

**Press Announcement**  
**New Eye for Brighton gets planning permission**  
11 October 2006



Brighton & Hove Council granted planning permission today for the Brighton i360 designed by the award-winning London Eye architects, husband and wife team David Marks and Julia Barfield. At 183 metres high and with the observation pod rising to 139 metres, the i360 will be Britain's highest observation tower, taller than the London Eye (at 135m).

In a joint statement, Julia Barfield and David Marks said, "We are delighted by this decision and would like to thank everyone who gave their support for this project. This is great news for Brighton. The i360 will boost Brighton's position as a top tourist destination, create 109 full-time jobs, increase tourist revenue by up to £10m and act as a catalyst for regeneration. The i360 will enable visitors to enjoy unparalleled

panoramic views and residents to see their City from a new angle. We hope that the i360 will become an elegant, 21<sup>st</sup> century symbol for Brighton. "

Visitors will board a giant fully enclosed 'pod' – more than nine times the size of a London Eye capsule. During their 20 minute ride, the pod will rise gradually to a height of 139 metres giving visitors stunning 360 degree panoramic views of up to 25 miles on a clear day of Brighton with its Regency squares, Grade II listed Victorian pier and the Pavilion, of the South Downs and the South Coast including the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head, as far as Eastbourne in the East to Bognor Regis in the West.

David Marks says, "We believe that the i360 will be a great success. We are expecting the i360 to attract in the region of 600,000 visitors making it Brighton's number one paid-for visitor attraction. People love a great view and to go up high to see a City. You only have to look at how popular other observation experiences are such as the Eiffel Tower, the Empire State Building and of course the London Eye, which is the UK's number one paid-for visitor attraction and has welcomed over 22 million visitors."

Eleanor Harris, Managing Director of I-Xperience, which will be operating Brighton i360 says, "With 8m visitors a year, Brighton is a fantastic location for the i360. We believe that the i360 will be extremely popular with visitors. We are expecting to attract a wide cross-section of different customers from families looking for a unique way to entertain the kids, couples on a romantic weekend break to school groups, conference visitors and stag and hen parties. During the evening, guests will be able to enjoy stunning night-time views and a glass of champagne in our Sky Bar. The i360 will be a unique venue for weddings, civil partnerships and events."

Brighton i360 will be located on the seafront on the site of the Victorian West Pier. Glynn Jones, Chairman of the Brighton West Pier Trust says "After 30 years of exploring public funding options, it has not proved possible to rebuild the pier. We believe that the Brighton i360 – a 'vertical pier' is entirely in the spirit of the pier's history and the best option to replicate the success and the ethos of the original pier." The i360 will provide an income stream for the Trust to finance its heritage works and future of the sea-based pier. The design will include restoration of the original Victorian toll booths and seating, and the creation of a Heritage Centre. It will fund the tidying up of the beach and removal of the wreckage, whilst retaining the sea island where thousands of starlings currently flock at dusk.

The architects have been overwhelmed by the level of support that the i360 has attracted. The landmark tower received vital support from English Heritage. In a letter to Brighton and Hove City Council, English Heritage's Inspector of Historic Buildings wrote, "English Heritage welcomes a project which would provide an outstanding feature on the seafront and a worthy companion to any successor to the West Pier, whether rebuilt or replaced. It would achieve an outcome not unlike the original promenade pier by allowing viewing of the whole of Brighton seafront not from the sea but from above."

The project received backing from tourism businesses in Brighton. Mark Jones, Chair of the Brighton and Hove Hotels Association, which represents all hotels in the City says, "Brighton & Hove not only needs to outdo UK cities but also compete with those

European cities which are just a cheap flight away. The challenge is a major one. To address it, out-of-the-box thinking, vision and daring are essential. Brighton & Hove must embrace projects which attract superlatives: the best, the biggest, the tallest, the bravest. It is exhilarating to hear ideas which are not 'down to earth' but instead, rather like the i360 itself, reach for the stars"

Toby Forer, Senior General Manager of the Sea Life Centre, one of Brighton's top visitor attractions, says "The i360 will compliment the existing range of attractions on offer within the City (Brighton Pier/ Brighton Marina/ Royal Pavilion / Brighton Sea Life Centre) and will underpin the dynamic proposition synonymous with Brighton".

Adam Bates, Head of Tourism for Visit Brighton comments "We are thrilled at the prospect of having this elegant 21<sup>st</sup> Century tourist attraction in our city. It will improve the competitiveness of Brighton as a tourist destination."

Located just 49 minutes from London and close to the Channel sea ports and Gatwick airport, Brighton is one of the UK's most popular destinations attracting 8 million visitors per year. With its vibrant night-life, great restaurants and shopping, it has enduring popularity as a weekend break destination, especially for young Londoners and for day trips. It has been nicknamed, 'London on the Sea'. Brighton is an established conference and meeting destination and will host the Labour Party Conference in autumn 2008 and 2009. It is one of the top UK destinations for foreign students to study English and for stag and hen parties.

The architects, Marks Barfield Architects, have become known for their environmental work. The practice recently unveiled plans for 'the Beacon', a new form of urban wind generation, which can be located in cities which benefit from the fact that 30-50% of energy gets lost through transmission. Approximately 20% of the energy required to operate the i360's pod will come from silent wind turbines at the top of the spire.

It is anticipated that the i360 will cost in the region of £20 million pounds, funded entirely by private investors. It is expected to open in summer 2008.

## **ENDS**

**For further information or for copies of high resolution images or video footage of an artists impression of a 'ride' please contact**

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## **Editors Notes**

### **Marks Barfield Architects (MBA)**

MBA is the internationally renowned, award-winning, husband and wife team behind the creation of the London Eye. Their aim is to deliver landmark developments that are imaginative, sustainable, and a pleasure to experience.

David Marks and Julia were awarded MBEs in the Queen's New Year's Honours List 2000, and have received The Prince Philip Special Commendation for Outstanding Achievement in Design for Business and Society. Over the last 10 years MBA has won over 40 awards, including Architecture Practice of the Year Award, and the Queen's Award for Enterprise (Innovation). MBA was recently nominated for the prestigious 2006 Stirling Prize for its spiral café in Birmingham.

### **West Pier Trust**

The West Pier Trust was created in 1978 to save the pier and return the site to public use. It is a charity and a limited company which owns the pier and the rights that attach to it. In 2005, following two devastating arson attacks on the West Pier in 2003, the Trust set out to seek private sector funding and a solution that would combine preservation of the heritage of the pier with the creation of heritage for the future; and which would be of public benefit and civic pride.