

## **MATTER 3: EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOWN CENTRES**

### **ISSUE 3.2**

**3.2** Referring to the justification for more new office development, Heron House office block London Rd. is to be converted into housing (HS/PA/14/00190).

### **ISSUE 3.5**

**3.5.1** With regard to Central St. Leonards town centre, Central St. Leonards is the most deprived and by far the most densely populated ward in East Sussex. Its unique historic environment is one of its greatest assets which should be protected and promoted. The last thing it needs is site allocations that would allow landmark multi-storey blocks that would deform the historic townscapes in the station area and Kings Road Conservation Area and, therefore, seriously damage the potential for heritage-led regeneration and tourism.

**3.5.2** St. Leonards Warrior Sq station is the only heritage portal for visitors to the borough. Kings Rd. and the whole area to the sea could become a major cultural artistic and bohemian centre for the SE, together with Burtons, the Old town and the convent. All these precious elements are here, but many small businesses are struggling owing to the lack of visitors. The problem is that most people are totally unaware of the burgeoning vibrant artistic and cultural bohemian atmosphere of Central St Leonard's.

### **ISSUE 3.7**

**3.7.1** The Plan should include something like the following:

**The Tourism Department is vital to the vitality of a Seaside resort; it should do more to publicize the cultural richness of the borough and the area more generally.**

**We will do our utmost to exploit the enormous potential for maximum use of our heritage architecture in conjunction with our cultural history, other in addition to 1066 and pirates. The Borough is associated with many artists Turner, Pre Raphaelites etc, other famous people include Alan Turing, Logie Bairde, Faraday, Tressel, Ryder Hagatt, Charles Dickens, some famous suffragettes and numerous notable architects including James and Decimus Burton, EW Pugin, William Wardell, William Tress and Sidney Little - the concrete king; these and many more should be brought to the attention of potentially interested tourists who could be tempted to explore this unique historic area where these exceptional people lived and thought.**

**3.7.2** Central St. Leonards is the centre of the borough by the sea; it contains a precious asset which is hidden largely from view. It is never highlighted on tourist maps for some strange reason. The Convent of the Holy Child Jesus has a unique history which has been largely

ignored for many years - this would be perfect for a Downton Abby style series. With wonderful architecture by Wardell and Pugin, nearly all in an exciting state of suspended animation; retaining very many of its distinct and period features 1840/50s, ceilings, windows, staircases, tiled floors, doors and dado panelling etc. It cries out to be used for multiple uses to regenerate our tourist industry. There is everything needed to make perfect film studios [the film industry is one of our rapidly growing exports] Incorporated in the complex could be a 5\* Hotel complete with Pugin Chapel for expensive weddings; one import factor would be off road parking The east wing could have a Gordon Ramsey Style rooftop restaurant with extensive sea views There are many sources potential of funding for these exciting projects.

**3.7.3** All this in conjunction with the business and education hub by Hastings station could help put the borough back on its feet with employment of all grades. English Heritage in conjunction with the college apprenticeship scheme could train people to become top grade heritage crafts persons so they would be equipped to work anywhere using their specialized skills. There is an endless amount of historic architecture to work and learn on in the borough. The convent alone could provide numerous opportunities for training and employment in a number of fields at : levels.

**3.7.3** But who would be able to coordinate all the energy which would be generated by such an exciting regeneration project It would need a very special group of people, who have the greater good of the borough as their aim? Maybe the White Rock Trust could take this on.