



# SHIFTING SANDS

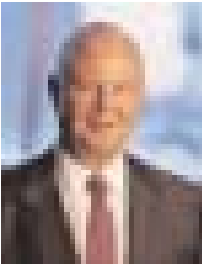
DESIGN AND THE CHANGING IMAGE OF ENGLISH SEASIDE TOWNS



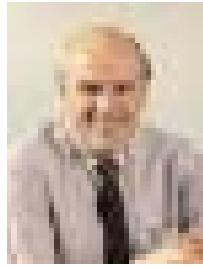
ENGLISH HERITAGE

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# FOREWORD



Sir Stuart Lipton



Sir Neil Cossons

As an island nation, our relationship to the border between land and sea is unique and deep rooted. Seaside towns share many similarities with their inland cousins, yet remain fundamentally different: climate, remoteness, ageing and transient populations, changing demands, balancing the needs of day-trippers with residents.

Despite a fall from Victorian grace, these much-loved locations have won a permanent place in the British psyche. Triumphs of imagination like the Brighton Pavilion or Blackpool's iconic Tower demonstrate an ability to adapt to changing fortune and fashion.

Yet, perched on the edge of an eroding economic landscape, they have often struggled to maintain their foothold. In decline, seaside towns have fallen prey to the whim of speculative, short-term development that compromises their original grandeur and continues a downward spiral.

Older resorts have suffered a lack of investment and political will, with a steadily decaying and inadequate infrastructure, whilst new arrivals are vulnerable to poor quality development. We see too many examples where design quality is sacrificed in a desperate bid to secure investment, reducing the chance of long term success.

The sight of a pleasing promenade often obscures the real town; schools, shops, housing and healthcare are needed here like anywhere else. However, there is a rising tide of excellence and, in this unashamedly positive publication, CABE and English Heritage demonstrate the contemporary strengths of English seaside towns.

Examples are used of towns that have regenerated themselves as year-round places, balancing the needs of visitors and residents. The case studies reveal creative responses to modern demands: innovative offices; unique public space; essential public services; engaging visitor attractions. These kinds of projects help to ensure that our coastline remains a viable place to live, work and play for future generations.

A broad sweep from small contemporary to large historic projects is included. No single project could claim solely to have delivered regeneration, but each has contributed enormously, raising the game in places where design-led excellence had been unknown for perhaps a century. The publication demonstrates how, by going the extra mile and implementing design quality in response to present day requirements, seaside towns can continue to adapt to constantly shifting sands.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Lipton', written in a cursive style.

Sir Stuart Lipton  
Chairman, CABE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Cossons', written in a cursive style.

Sir Neil Cossons  
Chairman, English Heritage



# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 4

SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS 6

## CASE STUDIES



01 **CRYSTAL PALACE BY THE SEA**  
The sound of the sea: De La Warr bandstand 10

02 **A NEW LOOK AT BOURNEMOUTH**  
Bournemouth Square 12

03 **FAR OVER THE SUMMER SEA**  
Brighton: Van Alen Building 14

04 **SEASIDE RESTORED**  
Eastbourne, East Sussex: Seaside Road  
Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes 16

05 **THE FOLKESTONE VIEW**  
Folkestone, Kent: Saga's Headquarters  
A place by the sea: Chummy's Seafood Stall 18

06 **SEEDS FOR CHANGE**  
Hunstanton, Norfolk: Boston Square Sensory Park  
Clacton Marine Gardens 20

07 **TAMING CLACTON'S WILD WEST**  
Jaywick Sands, Essex: Lotus Way 22

08 **TURNING THE TIDE**  
Morecambe, Lancashire: The Tern Project  
Art on the seafront 24

09 **SURF'S UP!**  
Newquay, Cornwall: Beach Hut Café and Extreme Academy 26

10 **CULTURED PEARLS**  
St Ives, Cornwall: Tate St Ives  
A cultural renaissance 28

11 **THERE'S A SMALL HOTEL**  
St Mawes, Cornwall: Hotel Tresanton 30

12 **THE END OF THE PIER SHOW**  
Southport, Merseyside: Southport Pier Pavilion  
Walking on water 32

13 **WHERE CLEAN WATERS FLOW**  
Ventnor and Eastbourne: Wastewater treatment works  
A farm by the sea? 34

14 **WINDOWS ONTO WHITBY**  
Whitby Abbey Heritage Centre 36

**ON A WIDER CANVAS** 38  
Drivers for Regeneration

**FURTHER READING** 40

**CREDITS** 40

# INTRODUCTION



SOUTHPORT

For much of the twentieth century piers and sandcastles, sticks of rock, windbreaks and donkey rides were the images of summers when, according to memory, the sun always shone. The commonly held view is that, by the end of the century, many seaside towns were in decline, suffering from a low-wage economy, high claimant unemployment and poor private housing, often with extensive multiple occupation. This had a consequent effect upon the state of the built environment and the public spaces that, in the past, have given these towns their particular charm. The English Tourism Council's 2001 report 'Sea Changes' recorded that 'a number of resorts are now facing a range of social problems, such as high levels of unemployment, low income levels, poor levels of education skills and training and housing problems more associated with those in inner city areas', while recent research undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University indicates that, over the past 30 years, seaside towns have been expanding faster than many of their inland equivalents.

Over the past ten years, a regular cycle of conferences and seminars has sought to address the state of seaside economies. The residents

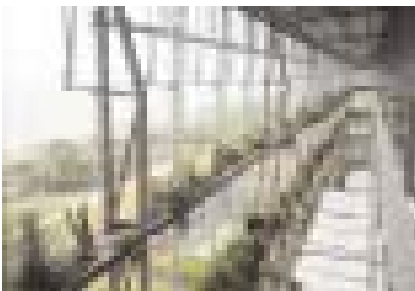
of seaside towns have become used to living with the promise of jam tomorrow. No one would pretend that there are any quick and easy solutions. While some may still dream of a return to halcyon days, most of those with responsibility for the future of seaside towns recognise the urgent need for change. For some this means the initiation of a process of masterplanning; for others a reassessment of strengths and assets, and using these to meet the demands and the opportunities of 21st century lifestyles. Some talk of 'de-resorting' to create a different kind of place in which people want to live and where there are jobs all year round. Others have taken small steps in the hope that this will begin a longer march to restoring pride in the past and confidence in the future.

'Sea Changes' showed that, in the last 25 years, total domestic tourism in England has hovered around 100 million trips each year; this figure does not represent an overall growth but neither shows a significant fall. English seaside tourism, on the other hand, has fallen significantly from 32 million to 22 million trips. The report identified a number of factors that were key to the success or failure of the seaside town, including the built and natural environment, infrastructure and public facilities alongside core elements such as accommodation and entertainment. 'It only requires one element of the product to be below standard to reduce the overall appeal of a resort.'

The report goes on to consider that 'research and admission figures show that England's architectural and historic heritage is a major factor making England an attractive destination... seaside resorts have made an enormous contribution to the cultural identity of England and contain some of the finest examples of our built heritage.'

This publication looks at a number of very different ways in which seaside resorts are developing, changing or

FOLKESTONE





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re-inventing themselves and at the role that new high quality buildings and open spaces that make the most of their seaside context can have in these changes. The examples it describes are only a few of many imaginative initiatives to be found around England's seaboard. They include the restoration of historic buildings; inventive improvements to sea defences and seafront public gardens; the creation of new homes, galleries and museums, hotels and restaurants by the sea; even wastewater outlets with flair. While they may not all be at the cutting edge of contemporary architecture or design, they share a desire to create a new coastal destination that is attractive to investors and business and has an extended season beyond the peak summer months - places that cater for a range of contemporary visitors.

The English love affair with the seaside has been a long one. For over 300 years the seaside played a central part in English summer holidays. In the 18th century the search for health had encouraged the development of the seaside resort with its bracing water and invigorating air. Throughout the 19th century, swifter transport, first by water, then by rail and later by car, made seaside towns more accessible from inland

towns and cities.

The seaside holiday grew in fashion. By the beginning of the 20th century many of the country's traditional seaside resorts were already well established. With the added impetus of the 1871 Bank Holiday Act, regular holiday trips - be they for a day or a week - began to be part of the expectation of all classes of society. The train and the charabanc brought thousands of visitors to resorts that were anxious to offer the very latest in novelty, fashion and fun. In order to encourage visitors to return on a regular basis, regeneration became an integral part of the seaside town's persona. Seaside architecture, design and engineering, never afraid of being bold, quirky and idiosyncratic, continued to dazzle right up to the beginning of the Second World War. New hotels, car parks for the increasing number of motor vehicles, lidos to catch the new fashion for sun-worship, entertainment by day and by night, all became part of the marketing of the summer holiday. By the 1930s more than 15 million people were taking a week's holiday at the seaside. The future of the seaside town seemed assured.

There were clouds on the horizon, however small. Even as early as the 1830s the French coast had begun to attract wealthier holidaymakers from

across the channel, able to afford both the time and the money to holiday on the continent. From the 1860s, the enterprising Thomas Cook took groups of tourists to Europe, combining transport and accommodation arrangements in a single package. A century later, the mass package holiday offered to millions more the opportunity of their first experience of foreign travel, first to European sunshine and later to places that had once seemed unimaginably far away.

In 1968, holidays in seaside resorts still accounted for 75% of all main holidays taken by Britons. By 1999 however, seaside holidays accounted for only 44% of all holiday trips with 42.8 million people taking holidays abroad and just over half that number, some 22 million, spending at least one night at the British seaside. This steady long-term decline inevitably has had a serious impact upon the seaside economies. Always victim to the problems of seasonal employment, many resorts now lack the full benefit of the summer influx of visitors to underpin their traditional economic cycle. Even resorts that might seem to be bucking the trend, including Blackpool, Brighton and Bournemouth, are listed in the top one third of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Indices of Deprivation.

In regeneration it is rarely possible to begin where you would like to. Sometimes it is best to start with the easy actions. Sometimes it is a single initiative that sets renewal in motion; on other occasions it is the giant step forward. This book includes examples of both - from a seafood stall to masterplanning on a grand scale, from single buildings to streetscapes to whole new communities. What they share is an ambition to revitalise towns - and a city - by the sea, to recreate the spirit of confidence and ambition that in their heyday made seaside resorts so successful.

# SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS



SOUTHPORT

## PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS

None of the examples in this book has single-handedly reversed decline and all their protagonists would recognise that successful regeneration depends on a package of measures including the transport infrastructure, the mix of visitor attractions, the development of a night-time economy, coupled with a safe night-time environment, clean beaches and clean water, new businesses, real jobs and affordable local housing. This often requires a public/private partnership in which local, and increasingly regional, agencies plan and work with the private sector to encourage growth and development, sometimes on an ambitious scale but often on a single project that can provide an incentive to other developments.

In Cornwall, increasingly England's tourism hotspot, it is this combination of actions, investment and partnerships that has helped to produce what the Governor of the Bank of England recently described as 'an economic renaissance'. A key driver in this success has been the Eden Project where the visitor numbers have almost trebled the expectations of the business plan and where 600 new jobs have been created. Eden has brought an estimated £160 million into the local

economy but while its achievements have undoubtedly helped others, the variety of the Cornish 'tourism offer' has in turn helped Eden. Nor is Cornish success rooted solely in tourism – new academic initiatives including the Peninsula Medical School and business ventures like Tripos Receptor, the chemical research company based in Bude, have helped to create new jobs and new investment. Local authorities and the regional development agency have encouraged and supported sustainable growth and placed a collective emphasis on design quality.

## PLACES TO LIVE AND WORK

The aim must be to produce effective regeneration for living communities. Places where people want to live and work are likely to be places that people want to visit. Rising house prices can often squeeze out the indigenous population, especially the young, the very people upon whom the regenerated town will depend for its sustainable future. The evidence is already clear in places like St Ives, Whitstable and Whitby. Property prices in Margate and Ramsgate have doubled in two years with the promise of high-speed rail links to London and of Snøhetta and Spence's contemporary art gallery to commemorate JMW Turner's connections with Margate. Meanwhile, the newly opened National Maritime Museum and the imminent Combined Universities in Cornwall are set to do the same for Falmouth prices. Shops geared for the more lucrative tourist market can crowd out local traders; prices in new restaurants and coffee shops can be beyond the reach of year-round residents. The answer lies not in preventing progress but in ensuring that, coupled with the development of an appropriately skilled workforce, it creates better paid, sustainable jobs and encourages the building of affordable homes and the

BLACKPOOL



perpetuation of towns and villages that people not only want to visit but where the residents also want, and can afford, to stay.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

There are no agreed measures for gauging the success of regeneration at the seaside. Clearly in many senses urban regeneration by the coast shares many of the ambitions and objectives for the renewal of towns inland but the traditional mix between resident and visitor and the strongly seasonal nature of seaside tourism has, to date at least, given the seaside economy a curiously lop-sided character.

Undoubtedly much depends upon the objectives of the regenerating resort. For some, the key aims will remain centred round the traditional tourism economy – the number and nature of visitors; the length of their stay and the volume of their spend; bed nights and available beds; hotel quality, business turnover and visitor satisfaction.

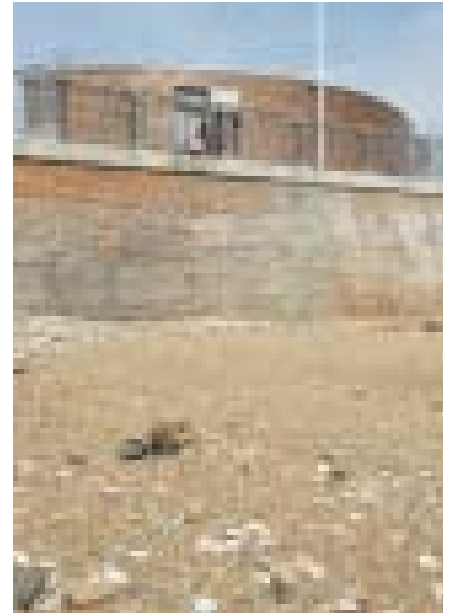
For those resorts seeking to stretch the season beyond the traditional summer months, measures of the average length of the season for hotels and visitor attractions and the

volume of self-catering and hotel accommodation available all year are useful signs of success.

There is now a widespread acknowledgement that the future of seaside towns depends upon a sustainable 12-month economy, providing better-paid employment. In some places this will depend on the creation of a virtuous circle in which an attractive year-round community draws in new business and provides new jobs that in turn sustain an attractive year-round community. Here the measures will include business start-ups, employment figures and the provision of affordable housing.

For some resorts new housing is the priority; for others it is bringing life back into run-down areas. The history of many resorts means that they often possess town-centre buildings of considerable heritage value but in poor condition or no longer suited to their original use. The number of these buildings improved or brought into contemporary use can be helpful measures of the success of regeneration.

In some localities, seaside towns have been the victims of their own success and rising house prices have



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made it difficult for local residents to enter the housing market. At the extreme end of this phenomenon, small seaside towns have become 'second home cities'. Here the key measures will be average house prices, the availability of affordable housing and the frequency and number of housing starts.

Many seaside resorts face the social problems of any community in decline – low self-esteem, high crime rates, vandalism, and high levels of churn both in jobs and in school attendance. Measures in relation to these elements of community health will be helpful in monitoring the achievement of a regeneration programme.

SOUTHPORT



### THE SEASIDE ENVIRONMENT

Although they have much in common with towns everywhere, seaside towns exist in a harsh environment and special consideration needs to be given to the effects of wind and waves, flooding and erosion, salt, sunshine, humidity and sand. It is also a sensitive environment; many seaside towns are close to sites that provide protection for birds, fragile physical features and coastal marine life.

English Nature has published a position statement on the physical management of England's shoreline, particularly in relation to coastal defences and shoreline management

planning. Other government and non-government agencies including the Environment Agency, the RSPB and the Countryside Commission also take an active interest in the coastal environment.

A report for the Standing Conference on Problems Associated with the Coastline (SCOPAC), 'Preparing for the Impact of Climate Change', found that climate change could result in rising sea levels, changes in wave directions and increased rainfall, all factors that would have serious consequences for the seaside environment.

### PROTECTING THE PUBLIC REALM

Meanwhile, people can be the greatest threat to fragile coastal habitats: a 2002 survey by the Marine Conservation Society found that, since 1994, litter on 229 UK beaches had increased by 50% while vandalism, damage caused by skateboarders tempted by the open spaces of the seafront, even the excesses of hen and stag parties can impact upon the urban landscape. To counter the damage to the physical fabric and atmosphere, resorts have looked to raise the quality of open spaces.

### A DELICATE BALANCE

One of the charms of English seaside resorts has been the broad base of their appeal. A trip to the seaside remains as much about winkles and jellied eels, a stick of rock even a kiss-me-quick hat as it does about lobster thermidor, a cafe latte or fashionable boutiques. This is, however, no excuse for the garish shoddiness with which low-quality private investment has scarred so many seafronts. For those resorts that wish to maintain their seaside holiday persona the trick is in getting the balance right and in raising the quality without losing the capricious charm that has long characterised the English seaside.

### STRETCHING AMBITION

While this survey found a range of new ideas and new initiatives, many were modest in scale. There is room for more, for bigger, for better and for the inventive use of the large historic buildings that are to be found in many seaside resorts. There is a paucity of high quality new retail in seaside resorts, little indeed to match the charm and character of Brighton's Lanes or the elegance of Southport's Lord Street. There are few attempts to exploit the health-giving qualities of the sea and the seaside in the way that the French and others have developed thalassotherapy centres.

Furthermore a number of seaside towns appear to lack the confidence to use their heritage as part of their regeneration strategy. While they appreciate the contribution made by the historic environment, they can frequently falter when it comes to looking after it if there is the slightest hint of conflict with a more pressing social and economic agenda, even if the care and conservation of the historic environment might contribute to this outcome.

It is evident, too, that there is room for the better promotion and celebration of the special nature of seaside towns. This includes their geography and heritage as well as the efforts that have been made to maintain their attraction for visitors. It is surprising how rarely successful new investment is lauded even in resorts' own promotional brochures.

### GOOD QUALITY, GOOD VALUE

The economic benefits of design, set out in CABE's Value of Urban Design, apply to all towns and cities wherever they are situated and are worth repeating here. Good urban design:

- adds economic, social and environmental value and does not necessarily cost more or take longer to deliver

- delivers high investment returns for developers and investors by meeting a clear occupier demand that also helps to attract investors
- enhances workforce performance and satisfaction and increases occupier prestige
- delivers economic benefits by opening up new investment opportunities and delivering more successful regeneration
- helps to deliver places accessible to and enjoyed by all
- benefits all stakeholders - investors, developers, designers, occupiers, public authorities and everyday users of developments.

Pavilion, Bexhill's De La Warr Pavilion or the Jubilee Lido by the sea in Penzance, and that constructed palatial hotels like the Grand in Scarborough and Brighton or the more modest but landmark Midland on the seafront at Morecambe.

Already there are encouraging signs around the English coastline that we are at the beginning of a new era of imagination.

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### RESTORING CONFIDENCE

Imaginative architectural conservation and design are only a part of the portfolio of initiatives needed for successful regeneration but they lie at the heart of rebuilding the confidence of the seaside town, the same confidence that created Blackpool's Tower with its permanent circus arena and stunning ballroom, that magically stretched piers out over the sea, that designed Brighton's unique Royal



JAYWICK

# CRYSTAL PALACE BY THE SEA

A SENSITIVE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY MAKEOVER FOR A MODERNIST ICON

## PROJECT

Bexhill, East Sussex:  
De La Warr Pavilion

## CLIENT

Rother District Council /  
De La Warr Pavilion Charitable Trust

## CONTRACT VALUE

£6 million

## ARCHITECT

John McAslan & Partners

## THE SITE

On the edge of the sea, in the quiet town of Bexhill-on-Sea, is one of a small number of iconic 20th century buildings. In 1934, the 9th Earl of De La Warr, landowner and socialist mayor of Bexhill, commissioned the German/Russian partnership, Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff, to create a Modernist pavilion that would contain an entertainments hall, reading room, restaurant, conference hall, lounge bar, sun parlour and sundecks. The light airy building, which managed to capture the feeling of a transatlantic liner and the spirit of an era of sun worship, has been described as 'one of the few truly world-class buildings in Britain'. One of the first major welded steel-framed buildings in England, the De La Warr Pavilion is Grade I listed.

View of the  
De La Warr Pavilion  
from the recently  
completed bandstand



## THE BRIEF

The passing years and the seaside environment had not dealt kindly to the De La Warr and the 1991 brief for the architect was to restore the fabric of this important building while providing the facilities demanded by the public at the beginning of a new century.



Sea-facing façade  
of the Pavilion

## THE ARCHITECT'S APPROACH

John McAslan & Partners won a 1991 competition to refurbish the Pavilion and has stayed loyal to the project ever since. This has given the practice the unique advantage of understanding the building in minute detail, even down to a study of individual door hinges. The refurbishment has been undertaken in three stages – repairing part of the external fabric, suffering from decades of exposure to wind and salt; the creation of a new art gallery and the refurbishment of the 1000-seat auditorium. Work has now begun on a fourth, and ostensibly the most dramatic, phase. This will involve the completion of the restoration of the external fabric, a re-modelled entrance hall, additional gallery space, a new bar, café and restaurant and two architectural additions to the Pavilion itself, including a studio dedicated to arts education and life-long learning.

The challenge has been to provide new facilities, increase access and meet the demands of health and safety legislation without competing with the language of the Mendelsohn/Chermayeff original. This has required a methodical approach to conservation, detailed research into Mendelsohn's intentions, contemporary solutions and, in the case of the new additions, careful concealment to protect the Pavilion's graceful lines.

## HELPING REGENERATION

During the 1920s, while other seaside resorts, including neighbouring Eastbourne and Hastings, were actively aiming to attract tourists as a result of programmes of capital investment, Bexhill Council hesitated, anxious not to disturb the genteel character of the town. Early in 1933 Earl De La Warr, aware of the importance of tourism to Bexhill's future economy, began to advocate the idea of a new entertainment centre for Bexhill.

The De La Warr Pavilion was thus from the start an ambitious model, and perhaps also a lesson, for seaside town regeneration. It is in this spirit that the Pavilion's new trustee management board is approaching the final stages of the refurbishment. Its aim is to ensure that the Pavilion will 'serve as a catalyst towards the wider ambitions for Bexhill, as the

The new art gallery



town becomes an important centre for cultural tourism and a focus for sustainable economic tourism'. The Pavilion's management argues that the refurbishment programme will safeguard 30 jobs and create 10 new ones, as well as helping to contribute an estimated £3 million to the Bexhill economy. The broader hope is that restoring the Pavilion, to create a venue for the 21st

century, will help to trigger other developments both in the immediate vicinity and the wider area.

The De La Warr Pavilion initiative is one of a small number of developments to be given priority by the Hastings & Bexhill Task Force, a programme supported by the South East England Development Agency and the local authorities.

The iconic Pavilion staircase



## THE SOUND OF THE SEA

On the terrace below the Bexhill Pavilion is a more modest but no less imaginative creation. Reflecting the design philosophy of his practice, Niall McLaughlin's deceptively fragile new bandstand was developed through an enterprising process of collaboration that included working with children from six local primary schools. The result is a very contemporary take on a seaside tradition (Saltburn-by-the-Sea has recently recreated its bandstand but in a more familiar style).

For a number of reasons, the creation of the De La Warr bandstand was a prolonged process but this not only helped to ensure a greater understanding of the exposed site but also, according to McLaughlin, allowed time for 'a search for deeper connections between the bandstand and the Pavilion'.

The mobile bandstand, which is constructed from pre-fabricated stressed ply and fibreglass, won a RIBA Regional Award in 2002.



Niall McLaughlin's bandstand at Bexhill

### A NEW FOCUS TO THE CENTRE OF BOURNEMOUTH HAS ENCOURAGED SHOPPERS AND SHOPS

#### PROJECT

Bournemouth Square

#### CLIENT

Bournemouth Borough Council

#### CONTRACT VALUE

£1.9 million

#### ARCHITECT/DESIGN

Landscaping: Gillespies  
Café/camera obscura:  
Trinity Architecture

#### THE SITE

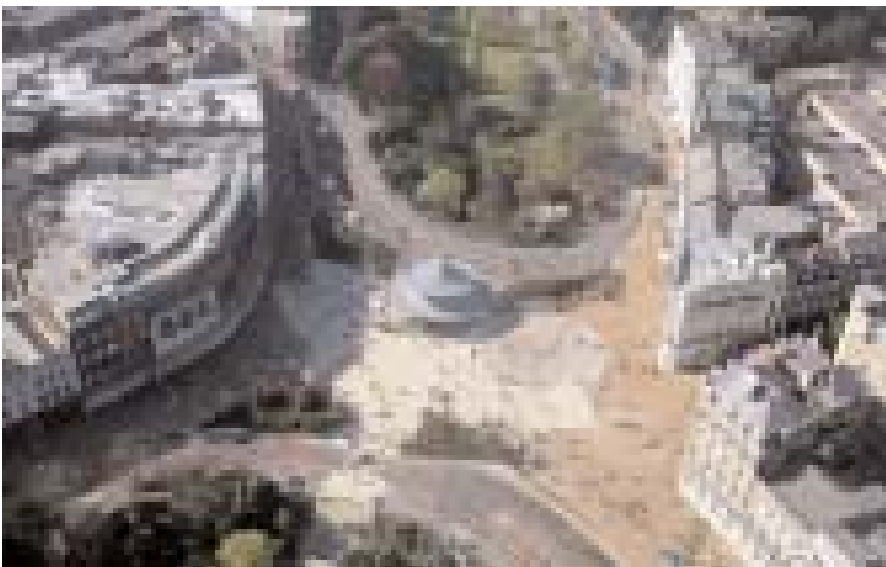
Bournemouth's busy town centre is divided by the gardens that flank the narrow river Bourne as it nears the sea. For many years the nodal point that joined the two halves of the town's shopping area was a busy traffic junction. During the summer, peak pedestrian flows across the square were about 4-5,000 people per hour.

#### THE BRIEF

Through this project Bournemouth Borough Council aimed to create a traffic-free hub in the centre of town that would allow easy movement of pedestrians from one side of town to the other; act as a central meeting point and create a new civic space.

the heart of the town, a place through which it is easy to move but which at the same time encourages visitors and shoppers to stop and relax. Throughout the year the square acts as a forum for a variety of public events.

The new square, which measures 13,500m<sup>2</sup>, contains a large mosaic by Maggy Howarth, featuring Neptune and mermaids, in pebbles, slate and limestone; a Millennium Flame and, on the north side, a café/camera obscura, designed by Trinity Architects. This two-storey circular building contains a ground floor café with a south-facing outdoor seating area for 200. On the first floor, accessible by lift, the town and gardens are reflected onto a



A bird's eye view of the square from the observation balloon

#### THE SOLUTION

The design solution was to construct a safe and comfortable environment for people and, at the same time, provide easy access to public transport. A new relief road took traffic away from the square while the use of adjacent roads was restricted to buses and taxis. Pedestrian subways were removed and new landscaping, aided by the square's parkland setting, helped protect the square from the sight and sound of the surrounding roads. The new square has become a focal point at

viewing table by a camera obscura, housed within the rotating clock at the top of the pagoda-shaped roof.

The overall design of Bournemouth Square was the responsibility of Gillespie's who were selected as a result of a design competition, following a successful Capital Challenge funding bid in 1997. The square, which opened in February 2000, won an RTPA Award for Planning Achievement in that year and was commended by the Civic Trust in 2001.

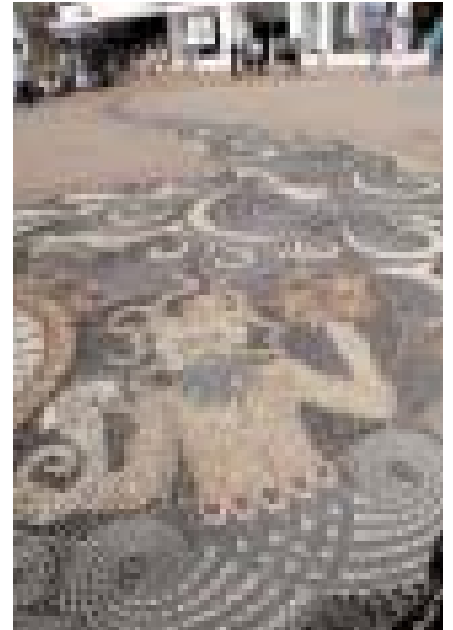
### AN IMPETUS TO REGENERATION

While the driving force for the new square was Bournemouth Town Council, the project has been enthusiastically supported by the commercial sector. Debenhams has made a major investment in its adjacent Bournemouth store while the square has encouraged new arrivals such as Borders bookshop. The success of the square has encouraged the Council to look at other parts of the town that have potential as gateways or sites for regeneration. These include the Triangle on the northeast edge of the central shopping area where there are now plans to create a new civic space. This is already the site of the new Bournemouth Library, designed by BDP, financed under the Private Finance Initiative and opened in the summer of 2002.

These developments form part of a wider re-assessment of Bournemouth's assets and potential. This has included a review of a number of seafront buildings – the International Conference Centre, built in the early 1980s and now in need of upgrading; the Grade II-listed,

1500-seat Pavilion Theatre, the Winter Gardens and Bournemouth Pier. As a result there is now a PFI proposal for the Pavilion and the conference centre and the operation of the Pier has been put out to tender. More controversially, the Winter Gardens site will be developed for housing. Away from the centre, there are plans to create an artificial reef for surfing at nearby Boscombe, once a popular family resort with a sandy beach and its own pier. Meanwhile Bournemouth's image has changed dramatically with the large influx of students to the university, art college and language schools in Bournemouth and nearby Poole. An estimated 83,000 students attend courses there each year. It is not surprising that for many young people, 'Bourmo' is now a major centre for clubbing.

In its own bid to attract students, the Arts Institute at Bournemouth makes reference to 'the fashionable new-look square, [which] with its mosaics and stylish camera obscura centrepiece, gives an atmosphere of continental chic, a perfect spot for people watching'.



The mosaic by Maggy Howarth



The camera obscura and pavement café

# FAR OVER THE SUMMER SEA

A CONTEMPORARY DESIGN SOLUTION  
TO FILLING A GAP IN AN HISTORIC SEAFRONT

## PROJECT

Brighton: Van Alen Building

## CLIENT

Berkeley Homes

## CONTRACT VALUE

Not available

## ARCHITECT

PRC Fewster

## THE SITE

The developer Berkeley Homes purchased what was in essence a brown field site on Brighton's Marine Parade in 1998. Formerly occupied by a petrol station, the site had for a long time been a gap in one of Brighton's finest seafront facades that includes a number of Regency houses by Charles Busby. Its high position on the cliff above Madeira Drive not only provides panoramic views across the English Channel but also made it necessary to find an architectural solution that would match the building line when viewed from the beachfront.

## THE SOLUTION

The architect's aim was to achieve an overtly modern building that remained in keeping with the character and historic shapes of its neighbours without attempting any kind of pastiche. Key to the architectural solution was to find a way to follow the shape of the site, to retain the building line between the premises on either side of the site and, at the same time, provide the required sea views from apartments at all levels. This was achieved by creating three matching stepped blocks, together with a smaller block containing the entrance to the



The apartment set in its seafront context

## THE BRIEF

Berkeley Homes' brief was to create the maximum number of two or three bedroom apartments, whilst ensuring that all were as wide as possible and all would have sea views. The apartments should have direct access to and from an underground car park. To the rear of the seafront building, two affordable homes should be added to an existing block of mews houses and four new houses constructed.

building from Marine Parade and a small concierge flat. The right angles of the blocks are softened on the south side by jutting curves of glass and white render which, when coupled with the use of stainless steel and the glass-fronted balconies, have strong echoes of 1930s Modernism.

By designing the apartments to run north south, all 37 units on six floors have sea views. All above ground level have balconies while the five three-bedroom duplexes on the top floor

have access to roof terraces. In most apartments the open plan living areas are on the seaward side while the bedrooms are to the rear, avoiding the noise of the road. There is a lift to all floors in each block.

Proposing a modern solution in an historic seafront location required considerable discussion with both the local authority and English Heritage. Plans for the building were considered by the Royal Fine Art Commission.

The Van Alen Building, named after William van Alen, the architect of New York's Chrysler Building, was completed in 2001.

### BRIGHTON'S REGENERATION

The Van Alen apartments were all sold within three hours of coming onto the market and in 2002 City Lofts sold off-plan 61 flats in the former Brighton Argus printing works in the lively North Laine conservation area. The speed of both these sales reflects Brighton's rising popularity as a place to live. Brighton and Hove officially became a city in January 2000. This accolade marked recognition of a process of regeneration, which had set out to restore the resort's fading charms. Led by the local authority, in partnership with the private sector, the programme focused on a number of development zones. These included the regeneration of the seafront and the creation of a cultural quarter; the refurbishment of the Museum and the Dome, and a new location for the Central Library designed by Bennetts Associates. Frequent attempts to revive Bartholomew Square on the edge of the Lanes have been rewarded by De Rijke Marsh Morgan's low but atmospheric Moshi Moshi Sushi restaurant, the first Moshi Moshi to be opened outside London. Under the Ocean Boulevard scheme, simple but effective streetscape improvements to the road that runs from the station down to the sea reduced vacancy rates from 55% in 1997 to 10% in 2001. Below the

seafront promenade, the restored boardwalk and arches contain a fishing museum, a smokehouse and a fish shop, while a pleasure boat runs from the beach in the summer. At the other end of the scale, there are major plans in hand for the redevelopment of the Marina on the east of the city, the site of the King Alfred leisure centre in the west and the 15-acre former Brighton station goods yard to be known as the New England Quarter.

Meanwhile another landmark seaside building languishes on the seafront, Wells Coates' art deco Embassy Court. This Grade II\* building, an exemplar of functional form, has been at the centre of a series of rescue attempts, as has Eugenius Birch's 1866 West Pier. Both buildings were included in English Heritage's Register of Buildings at Risk 2002.



Detail of the apartment block showing glass-fronted balconies

Brighton's Moshi Moshi restaurant



PARTNERSHIP AND RESTORATION HELP  
TO REGENERATE A STREET IN DECLINE

## PROJECT

Eastbourne, East Sussex:  
Seaside Road,

## CLIENT

Eastbourne Borough Council  
and private owners

## CONTRACT VALUE

£21 million

The former  
Manhattan cinema



## THE SITE

Seaside Road runs almost parallel to Eastbourne's seafront Grand Parade. With its attractive mixture of Victorian Italianate villas and terraces and Edwardian Dutch-gabled brick terraces, Seaside Road had provided an important focus for shopping and entertainment during the first half of the 20th century. The department store at the junction of Seaside Road and Terminus Road was occupied by one of a number of national retailers to trade there and Seaside Road boasted a theatre, the 1883 Royal Hippodrome, still operating today, and two cinemas, the 1906 Tivoli and the 1914 Manhattan. The opening of the Arndale Centre in 1980 marked the beginning of a slow decline for the road, culminating in the closure of the department store in 1998. Falling income made it difficult for owners to invest in the upkeep of their premises. The residential accommodation, often Edwardian examples of live/work space above retail premises, was in poor condition. The 1991 census showed that 10% of residents lived in accommodation that lacked basic amenities. An increasing number of vacant premises and boarded-up buildings hastened the deterioration of the once attractive streetscape. By 1999, 23% of properties were vacant.

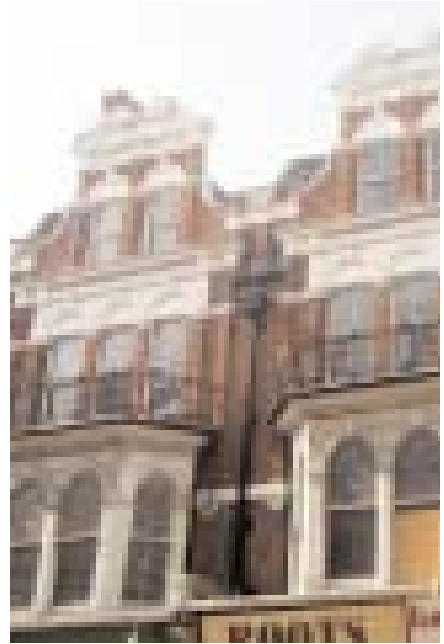
In July 2000, Eastbourne Borough Council launched its Seaside Road Regeneration Strategy.



The department store  
at the junction of  
Seaside Road and  
Terminus Road

## THE BRIEF

The aim of the Strategy was 'to address the physical, social and economic problems of Seaside Road and set targets and timescales for the regeneration of the area'.



Edwardian Dutch-gabled brick terraces  
above Seaside Road's  
retail premises

## THE SOLUTIONS

Seaside Road had been made a Conservation Area in 1990 and funding had already been found for restoration work focused on individual buildings. In 1993, English Heritage and the Council set up a shop-front restoration programme and in 1997 this was encompassed within a Conservation Area Partnership Scheme (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund) that enabled a £500,000 three-year programme of further restoration.

The creation of the Regeneration Strategy gave a new focus to the Borough Council's plans and enabled the development of funding programmes and the private sector partnerships that would be necessary

to achieve the strategy's aims. The Council formed an officer working group that brought together lead officers from environmental health, regeneration, housing, highways and planning enforcement who continue to meet monthly to coordinate development and funding programmes. In 2001 the Seaside Road programme was awarded a grant under English Heritage's Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) which over three years is contributing half the cost of a further £370,000 regeneration programme.

Multiple ownership - there are over 100 owners of property in Seaside Road - has on occasion made progress slow but, while the Borough has made it clear that it is prepared to use its powers of enforcement including compulsory purchase to achieve its aims, it has sought to develop a series of partnerships with the private sector. The Council's ability to offer funding incentives, including Empty Property Grants, has clearly helped this process.

Already there is evidence of success. Behind the restored frontage of the Manhattan Cinema are eleven housing association flats; Edwardian shop fronts have been recreated; in 2001 Southern Horizon Housing opened Houghton House, a new development of 18 flats and three shop units while, across the road, a former furniture store has been

redeveloped into 15 flats by the Northern British Housing Association. From the autumn of 2000 to the end of 2002, house prices in and around Seaside Road have risen on average by almost 57%, compared to a 42.5% increase in the Halifax House Price Index over the same period.

Together with East Sussex County Council and English Heritage, the Council is now developing a major street improvement and traffic management scheme including one-way traffic flow, pavement widening, improved lighting and street furniture.

### HELPING REGENERATION

The Seaside Road strategy is one of a number of public and private sector initiatives for the regeneration of Eastbourne. Other projects include the development of the Sovereign Harbour marina with its waterside cafés, bars, restaurants, shops and 3,000 new houses, 1500 of which are already built; the £10 million restoration of the Grand Hotel; plans for the creation of a new £8.5 million art gallery in a cultural quarter that already incorporates the Congress Theatre and the Winter Gardens, both Grade II listed. In January 2002 the Council reviewed its 2001 seafront strategy designed to make Eastbourne's seafront 'more attractive to families as well as providing many other attractions for visitors and residents'.

### HERITAGE ECONOMIC REGENERATION SCHEMES

HERS were launched by English Heritage in 1999. Delegated to local authorities and match-funded by a variety of partners, HERS offer grants towards the cost of repairing buildings, reinstating architectural details and features and enhancing the public realm. HERS schemes have focused on commercial and mixed-use conservation areas, which are important to the local economy and where employment-generating activities such as neighbourhood businesses and corner shops provide a focus for community life and prosperity. In seaside towns this extends to the repair of hotels such as the Royal Victoria Hotel in St. Leonards on Sea and terraces of guesthouses in Lowestoft. Other maritime buildings repaired in this way include the new Norfolk Nelson Museum in Great Yarmouth and the Halfpenny Pier and kiosk in Harwich. HERS provide an extremely flexible and accessible regeneration funding source and generate funding from a variety of sources. A 2002 study of 21 HERS schemes shows that on average £10,000 of heritage investment levers £46,000 match funding from private and public sources.



Many Seaside Road shop fronts have been re-furbished or recreated

## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS COLLABORATE TO MAKE FOLKESTONE A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

**PROJECT**

After years of decline, a series of public and private initiatives has begun to revitalise the town's fortunes; the projects range from Michael Hopkins and Partners' Saga HQ to Bond Architects' Chummy's Seafood Stall.

**THE TOWN**

Folkestone was once a busy cross-channel port and a popular holiday resort. The decision to close the car ferry in 2000 and the freight service from 2001 ended, at least temporarily, Folkestone's long history as a ferry port and, no longer maintaining its popularity as a seaside resort, Folkestone found itself in steady decline.



Saga's six-floor, glass-fronted office building framed by two glass towers

manages to take advantage of its site whilst avoiding overpowering the village below. It is framed by two glass towers that provide access by foot to the upper floors, surmounted by revolving ventilation units that achieve low-cost ventilation in the busy open plan offices. The second building, to the west, is an airy hall with a vaulted roof of tensioned fabric. Serving as a reception point for visitors, a home for the staff crèche, canteen, shop and training centre, the Pavilion acts as the communal centre of the Saga campus, representing the public face of Saga and the company's commitment to its community. Opened in 1998, the Pavilion has become an important and popular venue for local events and Saga ensures that there are no charges to the community groups using the facilities.

**WORKING TOGETHER**

Saga employs some 750 people in its new headquarters, part of a total company workforce in Folkestone of 2,200. Attracting and retaining high quality staff are among the company's key concerns. Central to maintaining improvements to Saga's job stability index is making Folkestone an attractive place to live. This requires not only affordable housing and good schools but also a pleasant environment for shopping, entertainment and leisure. A number of public/private partnerships have been developed to raise the quality of life in the town. Shepway District Council, Kent County Council and private businesses have worked together to develop regeneration programmes. Among the most important are proposals to establish a creative quarter based around the Old High Street and the sadly neglected Tontine Street, which surround a vacant piece of land known as Payers Park. Payers Park would be home to a new arts college, providing a focus and a driver for the revitalisation of the surrounding area.

**SAGA'S HEADQUARTERS**

The Saga group has been a Folkestone company since its inception. Its £22 million headquarters built in 15 hectares of parkland above the small village of Sandgate, just west of Folkestone, was commissioned from Michael Hopkins and Partners in 1996. The choice of site had been a controversial one and agreement to allow the construction required considerable consultation with the local community and the planning authorities.

**THE ARCHITECTS' RESPONSE**

Hopkins' approach was to create two buildings – a glass-fronted office building on six floors and a separate tented Pavilion. With stunning views across the Channel to the French coast, the large office building

The tented pavilion



## REGENERATION

Already there are early signs of success. On the harbour is Chummy's seafood stall. Strange Cargo, a carnival and celebratory arts company, is established in its offices and gallery in the Old High Street. The Sound Lounge, a music venue, has recently opened in Tontine Street. The Metropole Arts Centre provides a focus for the visual arts and acts as a motor for the creative quarter; the plans for a new sculpture park on The Leas and the burgeoning Folkestone Literary Festival. New conference facilities in Leas Cliff Hall will provide for up to 1500 delegates. A new shopping centre is planned for Bouverie Place. The new

Folkestone Enterprise Centre in Shearway Business Park has 66 office units and workshops, occupied by small and new businesses. On the edge of the proposed creative quarter; Kent County Council is completing a major renovation of the 1888 Folkestone Library and Museum with the help of funding and support from the Single Regeneration Budget, the Arts Council's Lottery Fund, the New Opportunities Fund, and the District Council. This includes a new foyer designed by David Adjaye and an entrance screen by Chris Ofili, winner of the 1999 Turner Prize. Importantly there is also strong media support for Folkestone's renaissance.

## FUTURE ISSUES

As always, successful regeneration depends upon a series of factors. Not least in the case of Folkestone, and East Kent as a whole, is the need to improve the transport infrastructure. While road access to London is good, travel around East Kent, vital for a workforce drawn from across the sub-region, is less satisfactory. Train links are poor – journeys to London, a distance of about 70 miles, are scheduled to take about 90 minutes and can be much longer. The prospect of the opening of the new Channel Tunnel Rail Link to commuter traffic will provide a major boost to Folkestone and the East Kent towns.

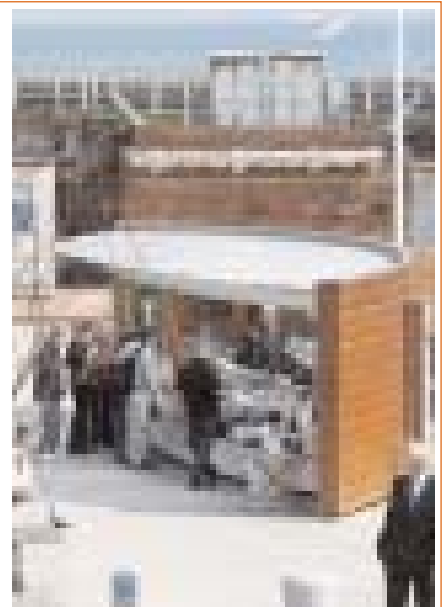
### A PLACE BY THE SEA

Chummy's Seafood Stall is set in Folkestone's waterfront area at the foot of the town. Part of a wider scheme led by Kent County Council and Shepway District Council to regenerate the area, this modest design shows that small can be both beautiful and effective. Tony Pye, the owner of two harbourside seafood stalls, held a competition, won by Norfolk-based Bond Architects, to create a single contemporary stall that would reflect the wider changes being led by the local authorities' regeneration team. The site stands on the south-western side of the harbour, looking on to the newly designed pedestrian area. The brief was simple – to create a temporary seafood stall for £45,000.

This modest project is an excellent example of what can be achieved, even with a relatively small budget, with an insistence on good design. Funded by the Arts Council's Arts 4 Everyone scheme, the architectural competition, coupled with the local authority's wider £1.5 million programme of harbour-side regeneration, helped to ensure a high quality and imaginative solution to the reinvention of an attractive but run-down corner of Folkestone.

As a result of this initiative, other local businesses have been improving their premises (one has even clad his caravan in cedar). According to the County Council there has been a noticeable increase both in the public use of this new civic space and in local economic activity. The waterfront improvement scheme was completed in the summer of 2001.

Over the past few years a number of seaside resorts have developed a reputation for offering good seafood in attractive surroundings. Further around the East Kent coast from Folkestone, the component parts of the Whitstable Oyster Fishery Co. – its beach-side fish restaurant, the East Quay Shellfish Bar and the seafront Hotel Continental – have all helped to attract a new clientele to this attractive coastal village. Meanwhile in Padstow, Rick Stein and other restaurateurs have helped to re-brand this North Cornwall port, with its working harbour and plethora of restaurants, as the culinary centre of the southwest. Over nearly 30 years, Stein's own businesses have grown from The Seafood Restaurant to two hotels, a café and a seafood cookery school. Padstow, with a population of about 3,000, now attracts about a million visitors a year.



Chummy's Seafood Stall: a modest project showing just what can be achieved on a small budget



## A NEW GARDEN PROVIDES INSPIRATION FOR REGENERATION IN A CONSERVATION AREA

**PROJECT**

Hunstanton, Norfolk:  
Boston Square  
Sensory Park

**CLIENT**

Borough Council of King's Lynn  
& West Norfolk

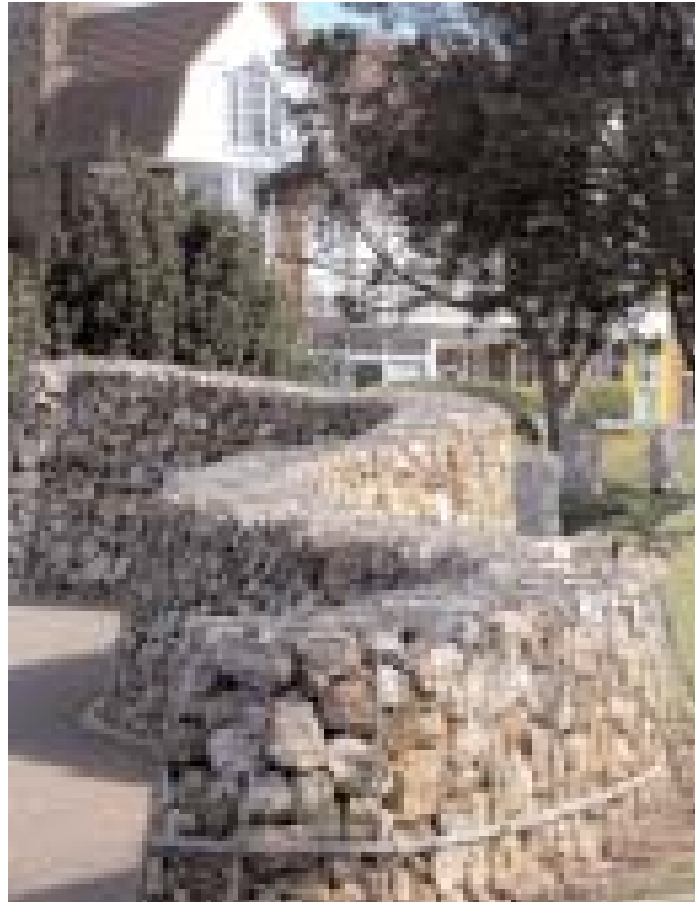
**CONTRACT VALUE**

£0.3 million

**ARCHITECT**

Jeremy Stacey Architects

Sculpted walls made  
of gabions of flint



The works of art  
extend the tactile  
nature of the garden

**THE SITE**

Although forming a prominent part of the Hunstanton Conservation Area, the centre of Boston Square had fallen into a sad state of neglect, being used as a car park. Its condition reflected the dilapidation of some of the large Victorian properties, which form the three-sided square that looks west to The Wash.

**THE BRIEF**

The architects' brief was to create a stimulating garden environment, giving special emphasis to the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities. It was set within the Government's Capital Challenge initiative and the Council's Local Agenda 21 objectives for sustainability. The brief drew attention to the site's natural slope towards the sea, existing trees, and proximity to the seafront, public walks and residential area. Emphasis was placed on public consultation and the inclusion of works of art.

**THE ARCHITECTS' RESPONSE**

Central to the architects' approach was consultation with potential users, including special needs groups, local authority members and officers. An extensive analysis of the half-hectare site – its geology, history and landscape context – formed the basis of discussions with local people. The architects deliberately kept an open mind and allowed these meetings to shape and refine the plans. This helped develop a sense of community involvement and, subsequently, local ownership of the new park.

**SHAPING THE SITE**

The scheme divided the park into three main areas, reflecting the geology and soils of Hunstanton. At the highest part of the site a 'cliff top' area mirrors Hunstanton's chalk meadow grassland while the area nearest to the sea represents the shingle beach; in between a lawn in the form of waves reflects the unique

strata of chalk and carrstone of the local cliffs. The site has been sculpted by terraces, platforms and walls made of gabions of flint. The design has incorporated most of the existing trees, including two Holm oaks that frame the view from the paved 'arrival court', allowing disabled visitors to alight safely from their vehicles. Paths around and across the park provide easy access for visitors with impaired mobility or in wheelchairs, as well as for parents with small children.

### PLANTING FOR THE SEASIDE

Two factors governed the choice of plants for the park. Most importantly, the planting had to be suitable for the seaside site. Secondly, the planting should stimulate the senses – touch, sound, sight and smell. Where possible, plants native to the area were used, especially in the shingle garden. Elsewhere grasses, evergreen shrubs, low maintenance perennials and bulbs give the garden year-round interest.



The materials used and the strong three-dimensional forms reinforce the park's sensory quality

### ART IN THE PARK

In partnership with the artist Elizabeth-Jane Grose, the architects commissioned a number of art works that have been incorporated into the garden design. These include an interactive water installation and a 'human sundial' where the viewer acts as the gnomon and, for visually impaired visitors, electronic sensors cause bells to ring out the time. Garden furniture has been specially created for the site, making subsequent additions of standard local authority waste bins seem somewhat out of place.

### HELPING REGENERATION

The garden opened in 2000 and subsequently won an award for its contribution to conservation and improvement in the countryside. The aim was to give new life to the centre of a square that had been allowed to decline. Enthusiastically supported by the district authority and the town council, the park has proved popular

with local residents and visitors. Importantly the presence of the new park has begun to help to regenerate the square itself. Significant improvements have been made to the two sentry houses that border the square on the seaward side.



Boston Square, a three-sided space with views to The Wash

### CLACTON MARINE GARDENS

Clacton's seafront gardens date from 1921. One of 34 gardens in coastal towns included in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens, they are set on a cliff top site stretching west from the Venetian Bridge which crosses Pier Gap, a cutting leading down to Clacton's 1871 pier. Recognising that Clacton's tourism market was changing, Tendring District Council's tourism and economic development departments reviewed a key stretch of seafront, visited by an estimated 2.5 million people each year. It was agreed to focus on improving Marine Gardens that, by the late 1990s, had become tired and overgrown. The authority successfully obtained a £416,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards a £554,000 project which included repairs to the Venetian Bridge.

The new gardens, designed by the Landscape Partnership, retain many of the original features, but the designers added a Mediterranean, and a Sensory Garden. Lighting improvements made the area safer at night, and access for disabled people was improved to all parts of the garden. A designated cycle path and play area were included with new interpretation panels providing information on planting.

Following the improvements, visitor numbers have increased and there are signs of new developments along the seafront road.

A HOUSING ASSOCIATION HELPS TO IMPROVE  
A VERY SPECIAL SEASIDE COMMUNITY**PROJECT**Jaywick Sands, Essex:  
Lotus Way**CLIENT**

Guinness Trust

**CONTRACT VALUE**

£2.5 million

**ARCHITECT**

Pollard Thomas &amp; Edwards

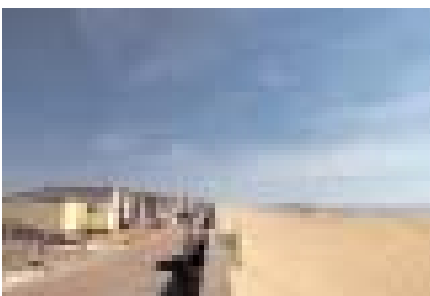
**THE SITE**

West of Clacton, overlooking an attractive stretch of sandy beach, is a highly idiosyncratic seaside community of large beach huts squeezed onto a plotland estate created in 1929 by the developer Jack Stigman. A motor-racing enthusiast, Stigman based the layout of the Brooklands Estate on the design of a Bentley radiator grille and named the roads after popular makes of car, Riley, Talbot and Morris. The very basic buildings that were erected on the site were owned mainly by Londoners and occupied under strict

Trust became involved in a regeneration programme involving both Tendring District Council and the local community in what was by then a Rural Priority Area, through which Jaywick Sands had already achieved a sea-front community centre, an Enterprise Centre and street lighting.

**THE BRIEF**

The brief was to design and build 40 new family homes including two- to three-bedroom houses and two-bedroom bungalows for the elderly and people with disabilities.

A group of 10 of the  
40 new homesPart of the existing  
Jaywick Sands  
community,  
overlooking the sea

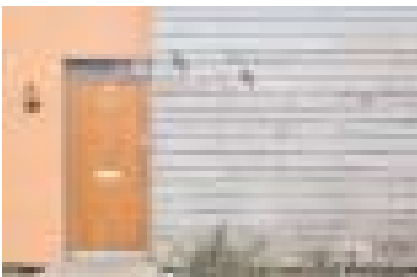
rules, including no overnight stays. Despite lacking even the most rudimentary facilities, in the years after the war, the Jaywick Sands community became a more permanent one. The devastating floods of 1953 cost 35 lives at the then unprotected resort. Attempts by the local authority in the 1970s to purchase and then demolish the estate failed and, though basic services were then provided, the quality of Jaywick Sands housing remained low. In 1997 the Guinness

**THE ARCHITECTS' RESPONSE**

Pollard Thomas & Edwards have created a group of red cedar-clad houses using prefabricated walls, floors and roofs, reflecting the timber-clad nature of many of the original estate properties. The homes face south towards the sea on a site behind the original Brooklands Estate, formerly occupied by a Butlins holiday camp. Design has taken careful account of the prevailing weather conditions and the maritime location and aims to create properties that



The exterior of the new houses reflects the appearance of many of the original estate properties



Detail

require low external maintenance. Use was made of passive solar gain and shading and the buildings are highly insulated to reduce running costs. The new homes are built around a small square, planted with fruit trees. A wetland nature habitat was created to deal with storm-water and natural species found on the site were relocated.

### HELPING REGENERATION

The original idea was that the 40 new homes, financed in part from a successful bid to the Capital Challenge fund for housing, would be used to re-house the occupants of the 40 worst properties on the estate. The vacated premises would be demolished and new homes built or open spaces created in the cramped estate. In the event, many of these residents proved unwilling to leave their homes. Nevertheless all 40 properties are now occupied by Jaywick Sands householders. There are plans to develop the second part of the site.

Although unemployment levels

remain high and vandalism on the older parts of the estate continues to be a problem, improvements are being made to existing properties and house prices are now rising rapidly. Lotus Way, a newly constructed road that runs through the site of the new properties, has already made a considerable difference to the whole estate and was adopted early in 2003. Hitherto the maintenance of all roads in the Brooklands estate has been the responsibility of Jaywick Sands Freeholders Association.

At a beachfront site on the edge of the estate, a private developer is now building three new blocks of apartments, a total of 18 flats with balconies facing the sea. The promotional website quotes both the new road and the creation of 40 homes at the rear of the existing village.

Lotus Way has won an RIBA Housing Design Award and a Civic Trust Rural Housing Award.

PUBLIC ART GIVES A NEW FOCUS  
TO MORECAMBE'S SEAFRONT



Morecambe's sea-front  
façade from the point-  
of-view of the popular  
sculpture of  
Eric Morecambe

### PROJECT

Morecambe, Lancashire:  
The Tern Project

### CLIENT

Lancaster City Council

### CONTRACT VALUE:

£21 million  
(coastal defences)  
£1.37 million  
(public art programme)

### THE SITE

Like many seaside resorts Morecambe's popularity had declined since the 1970s when competition and a lack of investment in an ageing infrastructure and historical assets began to take their toll. Possessing Britain's largest continuous inter-tidal coastline, Morecambe Bay, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is rich with migrant bird-life with an RSPB reserve covering 2500 hectares. At the same time Morecambe's exposed position has meant that, over the years, a series of storms severely damaged the seafront. Following a storm in 1990, Morecambe achieved funding to improve coastal defences and for derelict land clearance. The opportunity was taken to use this necessary work to give Morecambe an identity and create an attraction based around Morecambe's natural setting.

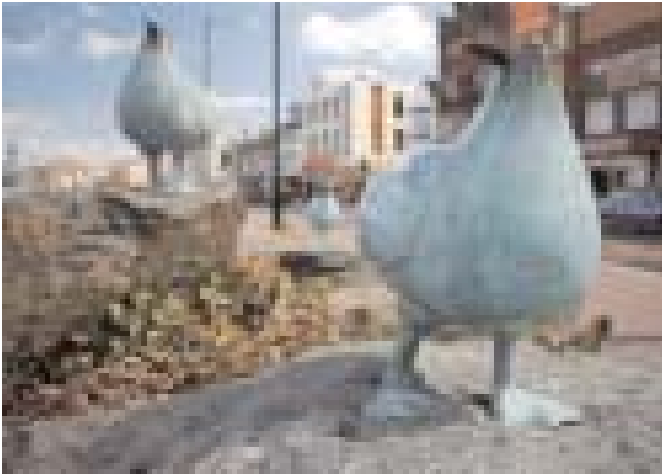
### THE AIMS

The development project had two aims:

- to create new breakwaters to provide headland protection, to repair or replace parts of the existing seawall and to introduce artificial sand nourishment to sections of the foreshore
- to introduce features of the bird-life into the new coastal defences and Promenade. The objective was to make these high quality, attractive, educational, durable and fun

### THE APPROACH

The Tern Project, as the public art programme is named, involved a project team made up of engineers, landscape architects, planners, artists, sculptors and education officers from the RSPB.



Shona Klinoch's seagulls

A team of artists, led by Gordon Young, was appointed. Perhaps the most successful of the new works, *A Flock of Words*, is the result of a collaboration between Gordon Young and the London-based design company, *why not associates*. There are five more works on the Stone Jetty, all that remains of the 1853 harbour that now forms a central part of the new sea defences. More art draws the visitor along the seafront, past the new RNLI Lifeboat Station. Lighting by Jonathan Spier has added to the Promenade's attractions.

The most popular of the new work is the lively sculpture of Eric Morecambe (by Graham Ibbeson) surrounded by a typographical memory of the entertainer, again by Gordon Young and *why not associates*, overseen by some delightfully chubby seagulls by Shona Klinoch. Morecambe was an enthusiastic supporter of the RSPB and the sculpture portrays him as an ornithologist, binoculars around his neck. Following the Queen's unveiling of this statue in 1999, tourism enquiries doubled and this much-photographed sculpture has become a leitmotif of much of Morecambe's promotional material.

The project has not been without its challenges and at times both artists and engineers have been on steep learning curves. Not least of the difficulties has been to find a way of meeting the technical demands

of artists while at the same time being able to deal with the potential damage from the harsh seaside environment.

Funding for the sea front work came from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Single Regeneration Budget, local authorities and the private sector. The art programme was supported by the Arts Council's Lottery Fund and North West Arts Board.

### IMPACT ON REGENERATION

The Tern Project has been focused on the seafront and on the road leading to the new shopping and entertainment precinct containing a supermarket, four-screen cinema, the Festival Hall Market and a bowling alley.

Overall the project has undoubtedly been a popular success and helped to ensure that three million day visitors still visit Morecambe each year, although only a tenth of this number stay overnight. Critics have commented that, in resorts where the sole emphasis has been placed on the seafront, too little attention is given to adjacent roads and buildings. Morecambe is no exception and attention will soon need to be turned to the town behind the seafront. Moreover the developments along the new sea defences have served to emphasise the sorry state of Oliver Hill's important 1933 Midland Hotel, with

### ART ON THE SEAFRONT

Another much-praised example, this time of artists collaborating with architects, is Bridlington's south promenade where Bruce McLean, Chris Tipping and Mel Gooding worked with Bauman Lyons to create a public space that, together with the new Headland Café, has helped to lift visitor numbers to this East Yorkshire town. Although it is beginning to show signs of premature ageing, the effects of sun and salt, the Bridlington promenade complete with new beach huts and showers is a fine example of a lengthy promenade held together by good design and bucketfuls of wit and style.

Like the constantly changing sea itself, seaside art can be ephemeral like David Ward's light-work 'Pier and Ocean' at Lowestoft or Esther Rowlandson's light decks for Brighton.

The Flock of Words



sculptures by Eric Gill and a mural by Eric Ravilious, and the Grade II\* Victoria Pavilion (1896) by Mangnall and Littlewood.

There are promising signs that the Midland will be restored. Only time will tell whether on this occasion this Grade II\* building will at last be recovered from its current dilapidated state and brought back to its former glory.

**PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS HELP TO REINVENT A SEASIDE TOWN**

### PROJECT

Newquay, Cornwall:  
Beach Hut Café and  
Extreme Academy

### CLIENT

Extreme Academy

### CONTRACT VALUE

£0.5 million

### ARCHITECT

Andrew Dart

### THE SITE

Newquay is the largest of the seaside towns on the North Cornish coast, a traditional bucket and spade resort. Although it still has about 4.3 million visitors a year and achieves 7 million bed-nights annually, it has shared with others a period of under-investment. Many hotels are showing their age and there has been a consequent fall in the number of visitors, a decline made more painful by the relatively short summer season.

Since the 1920s, Newquay's sandy beaches have been a magnet for surfers and the town claims to have been the birthplace of European

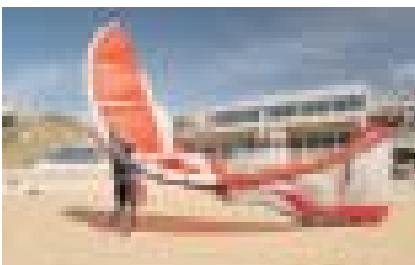
Watergate Bay sits at the east end of Newquay. The 65-room Watergate Bay Hotel is at its most easterly point, close to a car park and easy access to the two-and-a-half-mile long beach, which is privately owned. At the foot of the access road are the adrenaline-pumping Extreme Academy and the Beach Hut Café, developed on the site of a small takeaway café and beach shop.

### THE BRIEF

The brief for the Beach Hut Café and Extreme Academy was an unusual one: 'to create a ski resort on a Cornish beach'.



The design of the new extreme sports centre sits comfortably in its seaside setting



Kite surfing, just one of the adrenalin-pumping sports available to learn on the beach

surfing. The development of the wetsuit has turned this into a year-round activity enabling surfers to take advantage of different weather conditions. The attraction of the surf beaches for swimmers, walkers and spectators – even storm watchers – has now been recognised as a major asset for Newquay, encouraging the town to rebrand itself as the surf capital of Britain.

### THE SOLUTION

The Beach Hut bistro and bar form the focus for the seaside sports centre. The two-storey timber building with its slate pitched roof is in two adjoining parts. The 80-seat bistro and kitchen occupy the upper floor of the larger section with views out across the beach and the surf. The building contains an office and a meeting room, capable of hosting small

seminars. There are two wooden balconies on the side of the bar and bistro for summer use and a small terrace joins the two parts of the building at first floor level. A wooden staircase leads down from the bar terrace to the beach. In the adjacent smaller section is an extreme sports shop, changing rooms and tuition centre, offering coaching in surfing, windsurfing, land yachting, kitesurfing, wave skiing, buggying and mountain boarding.

In keeping with its setting and lifestyle, the building has a casual, almost rough and ready character; even more so internally where colour-stained wood has been used to resemble driftwood washed up onto the beach below. Like the balconies, the full run of windows with their painted frames takes full advantage of the location.

### HELPING REGENERATION

The Beach Hut is a symbol of the re-invention of Newquay. The highly appropriate nature of its design has undoubtedly captured the imagination of its clientele and the business now employs 65 staff during the peak summer season and ten throughout the year. Its 1999 business plan forecast an annual turnover of £190,000. By 2002 this figure had already reached £1.1 million. In 2000 the Academy won a Business Award for Entrepreneurship in the Devon and Cornwall Millennium Awards. The 2001 World Pro Kite Surfing Championships took place on Watergate Beach and in 2002 it was the venue for the first European Kitesurfing Championship.

27 of Newquay's hotels are now open all year round, a clear sign of the way in which the Newquay season has stretched beyond the summer months. The Headland Hotel has recently opened a number of self-catering cottages and apartments. New restaurants have opened on Harbour Beach and Tolcarne Beach. Cornwall County Highways are



The wooden balcony running along the side of the building offers fantastic views of the sea and beach activities

undertaking a major scheme to improve traffic management in the centre of town and there are proposals for a new bus station.

With the active support of the South West Regional Development Agency and Restormel District Council, the town has established a working party that brings together the public and private sector to work collectively for the regeneration of Newquay. Recognising the crucial importance of partnership for the future of the resort, the primary aim of this Core Group is to get Newquay to speak with a clear voice. An early action will be to commission a land-use masterplan.

Surfing is already estimated to be worth £40 million a year to the resort, witnessed by the number of surf shops that fill the town. It is now estimated that 60% of businesses in Newquay benefit from the surfing industry. Surfing's attraction not only to the traditional young surfer but also to a new breed of wealthier and older enthusiasts has given Newquay a bigger market. The success of Ryanair's low-cost daily flights from

Stansted to Newquay has made the surf beaches easily reachable from London and the southeast. Flights are operating at 70% capacity and Ryanair reached its first-year target of 100,000 passengers six weeks ahead of schedule. The company has increased the frequency of its flights and is considering introducing new routes.



The increasingly characteristic image of Newquay

### THE PIONEER OF CULTURAL REGENERATION SET A CONTEMPORARY DESIGN STANDARD

#### PROJECT

St Ives, Cornwall: Tate St Ives

#### CLIENT

Cornwall County Council/Tate Gallery

#### CONTRACT VALUE

£3.4 million (including land purchase)

#### ARCHITECT

Evans & Shalev

#### THE SITE

The site of the derelict St Ives gasworks was steeply sloping and badly contaminated but as the site for a Tate Gallery in St Ives commanded a superb position, overlooking the sweep of Porthmeor Beach.

#### THE BRIEF

The brief stated that 'the building should be stimulating, imaginative and excellent. It should be equally attractive to the arts enthusiast and to the family on holiday', and that the design of the gallery should be

and a rooftop café. Funding came from local authorities, Europe and the private sector; including £125,000 raised locally. The gallery opened in June 1993.

#### HELPING REGENERATION

Tate St Ives was perhaps the pioneer of a new cycle of seaside town regeneration and set a high standard in terms of ambition and design. Although there was some local opposition, the local authorities and many local businesses were quick to see the potential economic benefits



The proximity of the gallery to the beach reinforces its appeal to arts enthusiast and family visitor alike



Installation by Jim Lambie

'a building of architectural significance'. The brief also set out requirements for design and environmental conditions that would enable loans from the Tate Gallery's collections.

#### THE ARCHITECTS' APPROACH

Evans and Shalev were appointed as the result of an RIBA competition. The two architects knew St Ives well; this was reflected in the design in which the curves of the Loggia and the rotunda recall the former gasometer while the honey-coloured stone echoes the sand of the beach below. In addition to the five galleries the building also includes an education room, a bookshop

that the new gallery could bring.

Early estimates were for 75,000 visitors a year. In the event, first-year attendances reached 200,000. By January 2000, there had been more than 1.2 million visits to the gallery, 78% from outside Cornwall and an estimated 15% from overseas. Having originally estimated a permanent staff of six, supported by part-time staff and volunteers, Tate St Ives now employs 69 full- and part-time staff, while a number of external jobs have been created in providing services to the gallery. Inevitably this success has placed a strain on a building designed for fewer visitors and a smaller number of staff.

## A CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

Falmouth houses the National Maritime Museum Cornwall, a highly praised new museum designed by Long & Kentish. This £28 million landmark building has begun to have an effect on the regeneration of its former industrial site, forming one side of a new Museum Square that will house shops, cafés, offices, a cinema and apartments. Attendances during the opening ten weeks reached 112,000, almost three times the forecast estimate. 50 new jobs have been created and the museum is supported by 150 volunteers.

In Poole, the 1970s Lighthouse Arts Centre has been given an £8.5 million face-lift by Alan Short Associates, opening up the public spaces, and using glass, steel, colour and light to create a contemporary atmosphere. Poole is also home to the Study Gallery, a £2.4 million white cube by Horden Cherry Lee Architects for Bournemouth and Poole College Services. Half of this three-storey building is occupied by a 12-metre glass atrium while the other half houses the College's contemporary art collection, a range of education



The new National Maritime Museum in Cornwall



The Tidal Zone: the museum's underwater gallery

facilities and support services. Both buildings provide a cultural component to Poole's waterfront regeneration that will include a graceful bridge designed by Wilkinson Eyre.

In Margate ambitious plans are afoot to create a new contemporary art gallery to commemorate JMW Turner's connections with this East Kent resort, long suffering from economic decline. The Anglo-Norwegian partnership of Snøhetta and Spence's new gallery, alongside a Grade II-listed stone pier, will form a crucial part in the regeneration of Margate's Georgian old town and the wider economic renaissance of East Kent.



The Flotilla: the gallery exhibits a changing programme of boats from the Museum's collection

To some extent these pressures have been shared with the town with increased demands on public transport, traffic movement and parking. For most, these disadvantages have been outweighed by the benefits. St Ives portrays all the signs of success – year-round activity and employment, new restaurants and cafés, a growing number of galleries, craft and jewellery shops and rising house prices.

In 1994/95 Cornwall County Council undertook five economic impact studies on the effect of the Tate both in St Ives itself and across Cornwall.

These showed that the Gallery had already had a significant impact in the town and some impact across the

whole of Cornwall. About 70% of businesses surveyed believed that the opening of the Tate had benefited their own trade. 85% believed that the Gallery had benefited the town. The West Cornwall Tourist Board survey in the same series showed that 58% of the visitors to the Tate gave a visit to the gallery as their main reason for coming to Cornwall.

Council officers estimated that less than a year after the Gallery's opening, the Tate had increased sales in St Ives businesses by 5%, representing an increase in employment of up to 15 fulltime equivalents. At the end of 1998, hoteliers told The Guardian of an estimated 20% increase in business.

The characteristic quality of St Ives light, from the café window



# THERE'S A SMALL HOTEL...

DESIGN AND INDIVIDUAL DRIVE COMBINE TO RESTORE A FADING HOTEL

**PROJECT**

St Mawes, Cornwall:  
Hotel Tresanton

**CLIENT**

Olga Polizzi

**CONTRACT VALUE**

£2 million

**DESIGNER**

Olga Polizzi

**THE SITE**

Hotel Tresanton is set on a steep hill above the coastal road that snakes around St Mawes harbour. The building, which incorporates a small building from the 1760s and the site of a house destroyed by fire in the early 1950s, is built on several levels cut into the hillside and has extensive views over the bay. Well known and popular in the 1950s and 60s, the 18-room hotel was a former yacht club. By the mid-90s, Tresanton had fallen on hard times. Open only in the summer, it had suffered a sharp decline in visitor numbers and employed only a small number of staff. The hotel was purchased by Olga Polizzi, Design Director for Rocco Forte Hotels, in 1997. St Mawes has a year-round population of about 2,000, more than doubling in the summer months.

**THE DESIGNER'S APPROACH**

With the help of a local architect, Peter Bailey, and using a local builder, Polizzi set about modernising the hotel. Major work involved forming new corridors by removing the back of the existing hotel building. This meant that the existing corridors that had divided bedrooms could be incorporated into the bedrooms, giving each a lobby and en suite bathroom. The former staff accommodation situated at the top of the site was turned into a further series of bedrooms. Two two-bedroom family suites were created, each having its own terrace. The restaurant overlooks the sea with a terrace for summer dining and the hotel now also has an adaptable cinema and conference facility. Not surprisingly, high quality design has been a strong element of the hotel's



The hotel in context

**THE BRIEF**

The owner-designer set herself the task of turning a run-down family hotel into a comfortable contemporary hotel with 26 rooms, all with en suite bathrooms and sea views, capable of operating throughout the year. The aim was to revive a casual but elegant atmosphere in keeping with its seaside location.

refurbishment and the result is an individual hotel that reflects its maritime setting.

The marine environment has required the use of building materials and paints that can withstand winter winds, as well as the sun. Even so, the facade of the hotel requires repainting on an annual basis. The plastic windows that scar the face of so many seaside town refurbishments have been carefully avoided.



The hotel is built on several levels on a site that incorporates an existing building

View out to sea: the relationship of the hotel to its marine environment is key

### HELPING REGENERATION

Exploiting a niche market, Tresanton is now open the whole year round. Comparatively expensive for Cornwall, it is nevertheless achieving 85% occupancy throughout the year with the majority of guests coming from London and the southeast.

The hotel employs over 50 people all year round with this number rising to over 60 in summer months. A number of staff are recruited from outside Cornwall but many are local and include former students from Cornwall College. The hotel also makes a point of providing places for Cornish trainees and employing a number of people with learning difficulties. While Hotel Tresanton is independent of Rocco Forte Hotels, it has been able to take occasional advantage of their training programmes, which can offer a particular perspective normally unavailable to staff in smaller hotels.

In addition to providing some local employment, Hotel Tresanton purchases most of its produce from local suppliers. It spends about £70,000 annually on meat through a local butcher and a similar amount on locally caught fish. Small shops in the town are now open all year round and other local hotels and pubs are undergoing refurbishment. House prices are rising rapidly.

Both Hotel Tresanton and St Mawes benefit from the wider regeneration of Cornwall. Improved roads and low-cost flights into Newquay airport have made west Cornwall more accessible. The hugely successful Eden Project has provided a major boost to Cornish tourism, already helped by the Tate at St Ives and now with the addition of the National Maritime Museum at Falmouth.

Regeneration projects frequently depend upon a project champion for their success. Sometimes this might be a local authority, a housing association, on other occasions it might be an individual like the 9th Earl De La Warr in Bexhill or Olga Polizzi in St Mawes.



St Mawes harbour

## THE END OF THE PIER SHOW

A BOLD NEW DESIGN AT THE END OF SOUTHPORT'S PIER  
COMPLEMENTS THE TOWN'S SEAFRONT REGENERATION

Made of steel, glass and aluminium, the pavilion, complete with swooping roof, stands on a concrete slab on two rows of piles



### PROJECT

Southport, Merseyside:  
Southport Pier Pavilion

### CLIENT

Sefton Borough Council

### CONTRACT VALUE

£0.5 million

### ARCHITECT

Shedkm Liverpool

### THE SITE

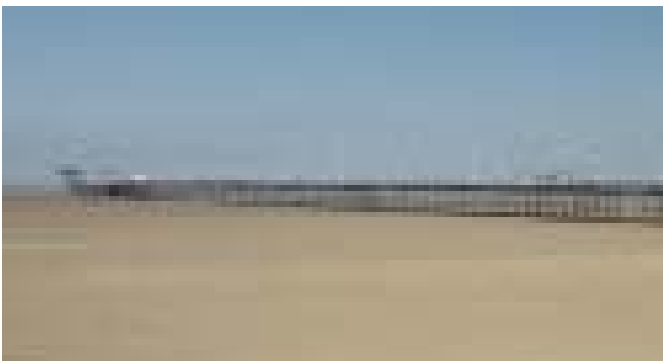
Southport Pier opened in 1860. It remains the country's second longest pier, stretching for more than a kilometre. Although the pier had been listed as Grade II in 1976, 14 years later the local authority applied for its demolition, a proposal that was only narrowly defeated. In 1998 it was closed for safety reasons. Two years earlier, Sefton Council and the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry formed the Southport Pier Trust and, by 1999, had successfully raised funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and from the European Merseyside Objective I Programme to begin a two-phase restoration programme.

### THE BRIEF

The brief set for architects entering the 1997 competition was a simple one – to create a pavilion for year-round use at the end of Southport Pier, housing 'a café/restaurant, a multi-function interpretation area and a reception/shop'.

### THE ARCHITECT'S SOLUTION

Shedkm, a Liverpool-based firm, set out to create a contemporary building that would complement the Victorian pier. Rather than place the pavilion on the pier itself they proposed a new building, moored like a ship alongside the pier head, giving the added advantage of a construction that would move independently of the pier in rough weather. The result is a delicate steel, glass and aluminium pavilion with a swooping roof, standing on a concrete slab on two rows of piles. An 'air floor' provides heating out of season and the circulation of cool air in the summer. The cantilevered roof on the pier-side will provide shelter for the three-car tram when it runs once more along the newly restored tram-track.



At more than one kilometre long, Southport Pier is England's second longest

## HELPING REGENERATION

Southport's longevity as a seaside resort owes much to the town's capacity to change and develop. Planning mistakes hindered this development but a series of new initiatives has helped to place the town in the UK's top ten short break and conference resorts, attracting visitors throughout the year for its access to its six golf courses and increasingly to the nature reserves to the north.

The history of Southport Pier is almost a lesson in regeneration in itself. Frequent fires, storm damage and threats of demolition have long dogged its existence. The restoration of the pier and the creation of its new pavilion have been accompanied by a five-year programme to strengthen the town's sea defences. The new £8.6 million Marine Drive sea wall has provided protection from tidal flooding for the central seafront, enabling the development of new leisure and entertainment facilities, close to the sea. Sadly the new £23 million Ocean Plaza shopping centre turns its back on the sea, despite its waterfront position.

Fortunately the floodwall that protects Marine Drive has itself been graced with new seating and lighting and some strong examples of public art, much of it with a marine theme. The works on the seafront are part of a wider programme, co-ordinated by Partnership Art, now Eaton Waygood Associates. This includes a towering sculpture of 'Professor' Gadsby, a one-legged diver who used to entertain the crowds by diving into the sea from the end of the pier.

Linking the seafront will be the new Marine Parade Bridge for which Babbie are the structural engineers and Nicoll Russell Studios, the architects. This £5.7 million project, which is due to be completed in 2004, will much improve the transport links between the town centre and the seafront. Further along the Promenade, the former Promenade



The pavilion's construction means that, in rough weather, it moves independently of the Pier itself

In the distance, 'Professor' Gadsby, part of a programme of art along the seafront



Hospital, built in 1862, has been converted into the Marine Gate apartments by Blackthorn Homes.

The proposed Southport Eco Visitor-Centre on the Esplanade will be the transfer point for the town's park-and-ride programme. This new building aims to be 'a practical demonstration of sustainable construction and renewable energy' and will include an integral 30-metre high wind turbine to generate electricity for the building, solar and photovoltaic panels to assist with heating, and water collection technology. It will incorporate a classroom for up to 60 children and an exhibition area promoting the themes of energy, transport and tourism.

## WALKING ON WATER

Piers have long been a feature of the British seaside resort, first as a way of enabling visitors to reach shore dry-footed, and then to allow promenaders the health-giving experience of walking out across the sea. By the last quarter of the 19th century, piers became the must-have for resorts eager to increase visitor numbers. By 1900 almost 100 piers stretched out from the British coast. Damage from fire, storm and neglect, the high costs of maintenance and the breaching of many piers during the 1939/45 war have reduced that number to 55, and some of those, like Brighton's once magnificent West Pier, are fighting for survival. However, the attraction of the pier remains strong and many resorts (including Clevedon, Saltburn, Southend, and Swanage) have sought to restore their piers, often with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The 'first new pier of the new millennium', in Southwold, opened to the public in 2001.

IMAGINATIVE APPROACHES TO LESS  
APPEALING ASPECTS OF URBAN LIFE

**PROJECT**

Ventnor and Eastbourne  
Waste Water Outlets

**CLIENT**

Southern Water

**CONTRACT VALUE**

Ventnor £14 million  
Eastbourne £42 million

**ARCHITECT**

Ventnor: Rainey/Petrie/Johns  
Eastbourne: Philip Parker,  
Eastbourne Borough Council

Eastbourne Waste  
Water Outlet viewed  
from the beach...



...and Ventnor

**THE SITES**

The European Bathing Water Directive sets down minimum and mandatory standards for the quality of seawater around European coasts. Both these sites form part of Southern Water's programme to improve the quality of seawater around the southeast coast. Much of this work involves engineering work below ground but inevitably these sites, on the edge of the sea, demanded sensitive and imaginative solutions to the necessary above ground structures. The Eastbourne wastewater treatment plant is located on Langney Point on Prince William Parade, a prime seafront location close to the Sovereign Harbour marina, the Ventnor pumping station at Lion Point. This is a prominent site

at the foot of the steep road that twists its way around the Victorian Cascade Gardens and the point where the Royal Victoria Pier, demolished in 1993, once reached the shore. The site offered stability in an area of coastline famously prone to landslip.

**THE BRIEF**

The Eastbourne brief to the architect was to create a works superstructure that would suit its local environment while at Ventnor the design of surface works for a large sewage tank and pumping station had to turn a functional facility into an attractive, useable feature for tourists and visitors and offer some of the opportunities that used to be provided by the pier:



Top: Eastbourne Bottom: Ventnor

**ARCHITECTS' SOLUTIONS**

The wastewater treatment works at Eastbourne had to be built over a large underground box, the size of a football pitch, containing the main treatment processes. Above ground, a building was required to house the control room, electrical distribution and a sludge processing plant. The agreed solution was a red-brick building designed to resemble a Napoleonic fort, complementing the 1804 redoubt at Seahouses, part of the chain of Martello towers built to defy Napoleonic invasion. External facilities include car parks and public toilets, a tearoom and extension to the town's promenade. A design-and-build contract resulted in disappointment over some of the detailing and the original plans to allow public access onto the fort have not been realised for health and safety reasons. Work was completed in 1996. Of the total cost, almost 90% was spent on the work underground.

The Ventnor building conceals both a pumping station, carrying treated and stormwater three kilometres into the sea, and a storage pump tank holding up to two million litres of stormwater, preventing it spilling onto the beach in heavy rain. The architects set out to create a building that would be a major feature in this visually sensitive Victorian resort. The

bandstand above the control building acts as a covered viewing platform, giving panoramic views of Ventnor Bay and St Catherine's Point. Much of the structure is reinforced concrete but the building is a mixture of stone, render and marine detailing to reflect its seaside location with strong echoes of the former pier. A series of inlaid tiles indicate distances from Ventnor to other towns and cities around the world. The surrounding setting allows access to Ventnor's popular sand and shingle beach.



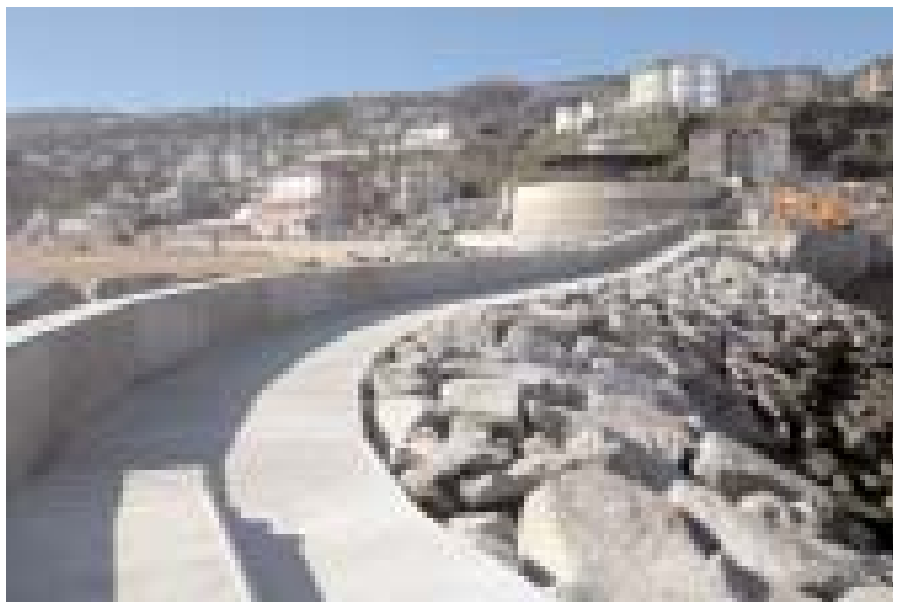
The red brick building at Eastbourne houses the control room and a sludge processing plant

### HELPING REGENERATION

Before the building of the Langney Point treatment plant in Eastbourne, wastewater was released into the sea through a short outfall pipe. The works now treat 74 million litres of waste each day before releasing treated water 3.2 kilometres out to sea. Clean seawater is an essential part of a successful seaside resort but treatment works have not always proved to be an attractive part of the landscape. Both these buildings represent an imaginative approach to what are important but potentially less appealing aspects of urban life.

The Eastbourne 'redoubt' was originally built at the edge of town, since its completion in 1996, there has been considerable housing development nearby. This has been achieved without concern or complaint. Indeed the building has become a tourist attraction in its own right. The surrounding area is, however, poorly maintained, a point noted in the Borough Council's new seaside strategy.

Below the Ventnor bandstand, a new fair-weather haven is being constructed for the use of commercial and recreational craft as part of the Eastern Esplanade development. The Isle of Wight Council has drawn up a brief for further mixed-use development, possibly including a restaurant, seafood preparation and shop, a chandlery and a sailing club.



Ventnor conceals a pumping station carrying treated and storm water three kilometres into the sea, and a storage tank holding up to two million litres of storm water

### A FARM BY THE SEA?

Just north of Scarborough on the Heritage Coast, close to the Cleveland Way long-distance footpath stands a typical Yorkshire farmstead. This new grouping of buildings, designed by York-based, Brierley Groom & Associates, includes farmhouse, barns and silos, all ingeniously disguising a large wastewater treatment works. The Scalby Lodge farm works were completed in 2002 at a cost of £27 million as part of Yorkshire Water's £120 million CoastCare programme. This programme has been supported by two pressure groups for clean seawater, Surfers Against Sewage and the Sons of Neptune, as well as the Marine Conservation Society.

## WINDOWS ONTO WHITBY

A STRIKING NEW ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTION  
BREATHES LIFE BACK INTO 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY DERELICTION

### PROJECT

Whitby Abbey Visitor Centre

### CLIENT

English Heritage

### CONTRACT VALUE

£2.847 million

### ARCHITECT

Stanton Williams

### THE SITE

The medieval Whitby Abbey stands on the southern headland above the popular harbour town of Whitby. The abbey ruins were handed into the care of the Ministry of Works in 1936 and are now the responsibility of English Heritage. The creation of a new visitor centre formed part of the Whitby Abbey Headland Project, a programme of archaeological research, evaluation and excavation work, undertaken by English Heritage during the 1990s. After considering a number of potential options for a new centre on the site, including a new building, it was proposed that it should be created within the nearby Banqueting House, built between 1669-72 by Sir Hugh Cholmley as an embellishment to the Cholmley family home. The building lost its roof in a storm in 1790 and has stood empty ever since. The project, which included a new ticket office and car park on the south side of the Abbey as well as a

major reassessment of the site and its environs, was a joint initiative of English Heritage, Scarborough Borough Council and the present owners of the House, the Strickland Estate. Major funding came from the European Regional Development Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### THE BRIEF

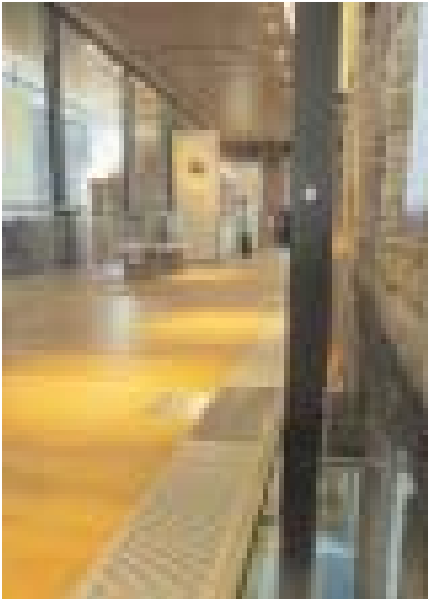
To create a visitor centre which would link the visitor experience to the whole of the Abbey site, from Saxon times through the 17th century to the present day.

### THE ARCHITECTS' SOLUTION

Stanton Williams were appointed in 1998 to design a new building within the shell of the ruined Cholmley House. Their elegant response is a steel and glass frame that sits behind the 17th century façade, carefully avoiding disturbance to buried archaeology and to the fabric of the existing building. Much has been done

The sophisticated relationship between the new intervention and the historic Whitby Abbey





The quality of design, materials and construction is a key contribution to the success of the project



The approach across the restored cobbled gardens

to retain the feeling of the original building and the initial approach across the restored 17th century cobbled gardens, discovered in good condition during excavation of centuries of soil, gives few hints as to the true nature of what lies ahead.

The centre, which is on two floors, connected by both staircase and lifts, has successfully incorporated high quality contemporary design, engineering and style into its historic frame. Blocked windows in the north and west walls have been opened to give historically important views over the Abbey and the town of Whitby below. To the south a new glass and timber curtain completes the damaged original elevation. York stone and oak floors are edged by glass panels on the first floor and the precise detailing includes furniture especially designed by Stanton Williams. The visitor is introduced to the history of Whitby Abbey and aspects of the town's own history through a variety of interpretative methods, including museum objects (some on loan from the Whitby

Museum), panels, video, and touch screens, designed by the York-based PastForward. The building also includes a ticket and information desk and shop. A glass-sided steel bridge from an unblocked first floor doorway provides easy disabled access onto the Abbey site. A new tearoom has been opened in Abbey House, which stands behind the centre.

The centre opened in the summer of 2002 and has won a RIBA White Rose Award and the RICS Yorkshire Award for Tourism.

### REGENERATION

Whitby has successfully played its two strong cards, geography and history. Its position at the base of a narrow gully at the mouth of the River Esk gives it a natural beauty and much, though by no means all, of the town retains its historic character. There has been a considerable increase in visitor numbers to the harbour because of its connections with Captain James Cook. Thousands of visitors crowded into the town to see the replica of Cook's Endeavour when she visited

Whitby on several occasions, most recently in 2003. The Captain Cook Memorial Museum, in a harbour-side house where Cook lived as an apprentice, has recently opened a new extension. Shops selling Whitby jet, once a symbol of Victorian mourning, abound as do celebrations of the pioneer photographer Frank Sutcliffe, Bram Stoker's Dracula and a more modern literary connection with AS Byatt's Possession, recently filmed in its Whitby location. House prices, that more ominous sign of successful regeneration, have been rising rapidly.

The Whitby Abbey Visitor Centre, which stands at the top of the legendary Church Stairs, the 199 steps that take the visitor up from the town, is a reflection of the new Whitby. It is clear evidence of how good contemporary architecture can exist in harmony with the old and what good design can achieve in regeneration - in sharp comparison to the car parks and supermarket on the banks of the Esk below.

# ON A WIDER CANVAS

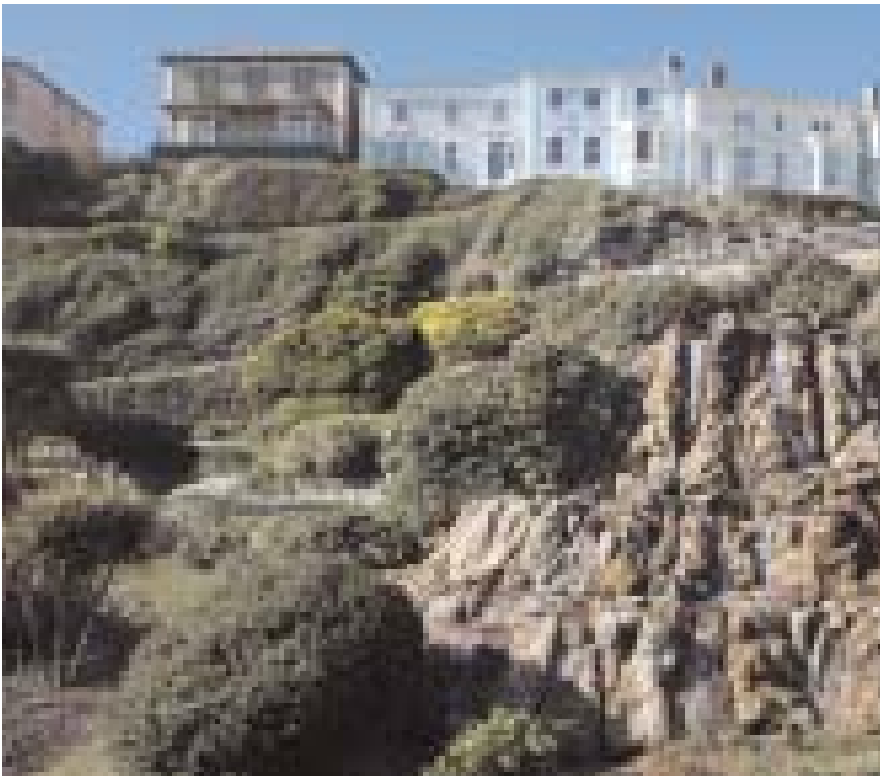
## DRIVERS FOR REGENERATION



BRIGHTON

Many of the case studies considered here are individual initiatives. In a number of major resorts, however, matters are unfolding on a larger scale. Though there is no denying the impact of single building projects, successful regeneration is likely to flow more readily from a structured approach. This section outlines four main approaches:

- 1 a process of masterplanning
- 2 a series of zoned plans to provide focus for future development
- 3 working with designers to create ideas for future resorts
- 4 adopting policies and practices to promote design quality



VENTNOR

### BLACKPOOL

An estimated 85% of Blackpool's economy is dependent on tourism but like many other resorts the town has been caught in a spiral of decline, fuelled by lack of investment. A high level of employment is seasonal and

unemployment rises from 6% to 14% in the winter months with consequent social problems.

Blackpool had already begun a redevelopment of its southerly promenade with new seawalls and some striking public art. Its new approach to its future is, however, on a grander scale – a major reassessment of the future of the town. The immediate objective is to produce 'A Vision of the Successful Visitor Experience', a spatial development plan and a series of individual masterplans for areas where comprehensive development or redevelopment is proposed, focussing first on the four kilometres of seafront between Blackpool's south and north piers. The key to future success must be public and private partnership and cooperation, with competition based primarily on quality and not on price.

Blackpool's local plan is a bold and ambitious target and an element of the resort's aspirations depends upon the creation of new casinos or, more particularly, resort casino hotels. Blackpool hopes that the liberalisation of gaming legislation, proposed in the 2001 Report of the Gambling Review Body, will provide 'a stimulus to major redevelopment of the resort's urban fabric, as has occurred in Las Vegas and Atlantic City'.

The resort is not however concentrating solely on gambling. There is much emphasis on Blackpool as a family attraction, a conference centre and a festival city, capitalising on the town's fame for its illuminated trams by making Blackpool a 'Capital of Light', with schemes to do more to celebrate Blackpool's rich architectural heritage and to upgrade the tired tram system.

### BRIGHTON & HOVE

Design is a key feature of Brighton & Hove's Local Plan: 'all new buildings will be expected to demonstrate a high standard of design and to make a positive contribution to the visual quality of the environment. . . unless

a development proposal is within an area featuring a distinctive historic style of architecture, replication of existing styles and pastiche designs will be discouraged.'

The city's desire to be characterised as a place of ambition, energy and culture determined that it should be seen a city that would not tolerate the mundane.

Rather than develop a masterplan, Brighton & Hove's approach to planning has been to focus on a number of development zones in the belief that this has allowed a greater degree of flexibility in the longer-term planning process. To ensure co-ordination, officers from all appropriate departments work together on individual projects steered by a designated lead officer for each project.

### SCARBOROUGH

Possibly the country's oldest seaside resort, Scarborough is one of the first six towns to be part of Yorkshire Forwards' imaginative and innovative Urban Renaissance programme. Community ownership of regeneration dreams and plans is at the heart of the Yorkshire Forward programme structured around community audit and consultation. The publication of A Vision for Scarborough, set out a 'ten towns' vision, celebrating the strengths of Scarborough as a springboard for its relaunch. A Town Team now meets monthly to drive the process forward and all 35 members have signed Scarborough's Renaissance Charter which sets out commitments to change and plans to achieve it.

There is widespread acknowledgement that Scarborough must change. The Renaissance programme with its focus on improving the public realm is beginning to bolster self-confidence and to encourage the recognition that to make Scarborough a better place to live and work, and thus to visit, Scarborough must first help itself.

### HASTINGS AND BEXHILL

In Hastings and Bexhill, the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) commissioned a masterplan that would represent a 30-year vision for the two towns; a vision statement Towards a Masterplan was published. The goal of this plan is 'to co-ordinate the growth of attractive, connected and prosperous communities and districts by improving transport infrastructure and initiating appropriate development around quality public space'.

In the summer of 2002 Hastings was designated by English Partnerships to be the last of seven Millennium Community projects selected to demonstrate new approaches to 21st Century living from which others can learn.

The national programme aims to deliver somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000 dwellings over the course of a seven to 10-year period. MBM's draft masterplan looks to the creation of 'new vibrant sustainable neighbourhoods on under-used land around existing and new stations with more frequent train services'.

The target is to build more than 1,000 new homes together with a new country park, commercial, community and leisure facilities. The Hastings and Bexhill Task Force, charged with the responsibility of progressing the regeneration of the two conurbations, aims to make this Millennium Community a UK showcase for the best in domestic design.

### SOUTHPORT



NEWQUAY

BRIGHTON



## FURTHER READING

**Sea Changes: Creating world-class resorts in England**  
English Tourism Council, 2001 ISBN 0 86143 240 1

**Francis Golding Building in Context:  
New Development in historic areas**  
English Heritage/CABE, 2001

**Heritage Dividend 2002**  
English Heritage, 2002

**The Register of Parks and Gardens: An introduction**  
English Heritage, 1998

**Lynn F Pearson Piers and Other Seaside Architecture**  
Shire Publications, 2002 ISBN 0 7478 0539 3

**Stephen Braggs and Diane Harris Sun, Fun and Crowds:  
Seaside holidays between the wars**  
Tempus, 2000 ISBN 0 7254 1891 2

**John K Walton The British seaside:  
Holidays and resorts in the twentieth century**  
Manchester University Press, 2000  
ISBN 0 7190 5169 X (hardback) ISBN 0 7190 5170 3 (paperback)

**Joseph Connolly Beside the Seaside**  
Mitchell Beazley, 1999 ISBN 1 84000 164 X

**A Design Statement for Cornwall:  
Achieving Quality in the Built Environment**  
Cornwall County Council, 2002

**The Value of Urban Design**  
Thomas Telford, 2001 ISBN 0 7277 2981 0

**State of nature: Maritime – getting onto an even keel**  
English Nature, 2002 ISBN 1 85716 647 4

**Conservation Issues in Strategic Plans**  
Countryside Commission/English Heritage/English Nature 1993  
ISBN 0 86170 383 9

**Natura 2000: Indications of Good Practice for establishing  
management schemes on European marine sites**  
EN, SNH, EHS (DoE (NI)), JNC & SAMS 2001 ISBN 1 85716 577 2

[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)

[www.britishresorts.co.uk](http://www.britishresorts.co.uk)

## SHIFTING SANDS

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