

Brighton to have Britain's tallest observation tower

See page 4



Plans set for international sports arena

Page 3

New 8.4 million hotel being built in Brighton

Page 3



David Maslen  
Maslen Estate Agents

## Market Trends

We are often asked for our predictions for the property market, and for how long will prices keep rising? If only we had a crystal ball. As with any market, gold, oil, stocks and shares, the property market is largely driven by supply and demand. The economy is very strong, particularly in the South, where the majority of the area is made up of service industries. Although we have seen interest rates rise in recent months, they are still very low compared to the early 1990's, when they reached 16%. Therefore the prediction for this year is that the property market will remain fairly buoyant with demand continuing from buyers. Peoples' circumstances continue to change with job relocation and growing families etc, so people will naturally need to move. The key is to always price sensibly to attract the buyers - you will never sell a £50 note for more. Whilst this is easy as the value is written on it the same applies to property, it will only sell for what it is worth.

# A question of preference

**During the course of the ownership of your home, you will no doubt consider a number of improvements that you hope will add value, or at least recoup the money spent, when you eventually come to sell.**

However, it is of course impossible to predict the tastes and preferences of your future buyer, so how do you know whether a particular improvement is worthwhile?

A good rule of thumb is to recognise that the most likely buyer for your property is probably going to be someone in the same socio-economic group as yourself and other homeowners around you. It therefore follows that changes to your property that could alienate these key buyers should be avoided.

For example a two-bedroom loft extension on a two-bedroom terraced house might attempt to transform it into a family home, but will not necessarily cover the amount spent on the work in terms of increased value.

For example, are the ground floor accommodation and garden also suitable for family living? Is there sufficient easy parking at the property for parents with small children? Is it within a popular school catchment area?

Likewise, it's worth remembering that in order to attract the most buyers, you should avoid highly personalised décor. Whilst a blood-red kitchen might appeal to your own sense of fun for one year of your life, the chances are that your buyer does not yet appreciate this! Similarly, is your buyer really going to agree that the Barbie-print carpet in your little girl's bedroom was really such a good idea for their boy?

So when considering improvements, unless your more exciting personal preferences can readily be watered down prior to selling, it is worthwhile looking at your property through the eyes of the most likely buyer if you are going to secure the highest price the market will pay.

## Station revamp plan for more shops and mall

**A sloping walkway lined with shops could be built if plans for a revamp at Brighton Station go ahead.**

Proposals include a new 'access mall' stretching from Trafalgar Street to the station concourse.

The additional entrance doors at the Trafalgar Street level would replace the disused Victorian toilet block and storage space beside it. There are also plans for a disabled lift from the street to the station.

A spokesman for Frankham Consultancy Group, which is acting as an agent for Southern Railway, said the project could cost as much as £500,000.

He said the antique mosaic floors in the ladies and gents toilets would be preserved. "It is a way of providing another entrance in an increasingly busy station and using space which is not doing anything at the moment".

The rail group is planning to put a new coffee stall between platforms seven and eight for travellers who do not want to go through the barriers to the main station.

The idea is aimed at those who travel into Brighton from Lewes and along the coast to catch another train to the capital and who would not automatically pass by the main concourse.

### What's on!

*Some local events scheduled during the next few months.*

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 14 Dec/<br>14 Jan | <b>Aladdin</b> - A Magical Christmas Extravaganza - Theatre Royal                 |
| 27 Dec/<br>06 Jan | <b>Get Your Skates On</b> - Public Ice Skating - Brighton Centre                  |
| 01 Jan            | <b>St Petersburg Ballet</b> - Sleeping Beauty - Dome Concert Hall                 |
| 07 Jan            | <b>Sunday coffee concert</b> - Master Piano Series - Old Market                   |
| 14 Jan            | <b>Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra</b> - Dome Concert Hall                        |
| 29 Jan/<br>03 Feb | <b>Tap Dogs</b> - Back by popular demand - Theatre Royal                          |
| 06 Feb/<br>10 Feb | <b>The Seafarer</b> - National theatre at its best - Theatre Royal                |
| 12 Feb/<br>17 Feb | <b>Acorn Antiques</b> - 'Ridiculously enjoyable' - Theatre Royal                  |
| 13 Feb/<br>18 Feb | <b>Lord of the Dance</b> - Irish Dance Spectacular - Dome Concert Hall            |
| 19 Feb            | <b>The Nutcracker</b> - Russian State Ballet of Siberia - Theatre Royal           |
| 27 Feb/<br>03 Mar | <b>Old Times</b> - by Harold Pinter - Theatre Royal                               |
| 12 Mar/<br>17 Mar | <b>Hay Fever</b> - Direct from West End Theatre Royal                             |
| 20 Mar/<br>24 Mar | <b>French Without Tears</b> - 'A little masterpiece of frivolity' - Theatre Royal |

*Please note: It is advisable to check dates, times and venue before travelling as each event is planned well in advance.*

# Grand house in the park is back to former glory

Story courtesy of the Brighton & Hove Leader

**It took a long time to achieve and there were many alarms on the way but Stanmer House has now been restored to its former glory.**

The house and surrounding estate including the park were bought in 1947 from the Earl of Chichester. Almost 5,000 acres were in the package including both Stanmer and Falmer villages and six farms.

Historian Clifford Musgrave said it was the most far-reaching and imaginative act by the Brighton authorities since they bought the Royal Pavilion estate almost a century earlier.

Not only did the estate provide a country park on the edge of town but it also produced land for two university campuses and a couple of schools.

In 1980, Sussex University returned the house to the council which then started a long process of trying to find a use for it. The difficulty was always in achieving this without restricting public access.

All sorts of schemes were proposed including using it as a language college and reopening it as a stately home run by the council, rather like Preston Manor. But none of them came to anything and meanwhile the house began to deteriorate. At one time it was occupied by squatters.

The one positive move at Stanmer during these years was the establishment of a rural museum next door by the Stanmer Preservation Society.

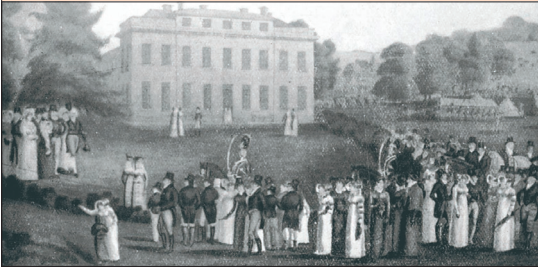
The house was formally reopened last summer and is already doing brisk business. Stanmer House now looks better than it has at any time during the last century.

More than £5 million has been spent on the restoration. Despite being so close to



Sussex University, the campus cannot be seen from the house and even the roar of the Brighton bypass, clearly audible from much of the park, does not normally reach it.

A painter adds the finishing touches to the renovated house in 2006.



Stanmer House in 1815

Stanmer House was built in the 1720s for Henry Pelham and was designed in Palladian style by Nicholas Dubois.

The house was extended in 1775 and 1860 with the main state rooms downstairs being far more impressive than the rest of the building but when Brighton Council bought the estate, Stanmer had been under military occupation during the war and was in a very poor state of repair. But restoration work took place and the house was put back in good order although the west wing was demolished as it was considered to be beyond repair.

When Sussex University was formed, Stanmer House was used by the authorities while the main campus was being built.



In the pink...the reopening of Stanmer House in June this year.

In the 1990s, English Heritage paid £500,000 to restore the roof and this at least stopped further damage from water.

At this time, serious interest was expressed in the property by businessman Mike Holland who had established himself in Brighton and Hove. He proposed restoring the house and building on a replacement wing for new housing which would be discreetly tucked away. While there would be some public access to Stanmer House, it would be also used for receptions, events, conferences, balls and gatherings.



The classic car show in the park in 2000.

Brighton and Hove City Council has plans to restore and revive the surrounding parkland and improve access so that it is more attractive to visit by public transport.

## Did you know?

### Nuffield Hospital site

**Was the home** to The Warren Farm Schools which were industrial schools for poor juvenile children opened in 1862 and closed in 1930.

**The water supply** for the school came from the world's deepest well which took 4 years to dig by hand and had a depth of 1285 feet.

**From 1930** the school buildings were used as a children's home, infant and junior schools and a public library up until the early 1950's.

**In 1955** the buildings housed St John the Baptist Roman Catholic School which was later renamed Fitzherbert R.C. school which closed in 1987.

**After a few years** of being derelict the buildings and the well were demolished to make way for the Sussex Nuffield Hospital.

**Before Warren Farm** the area was home to the earliest farming settlement to be identified in the area. Wick Farm dates back to 1296 and later became Warren Farm.

## Another 'First' for the Maslen team!

Maslen Estate Agents are proud to confirm that at the end of last year we were approved by Brighton & Hove Trading Standards and are now part of the 'Buy With Confidence' scheme. We are the first firm of Estate Agents in Brighton & Hove to do so and are one of only three agents in the whole of Sussex. To be part of the scheme Trading Standards have taken up



references by writing to past clients, have carried out various checks at Companies House and most importantly have carried out checks at the Criminal Records Bureau on all of our team. You really are assured of dealing with a highly professional firm, who are also members of all of the professions governing bodies and therefore abide by their rules and codes of conduct.

# Sports arena plan SKATES INTO VIEW

Story courtesy of the Brighton & Hove Leader

**D**evelopers want to build a £55 million international sports complex and low-rise futuristic homes.

The Brighton International Arena would feature two Olympic sized ice rinks, a skating school run by Olympic champions Jane Torvill and Robin Cousins, a 10,000-seat multi-purpose arena and a cinema.

Brighton and Hove City Council said a planning application was expected shortly and, if successful, work could start at the site at Black Rock, next to Brighton Marina, next year.

The arena would host major sports events including European and international skating competitions and exhibitions. Rivaling the Brighton Centre, it would be a modern complex on a par with the Birmingham NEC.

Celebrity chef Antony Worrall Thompson has expressed an interest in building a restaurant as part of the complex.

Business leaders say the project would give the local economy a massive boost, providing 126 permanent jobs and 225 part-time positions.

Building work on the site could take up to two years but the complex has already been offered as a home ground to sports teams, including the Brighton Bears.

The application could bring to a close almost four years of speculation over the derelict site. The consortium behind Brighton International Arena has been working to adhere to planning regulations since city councillors chose its design, created by London-based S&P Architects, to develop the site in 2003. Bids were invited for the site as far back as 2002. Rival proposals, including a five-star spa hotel and winter gardens, have all been rejected.

The city council said the arena would best enhance the city and would have major financial benefits, including about £8 million in increased tourism revenue.

The exterior of the arena would be covered largely in glass and lightweight metals. A 64-unit low rise housing block would offset the cost of building the arena which would include at least 40 per cent "affordable" housing.



**"The Brighton International Arena at Black Rock would feature two Olympic-size ice rinks"**

## Harmony's the key for hotel



**Building work has started on an £8.4 million hotel opposite Brighton's new Jubilee Library. The four-star Myhotel, in Jubilee Street, is expected to be ready to open in the winter of 2007. It will have 80 en-suite rooms, a spa, gym, cafe and restaurants and its own library for hotel guests.**

Myhotels developed its boutique hotel concept in the 1990s. It aims to provide its hotels with innovative designs and the principles of feng shui, an ancient Chinese guide to enhancing harmony in surroundings.

The company has hotels in London's Bloomsbury and Chelsea. This will be its first outside the capital.

Willmott Dixon Construction has been awarded the contract. Managing director Mark Tant said: "I am delighted we have secured this prestigious scheme opposite the new library."

The library will be fully operational while the building works take place.

Deputy council leader Sue John said: "This will complete the public square, bring new life into the area and give a big boost to the local visitor economy."

## BRIGHTON - NEWS IN BRIEF

### **New library and homes in Coldean**

**A community library in Brighton is to be replaced by a new one twice the size under a £1.3m plan being put together by Brighton & Hove city council.**

The authority's policy committee recently approved plans to work with Hanover Housing Association on regenerating the Coldean Library site. Six extra-care flats would also be built, to enable older people to live independently in their own homes.

The new library would be leased back to the council at no cost and managed by the authority. It would enable expansion of the children's library, more books, better computer facilities, improved disabled access and public toilets. Work is expected to start by next March and take around a year.

It would be the latest council housing scheme aimed at enabling older people to stay in their own homes. As well as the 38 flats opened at New Larchwood this summer, plans are being made for at least 70 similar homes at Patching Lodge, just off Eastern Road, Kemptown, to be ready by the beginning of 2009.

Deputy council leader Sue John, who chairs the city's culture and tourism sub-committee said: "This is an imaginative plan to meet two pressing needs in a single scheme. The new library would be a great addition to community facilities".

### **Council wins top eco award**

**Brighton & Hove City Council has won a top award for its commitment to renewable energy.**

The city council was presented with the prize for South East Local Authority Commitment to Renewable Energy, by the South East Sustainable Energy Partnership.

Elliot Morley MP, the prime minister's special advisor on climate change, praised the city council: "Brighton & Hove City Council have a very good record in taking forward sustainable development and are one of the pioneers in terms of local government."

The council installed the first 6KW wind turbine in the city at the award winning Westergate Business Centre in Moulsecoomb. Westergate is thought to be the most sustainable industrial building in the country. The council is also incorporating renewable technologies into other buildings. A new college for young people with special educational needs at Vardean has a raft of sustainable features and the new Whitehawk Children's Centre includes a wind turbine and a new dining hall at West Hove Infants School, which will be built in 2007, will incorporate two wind turbines.

# The *i360* - set to transform the city

**The Brighton Eye - a 172m tower - will be built after winning over city councillors. Their approval means Brighton and Hove will become home to Britain's tallest observation tower on the foreshore of the city's dilapidated West Pier.**

The tower, designed by the architects of the London Eye and known as the *i360*, is one of three major developments which will radically transform the city's skyline. The *i360* is predicted to attract 500,000 visitors each year and boost the city's economy by an estimated £10 million as well as creating more than 100 jobs.

Members of the city council's planning board unanimously backed the project in October 2006. The decision follows shortly after the



128m Brighton Marina tower and the Frank Gehry development on the King Alfred site in Hove were approved.

Councillors, conservation groups and tourist chiefs have all backed the latest structure.

Measuring just four metres wide, it will transport visitors up to 139m in a gigantic enclosed pod, providing panoramic views over a 25-mile radius. The observation height of 139m tops by four metres that of the London Eye. The pod, with a capacity for 125 people, will be more than nine times the size of a London Eye capsule.

Construction is due to start early in 2007, with completion by summer 2008. The project will be funded by private investors.

Simon Burgess, leader of Brighton and Hove City Council, said: "It is going to transform the city. The *i360* will be a familiar picture postcard image - recognisable throughout the world. It will generate huge amounts of cash and benefit the city's economy all year round."

Mark Jones, chairman of Brighton and Hove Hotels Association, said the city needed to build outstanding attractions which would enable it to compete with other European destinations. "It is exhilarating to hear ideas which are not 'down to earth' but instead, rather like the *i360* itself, reach for the stars."

Professor Fred Gray, an expert on seaside architecture, said he thought the scheme, dubbed the Brighton Eye, was a "fantastic" idea. Prof Gray, based at the University of Sussex, is a director of the West Pier Trust, which manages the site and supports the proposal for a tall tourist attraction.

The *i360*'s creators are the husband and wife architect team David Marks and Julia Barfield. Mr Marks says it will compete with other popular observation deck attractions including the Eiffel Tower and the London Eye, which has 22 million visitors a year and is Britain's most popular paid-for attraction. He said: "I am just completely ecstatic. What a vote of confidence to get unanimous support."



Artist impression of the panoramic viewing pod

Support came from as far afield as Germany, Japan and the Netherlands. The South East England Development Agency, English Heritage, the Regency Society and Tourism South East were among the bodies which backed the plan.

***"The *i360* will be a familiar picture postcard image - recognisable throughout the world"***

It will involve the removal of wreckage from the collapsed West Pier. The end section farthest out to sea will be kept and it is hoped might still one day be integrated into the rest of the development. The Brighton

West Pier Trust, which bought the pier from the Crown Commissioners three years after it closed in 1975, once hoped the building could be repaired but storm damage and two fires resulted in the loss of the central section.



The tower, designed by the architects of the London Eye, is scheduled to be finished by the summer of 2008.