

Hastings Old Town Residents Association

Parish News February 2020

Improvements to Old Hastings House

The trustees of the Magdalen and Lasher charity quietly find ways whereby those with Adult social care needs can be better looked after within this community. As a result of diligent governance they operate at the highest standards to look after over 100 clients. Once this was folk who were simply frail and needed support in their daily lives. With so many living longer the needs of these special people have become more complex and consequently the service provided has had to adapt. The original building was Georgian. Since World War II the buildings have been added to and now provide safe and secure homes including for some suffering with dementia. These residents needs are both social and medical.

During much of 2019 a set of plans for an Amenity space for 9 patients were drafted and consulted upon. Using a corner where 2 buildings abut at 90 degrees the proposed plans gave 9 dementia residents a view across the Old Town overlooking the historic lifeboats, All Saints Church, and the East Hill where many of them played as children. Part of the bonus of the design was a view that is uplifting. The design incorporated curved glass windows which meant that just by looking outside these 9 people could enjoy one of the best views in the Old Town.

Discussions between HBC Planning department and the architects stretched over many months. Both the trustees and the architects were surprised when shortly before Christmas the Conservation officer demanded major changes. None of these had been raised before. No doubt applying planning guidelines a case could be made but the major omission is failure by HBC to recognise the benefits for these 9 residents,

A petition has been submitted - with full support from HOTRA - asking the elected Planning Committee to look at the application. Of course HBC could decide to not support the original application. That may well lead to an appeal to the national Planning Inspectorate by Magdalen and Lasher. HBC would have to spend money instructing someone to defend the application. [About 80% of appeals are successful] Magdalen and Lasher are using their own funds to meet the costs of the new building. They run the risk of losing all that money. More importantly the 9 patients would continue to live in what are not the best possible spaces.

Lets hope that wisdom prevails.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The rate for individuals is £15. Please put your subs and contact details in an envelope marked HOTRA. Either drop it into Phil Whites letter box at Eight and a Half Exmouth Place OR leave with Chris at Reeves opposite the Jenny Lind.