

brighton marina:

FOR
PEOPLE
NOT
PROFIT

OUR MARINA – OUR SAY

The harbour walls of the Brighton Marina at Black Rock are almost complete – the Company's plans for what they want to happen within those walls are now being examined by an Inspector from the Department of the Environment at the Town Hall in Brighton. Anybody who wants to have their say on these proposals put forward by the Brighton Marina Company may 'give evidence' to the Inspector at the Town Hall within the next three or four weeks. Some people may wish to do this alone and some with a group of others whose ideas are similar to their own – whichever way, QueenSpark has commissioned this short report to help you make up your mind on some of the major issues brought up by the Company's plans and to discuss alternative ways of developing this enormous site. If there is enough agreement we can act together as a group in presenting our views to the Enquiry and possibly have more influence on the outcome.

THEIRS AND OURS

On the back page you will find a short report on the Company's plans for their Marina, written from an architectural point of view. The conclusions are based strictly on an assessment of the Company's own drawings and their statements which, though not plentiful, are quite illuminating.

Meanwhile in the double page centre spread you will find a sketch and outline proposals which are intended to give an idea of how the Marina could satisfy some deeply felt needs in Brighton and in the country as a whole. While the drawing is not a plan and is no more than an illustration of how these proposed facilities could be placed in the Marina (no high rise blocks here), the ideas for the facilities themselves have all been studied for their viability. None of them are 'pie-in-the-sky' and there is an actual example either in Britain or abroad of each one of the proposals put forward here. **IT CAN BE DONE.**

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

The Secretary of State for the Environment has advised that the Enquiry should deal mainly with these topics:

- the visual impact of the proposed buildings.
- the need for exhibition, chandlery and shopping spaces.
- the need for residential accommodation
- the traffic implications for existing and proposed roads in the town.

Related to these are matters such as Employment, possible effects on Brighton in terms of Rates, Housing, Public Health Facilities and of course the economics and finance of the project. These issues have all been discussed and various points of view concerning them have been and will be heard at the Enquiry. But there is a big question, which should really come before all of these, and yet is kept getting forgotten:

Who is the Marina for, whose needs does it answer and who is going to benefit from it?

Support

Of the many organisations and individuals consulted while researching these proposals we have so far received help and encouragement from members of Brighton Council, the Central Council for the Disabled, the British Rheumatism and Arthritis Foundation, Sparks (catamaran for the disabled), the Royal Yachting Association, the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Trades Unions' Congress, the National Maritime Museum, the National Maritime Trust, Mr Illyd Harrington, Deputy Leader of the G.L.C., Mr Ellis Hillman, Chairman of the Arts and Recreation Committee, G.L.C. and from Mr Cedric Price A.R.I.B.A.



BRIGHTON

Overlay of Marina (to same scale)

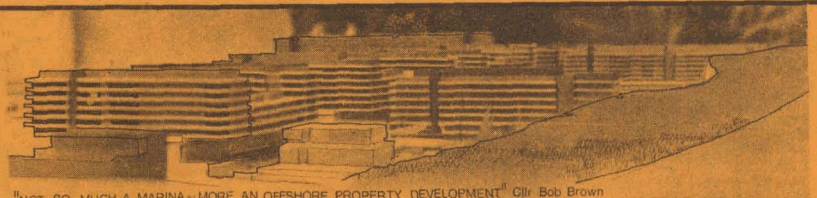
A CASE OF BAD PARKING

The allocation by the Company of 4,648 car parking spaces for over 2,000 moorings, 1,450 flats, a Disney-type Entertainment complex and a Hotel is unrealistically low, especially for summer weekends. All of those activities are 'high car generators' – or to put it in their terms *"the majority of the people attracted to the Marina are likely to be from socio-economic groups exhibiting high car ownership rates"*. If these facilities were to be properly provided for, the parking should be doubled at least. And it

should not be forgotten that parking for people who would actually be working in the Marina would alone amount to an estimated 500 spaces, a fact which seems to have been entirely omitted from their calculations. The consequences of such bad planning for the neighbouring streets in Kemp Town, already over-parked, seem to be disastrous. Unfortunately, the answer cannot be to merely increase the parking spaces; for then the extra traffic imposed on the roads of Brighton would be intolerable.

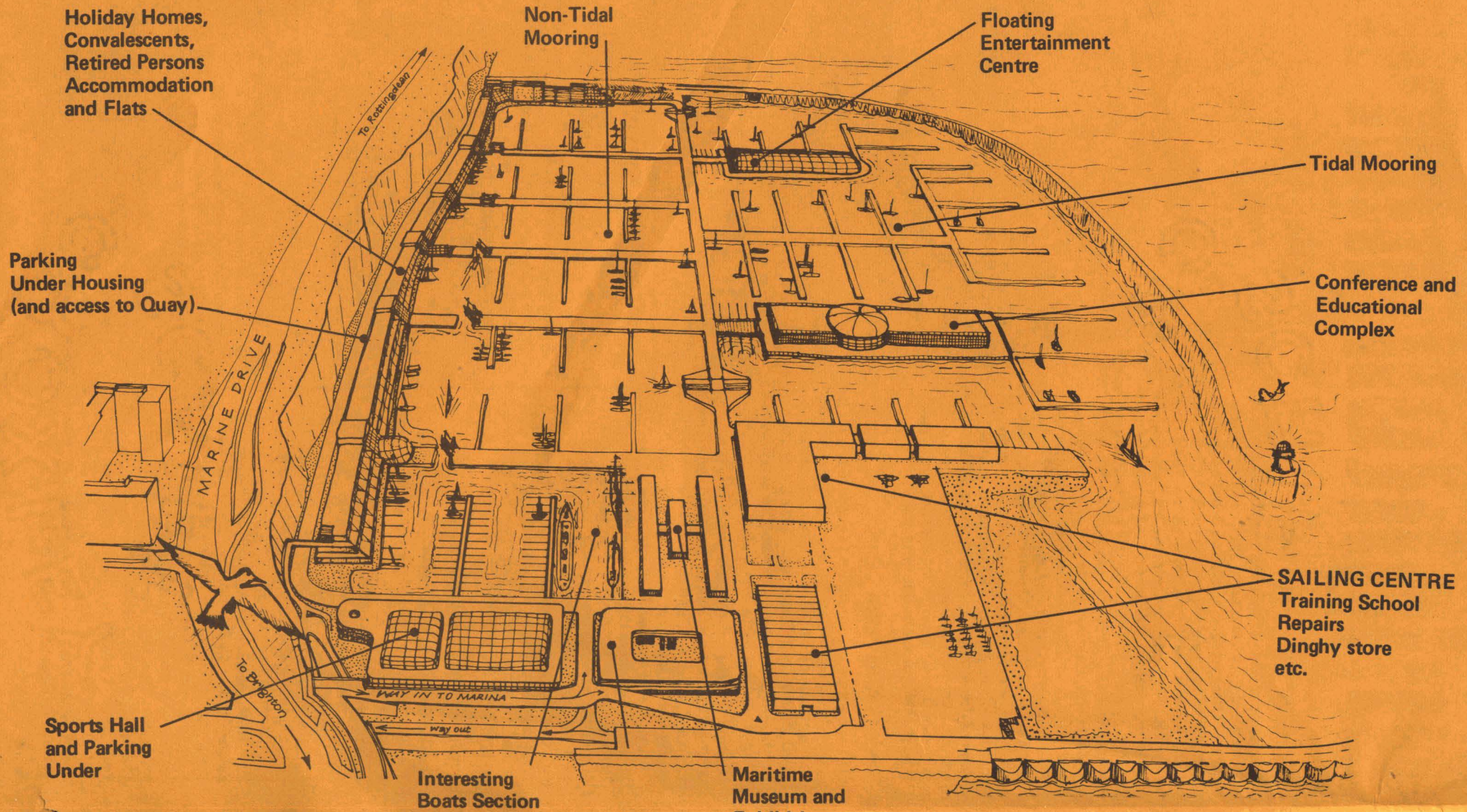
The solution must lie in:

- ++ reducing the demand for car use in the Marina, which can be done by:
- ++ reducing the accommodation and
- ++ introducing public transport in a more positive way.



"NOT SO MUCH A MARINA – MORE AN OFFSHORE PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT" Gill: Bob Brown

brighton marina



Resort for Disabled and Convalescent

Specially designed accommodation fully serviced with all domestic and clinical facilities and professional attendance, to give convalescents and infirm people a real chance to rest and recuperate by the sea, amongst other holiday-makers and other members of the community. Special transport facilities to and from the station together with weekly trains from Victoria with specially fitted carriages could be arranged. Trips to the town and through the countryside could be arranged in a similar manner.

'Sparks' is an organisation which runs a sea-going catamaran crewed by disabled young people; they have expressed great enthusiasm at the idea of having a base in the Brighton Marina. The British Rheumatism and Arthritis Association, always looking for suitable permanent and holiday housing for their members and patients is equally enthusiastic about this aspect of the proposal. The Transport and General Workers' union's new convalescent home at Eastbourne is an example of care that many other Unions would wish to emulate. See also the Workers' Union Rest Home overlooking the Mediterranean in Israel.

Family Holiday Centre

Small-scale flats and chalets for singles, couples, families and grandparents too — some self-contained, some 'community houses' for two or more families, some 'college-type' rooms and some dormitories — accommodation to suit even the lowest budget. The G.L.C. has expressed an interest in this sort of housing for retired couples in surroundings sympathetic to their needs.

Creches, holiday playgroups, baby-sitting — specially designed to give the kids a full day of games and activities, even learning, and to give Mum and Dad a real holiday.

Entertainment Centre

This would contain dance halls, club rooms, a botanical 'Palm House' facilities for conferences, bowling alleys, etc. The facilities for handicapped people contained in the housing would be extended to this area too. Educational facilities could also be accommodated here — subsidised language laboratories, films and videotapes set up and made available as a 'reference library' for all to use.

Maritime Museum

In the inner locked harbour we propose an Interesting Ships section — a place near the entrance where people who had an interesting vessel could moor at a cut price so long as they would be prepared to let the public see inside at certain times. This could be supplementary to the permanent exhibition of historic vessels which one could then learn more about in the adjacent Museum building.

Sports and Recreation

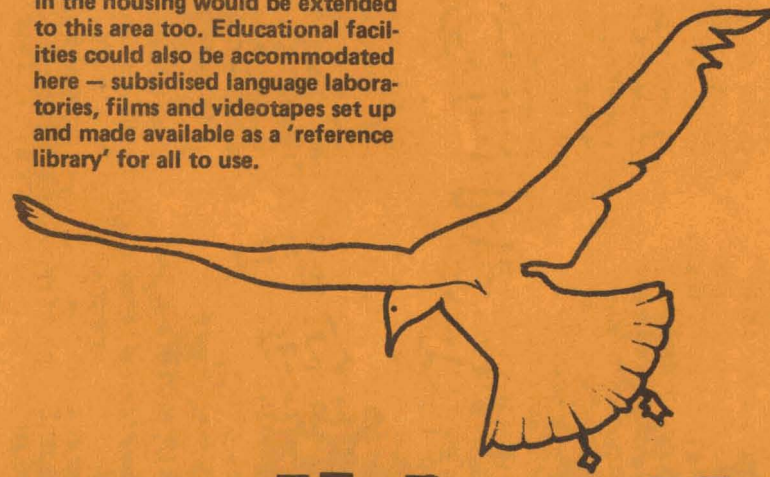
In addition to the sailing facilities there should also be provided a swimming pool, perhaps an ice rink, squash courts; it is however open to question whether the location of these facilities on the Marina would be beneficial to Brighton residents — a more central site (e.g. near the station) would probably be more suitable.

Educational and Training Centre

Sea-learning — swimming, sailing dinghies and yachts with experts, navigation, knots and splices, boat-building and fitting either as an apprentice professional or as a hobby. These facilities would be invaluable to the Brighton schools, but children from all over the country could come too — school lessons in the morning and evenings, sea-learning in the afternoon. The French do this — scuba training residential course for school children in Toulon; similar set up for skiing in the Alps, paid for by the Municipality. Sail training schemes could be geared to the voluntary proficiency-licensing scheme run by the Royal Yachting Association who would be interested in assisting such a proposal.

These ideas are strongly supported by Mr Ellis Hillman, Chairman of the Arts and Recreation Committee of the Greater London Council and he has resolved to pursue the matter further.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institute has expressed interest in being able to use accommodation and teaching and training facilities of the sort proposed — an especially good 'off-peak' use.



~ ~ ~ a possible alternative

Who is the Marina for, whose needs does it answer and who is going to benefit from it?



THE COMPANY'S ARCHITECT AND HIS GRAND DESIGN

Compare these two statements by the Marina Company's architect, Mr David Hodges: "References which have been made to the possibility that the Marina accommodation would cater for only a small section of society described the very anti-thesis of the policy I have advocated from the very beginning and which my clients have authorised me to pursue". (Evidence, October 1974). And yet in April 1972 he was saying that "the cost of harbour construction anywhere is such that it can only be supported by high charges for moorings" and "...at Brighton, in order to cover these enormous costs, it was vital to aim for the highest standards and the top of the market". From 1972 to 1974 the cost of the harbour rose from an estimated £7.2 million to £30 million — even at the lower figure it was recognised by experts that this cost in the Brighton Marina was abnormally high and would have to be paid for by high revenue earning facilities — ie. expensive flats, expensive moorings.

SEEING THEIR MONEY BACK

"The delay between capital expenditure and return, far longer than usual on account of the lengthy breakwater construction, has to be minimised." (Hodges, 1972). The fastest way to get a large amount of money back on a development is to work fast and sell the product — rental only brings in relatively small amounts over a long period. There is strong reason to believe that this is the reason for the Company's desire to so drastically increase the amount of housing on the site (330 flats in 1965 — 1,450 in 1974). "The...objective was to create the site values without which the Marina cannot be financed and built. The residential element has a large part to play in this..." (Hodges 1972). The price of a flat in the Marina is now estimated to be in the region of £30,000 or more which suggests that contrary to Mr Hodges' claims at the Enquiry they are in fact catering "for only a small section of society."

NOT SO MUCH A PLAN; MORE £'s PER SQUARE FOOT

Mr Hodges' stated aim is this: "The Marina needs a residential population to keep it functioning and alive at all times, so that the residents and hotel visitors will provide a more or less constant clientele for the shops and restaurants". (Hodges, 1972 and 1974). Here the architect sees permanent residential accommodation alleviating the 'off-peak' periods in mid-week and throughout the winter. But the 1450 proposed flats would be housing about 5-6000 people - a community getting on for half the size of Lewes and rather more than Rye. For developments of this scale in normal circumstances an architect or planner would be required to furnish detailed analyses of the type of family expected to live there, the possible number of children, their assumed age-grouping, their spending power and various other statistics which would have a bearing on the provision of shops and social facilities for the new population — yet not one of the documents issued by the Company or their Architect even touches the subject. Are they going to provide a Primary School, a Nursery School, a Doctors' Surgery, or a Clinic — all well established social necessities for a population that size. Or are they relying on Brighton to provide? Mr Hodges and his clients have been designing their housing and shopping areas in terms of spaces because it is in £'s per square foot that they will earn their money and pay off their debts; what they seem to have forgotten is that **people will be living in those spaces, 5-6000 of them if they had their way.**

MAKING MONEY FROM WATER: BOAT SPACES

The rental of mooring spaces in a Marina provides a regular income for the operators — the rent must however cover the cost of providing the necessary services to the spaces and contribute to paying off the overall cost of the harbour itself. The Marina Company has planned for 2047 moorings for boats not less than 26 feet at rents ranging

from £12 to £15 per foot per annum; that is, the minimum rental will be £312 p.a. and will probably average out at something between £450 and £500 a year. The Company imposes a further two restrictions on sailors intending to moor in their Marina — all vessels must have 'Elsans' or similar sanitary facilities on board and all sailing boats must have auxiliary motors. They fail to mention either of these two conditions in their publicity leaflets. The original plan to include dinghy accommodation was dropped not for the reasons the Company gave — overcrowding at the entrance to the harbour, causing a nuisance to the larger boats (hardly likely since the width at the mouth is a full 80 metres wide and the deep channel itself 60 metres, ample room for safe sailing) — but again for financial reasons. It is less profitable to rent out space for small boats than it is for large boats. So the dinghies had to go.

PROFIT OR PEOPLE?

We can see that sometimes in words and always in deeds Mr Hodges has acted for his clients in a manner which has put their own financial interests first at the expense of almost every other reasonable consideration:

No thought has been given to the social facilities which are necessarily part and parcel of every sizeable residential development.

Parking facilities fall far short of the required amount in view of the activities proposed in their scheme.

The restriction of the moorings to large well equipped boats excludes all but the very rich.

The price of the luxury flats puts them out of the reach of anyone earning less than £200 per week.

In 1972 Mr Hodges said that "the preliminary decision on the real estate content of the scheme came about as an assessment of the values which would have to be created if the cost of the harbour construction were to be supported..." and in that connection "Just as the moorings need to be of the highest quality so the flats and houses must be so arranged that they are of the highest value".

This Report was written by Unit Seven for QueenSpark, 14 Toronto Terrace, Brighton. (Telephone 680902).

The company has designed this Marina for Profit — and People have been forgotten.