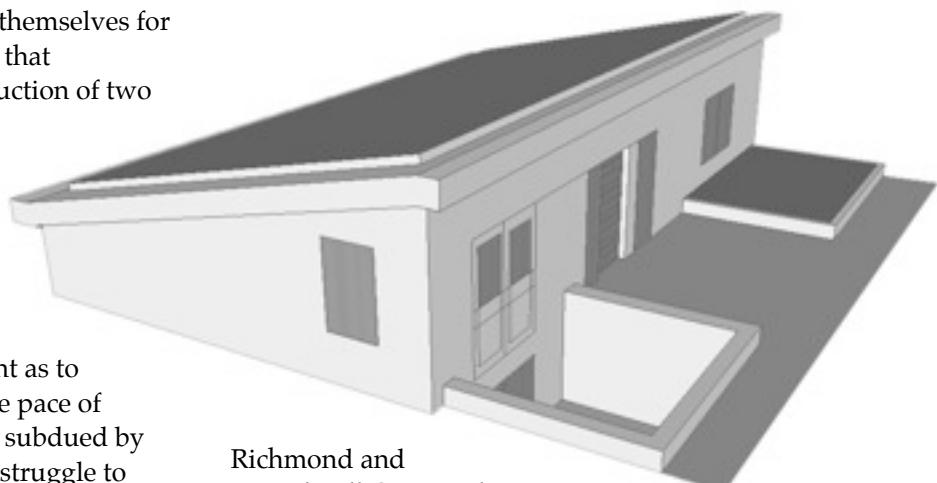
Two new houses for Ashdown

Plans for two detached properties have been approved

Residents in Ashdown Road are bracing themselves for a protracted period of development now that permission has been given for the construction of two new houses.

The new structures are partially submerged so the building project will be particularly intensive and there is likely to be considerable disruption caused by the heavy vehicles needed to remove the waste earth excavated from the site. There is little indication at present as to when work is likely to begin although the pace of development elsewhere in the city is still subdued by the effects of the recession as developers struggle to raise the capital for costly building work.

The designs for the new houses are interesting however and reward a closer look. The new buildings are set to be a familiar sight for residents of Ashdown,

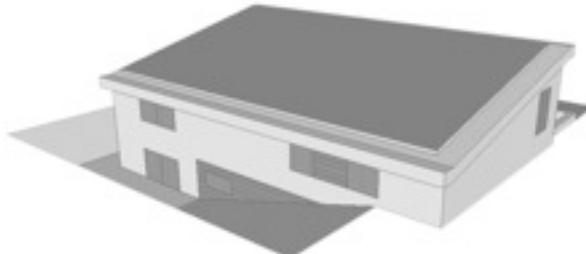


Richmond and Round Hill Crescent but are carefully designed to ensure that the windows do not overlook neighbouring properties.

The new properties each have bedrooms situated on a lower ground level with large "light wells" cut into the ground to give natural illumination. The dwellings also have sloping roofs which under the plans will be planted with evergreen vegetation. The architects intend this to improve the aspect for neighbouring properties as well as reducing the ecological impact of the new construction.

There will be a small courtyard between the new structures and the existing houses but otherwise very little open space for the prospective residents.

Plans for three new houses were revised down to two after consultation between the developers and planning officers. Residents were largely against the proposal but local opposition and calls by local Councillor Keith Taylor for a further reduction in scale were over-ruled by the planning committee who voted on a majority to approve the plan.



Pictures show an artist's impression of one of the new houses based on the architect's drawings, with a view from the front (top) and rear (above)

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Wasting away

The city's waste strategy confirms a long way to go on recycling targets

How much do you throw away? Could more of the waste from your household be recycled?

The City Council's waste strategy report 2009 sets out the current position and the targets that will need to be reached if the city is not to incur fines for over-reliance on landfill. In 2008, Brighton was putting more than 60% of its waste into holes in the ground. By 2021, the city is aiming to reduce this figure to 2%.

The report reveals that kerbside collections have made a significant impact. The amount of our waste which is recycled has risen from 10% in 2000 to 28% today. But many recyclables still go into black bags and wheelie bins and it is estimated that this figure would be 37% if only every resident used the Cityclean recycling boxes.

The average city resident produces 436kg of waste every year, adding up to 114,000 tonnes across the city. The contents of our bin liners have also been helpfully categorised in the report. Around 45% is organic waste (kitchen and garden). It decomposes quickly but causes problems in black bags attracting vermin and also creates pockets of methane when added to regular landfill. A further 28% is made up of recyclables such as plastics, paper and card and nappies alone account for 8%.

Wastewatch 2010

If you're affected by the waste processing facility at Hollingdean, we'd like to hear from you. The Environment Agency is conducting an investigation into the impact on the community and residents are encouraged to report odours, particulates and noise disturbance but the Round Hill Society are also trying to keep a central record of the effects on the area.

1 Call the EA on 0800 807 060 quoting licence number EAWML100185

2 For complaints relating to a breach of planning conditions email scott.castle@brighton-hove.gov.uk

3 Tell the Round Hill Society so we can keep a central record of problems: www.roundhill.org.uk/waste

Target	2008	2016	2021
Recycling	28%	40%	45%
Energy recovery	11%	55%	53%
Landfill	60%	5%	2%

Clearly this leaves scope for improvement and the strategy describes possible actions to start reducing the scale of the city's waste, such as:

- fine individual households who fail to recycle and reward the best recyclers
- charge for garden waste and encourage home composting
- promote and subsidise reusable nappies
- consider special food waste collections

Share your tips for recycling and see what others are saying on our website: www.roundhill.org.uk/waste



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16a Wakefield Road
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E brightonbloomers@googlemail.com

The Round Hill Reporter is published by the Round Hill Society to keep residents in the area in touch with local news, events and each other. We try to present a fair and balanced view but the opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily shared by all.

Decorators

Preston Decorators Princes Road M 07976 893087
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General

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Letters or ideas for articles are welcome - please contact the editor at the address shown above.

Deadline for the June edition
14th May