

Actors supporting FTA's
vision



Kenneth Branagh



Fiona Fullerton



Mark Rylance



Stephen Mangan

A BRIDGE TOO FAR FOR WAVERLEY AND CNS?

On 15th June Waverley's Joint Planning Committee decided by 15 votes to 8 to allow developers Crest Nicholson Sainsbury (CNS) to demolish the Brightwells Tennis Club Pavilion without building the promised construction access bridge - and before the 7th August, when the present planning permission runs out for their East Street/Brightwells development.

The Non-Material Amendment (NMA) approved on the 15th was a scaled-down version of the original, **which had included the demolition of the Redgrave Theatre** among several other very material works. Due to many strong objections, CNS revised their schedule of works and eventually asked only for permission to remove the tennis facility and for the provision of temporary 'welfare facilities' - toilets. However, the impact will be just as significant as CNS will now be allowed to occupy the Brightwells site for an indefinite period of time, without having the funds with which to complete the development. As the contract between Waverley and CNS is still conditional, the future of East Street could look very bleak.

There is an alternative. Legal action taken against Waverley is a possibility. Over the years, the Borough Council has allowed undue advantage to Crest Nicholson over other competitive bidders to the original brief. Several of the required elements of the development have been dropped, for example the Bowling Clubhouse and Green, the Cobbett Clock, the CAB building and most recently the Gostrey Day Centre, as well as the avoidance of requirements of several Planning Policies and an up-to-date Environmental Impact Assessment.

In preparation for any legal action, FTA Consultant, Michael Holden has been busy preparing an alternative scheme for Brightwells with the support of local retired architect, Michael Blower.

A plan has been devised which includes the possibility of the Redgrave Theatre running in combination with Curzon Cinemas, and this smaller, low-impact scheme has the approval of the Farnham Society and has awoken the interest of the Farnham Town Council.

The plan retains Brightwell House as a restaurant and is the centrepiece of an area of parkland, contained by two terraces of town houses to the south. Retail units with cinema screens above are planned to the north and another terrace of housing is placed above a car park on the east side. Affordable housing is included over the retail units. We hope to tell you more of this exciting development and as events evolve, we will keep you informed of further progress. (See the ground plan over the page)

Brightwells Restored



A New Plan for East Street, Farnham

Dame Judi Dench, one of our most high-profile supporters, sent us this message after the memorial service for Richard Attenborough.

"Last Tuesday I attended Richard Attenborough's Memorial at Westminster Abbey. One of my favourite quotes from the service went as follows:

The Arts are not a luxury. They are as crucial to our well being, to our very existence, as eating and breathing. Access to them should not be restricted to a privileged few. Nor are they the playground of the intelligentsia. The arts are for everyone - and failure to include everyone diminishes us all.



I am absolutely delighted to hear that tonight you will be finding out about a new proposal for a theatre and arts cinema for Farnham.

Very many congratulations to all the people who have fought so hard over the years to keep theatre alive and kicking. I really hope this exciting new proposition will rejuvenate and revitalise your beautiful town. I send you my very best wishes.

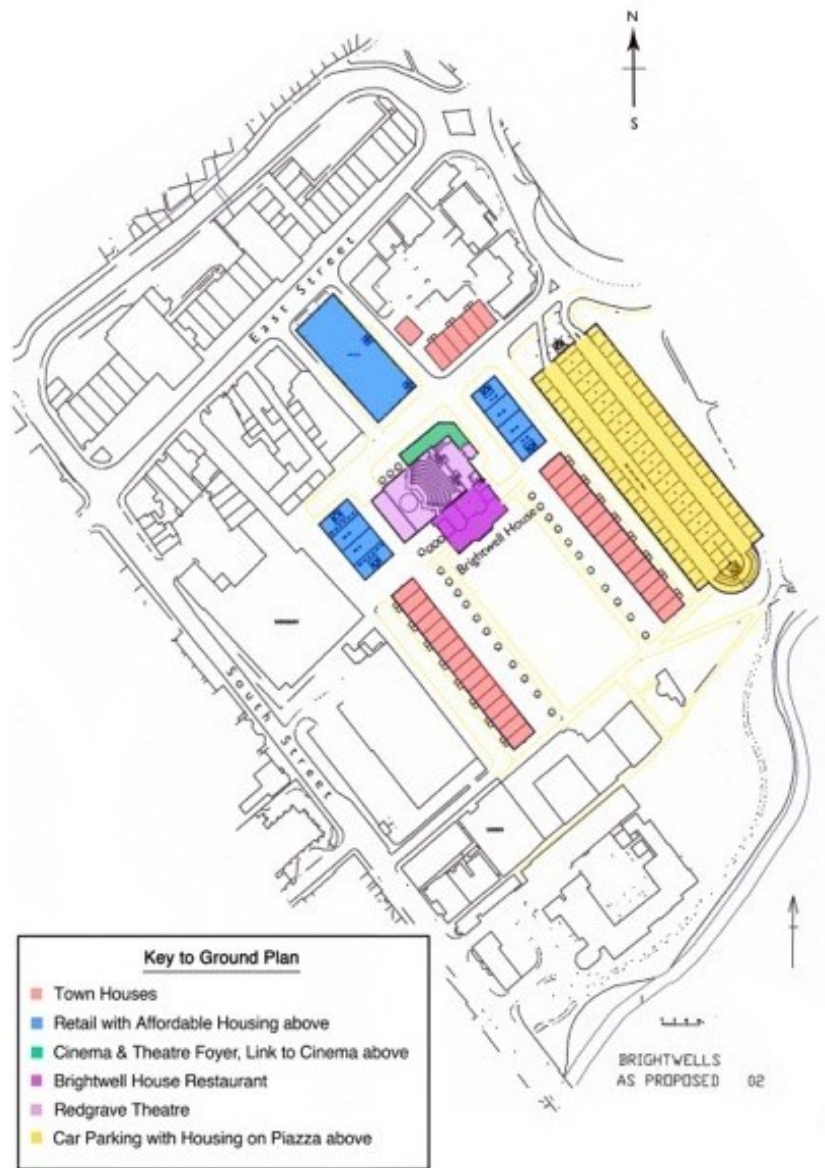
GOOD LUCK!

Our grateful thanks to Dame Judi for this superb encouragement.



Here is another famous name recognising FTA's vision; David Edgar, playwright, lending his support.

Ground plan for alternative development for Brightwells



The plan above retains Brightwell House as a restaurant and is the centrepiece of an area of parkland, contained by two terraces of town houses to the south. Retail units with cinema screens above are planned to the north and another terrace of housing is placed above a car park on the east side. Affordable housing is included over the retail units.

Farnham Rep will be performing two rehearsed readings at the Phoenix Theatre in Bordon

7th July, 7.30pm *Kolbe's Gift*,

written and directed by David Gooderson. First premiered by Farnham Rep in 2006 in Brightwell Gardens.

14th July, 7.30pm *Equally Divided*,

a showcase of a new play by Ronald Harwood, author of *Quartet*; this performance directed by Maurice Thorogood. Entrance for both productions is FREE. Seats can be obtained from the Phoenix Theatre **01420 472664** or online at **www.phoenixarts.co.uk**

There will be a collection after the performances for Farnham Rep/Phoenix Theatre.

Are you ex-Redgrave or ex-Castle Theatre?

We are writing to a number of the actors who appeared at the Redgrave or Castle Theatres for their recollections and anecdotes and hope to run these in a future issue.

In the meantime, anyone with memories of acting, directing or designing at either theatre is warmly invited to send in their recollections and also demonstrate support for our shared cause with a view to a booklet being produced to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Redgrave.

Comments and stories from audiences are also very welcome. Just email the editor, see back page.

Waverley Councillors display a shaky hold on truth

INNACCURACIES AND UNFOUNDED CLAIMS IN COUNCILLORS' COMMENTS

An earlier Waverley Council meeting on 26 January at Godalming concerned the listed building consent application WA/2014/1926 for demolition of the Redgrave Theatre. Many councillors displayed a significantly incorrect version of the truth and continued to peddle the same old mistruths and misinformation that they have perpetrated before.

This January meeting was recorded so to see a transcript of these errors and untruths then just go to www.farnhamtheatre.co.uk It makes for fascinating yet depressing reading!

We show just one example here, from Councillor Gates who did not stand for re-election at the May elections.

"In nearly 18 years not one single remotely credible scheme has been submitted for the re-use of the theatre space". (Cllr. Richard Gates)

FACTS:

In May 2006 Farnham Theatre Association presented to Waverley Borough Council a Theatre Report and Business Study for the re-use of the theatre without relying on Council funding and which would be guaranteed against default.

This documentation was accepted by Waverley as being so substantial it could not be ignored, and would be used to support Waverley's policy for theatre at the Maltings, but that no officer time was to be allowed for assessment of its viability for the Redgrave. Cllr. Gates has no evidence that this plan was not credible.

See WBC Archives for 2006 Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny 32 May Agenda Item 7 and Minutes. The Theatre Report is extant and it is referred to (but misquoted) in the Crest Nicholson Design and Access Statement 2014 Chapter 7. Justification of the Works.

This example from our document emphasises the campaign we have been running for 10 years and how WBC was determined to ignore it during the years whilst Councillor Gates was there. We now expect to be able to produce a good theatre/cinema business case for the 'Brightwells Restored' alternative plan to bring before new Waverley and Farnham Town Councils.

To view webcasts of Waverley meetings go to:

http://www.waverley.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=944&pageNumber=3

Another anecdote about the Redgrave provided by Abigail McKern's colleague who performed with her in *Shakespeare in Love*: Ian Bartholomew

A curious incident. (The curious incident of the log in the daytime??)



Of all the very fond memories of my time at the Redgrave there is one that, literally, stands out from the rest. I had been cast in *Privates on Parade* as the young and innocent new recruit, Private Flowers. At the beginning of the play he has just been posted to Malaysia, during the Second World War.

Every night during the run, we became used to the first line causing a few seats to loudly flip up, followed by the exodus of several sensitive souls taking exception to the opening line, which includes some of the more fruity examples of Anglo-Saxon earthiness to say the least. That was nothing compared to what was coming.

One packed-out mid-week matinee, I was subjected to a heinous and dastardly prank, perpetrated by my female colleague in the show, who shall remain nameless to spare her blushes. At the beginning of the second act, Flowers is undergoing a little extra-curricular tuition in the art of love and seduction with one of the local girls. This involved a fair amount of naked writhing in bed under the sheets while the rest of the male company sang a poignant and delicate rendition of 'Greensleeves'.

Afterwards, left on stage alone, the two lovers continue with the rest of the scene, eventually emerging from their post-coital reverie, getting dressed and launching into a Fred and Ginger style song-and dance number. All done in the best possible taste.

However, on this particular matinee, my very attractive companion had decided to see if I was a red-blooded heterosexual male, and proceeded to try and bring me to a state of arousal beneath the sheets. By this time we were so used to disporting ourselves naked in front of 350 people every performance, that it had become almost commonplace, and we hardly gave it a second thought. Which meant I was very relaxed about the whole thing in general.

Which meant I responded to her furtive shenanigans. Most alarmingly.

Whilst enjoying her attentions, it slowly dawned on me during the scene that I had to cross the stage with this condition, and that time was fast approaching. I sidled from beneath the sheets and crabbed my way sideways across the stage, trying not to reveal my embarrassing predicament to the poor unsuspecting audience. Unfortunately, our MD in the Orchestra pit, Mr Rob Mitchell, had caught an eyeful, and commenced to guffaw heartily enough to actually fall off his stool.

By this time both of us on stage were finding it difficult to control the rising hysteria, especially as it was becoming clear that I was being none too successful in my efforts to conceal the offending article and that the audience were all too aware that something was amiss. Many middle-age folk were beginning to get decidedly restless. I made it to the other side of the stage in the most ungainly fashion, to what I thought of as the safety of my clothes over the back of a bentwood chair. Sanctuary.

Still with my back to the audience, I drew on my regulation Army Y-front pants and with great relief turned to the front and carried on with the scene as rehearsed, whereupon the afore-mentioned offending article made itself visible through the vent at the front of my pants. Boing!

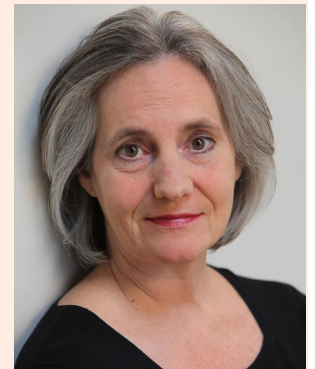
That's how y-fronts are designed. With a little door, you see. And the audience did! Full frontal. Whereupon there ensued a sharp intake of breath from the auditorium, more helpless guffawing and falling off stools in the pit, and much hilarity from the other side of the stage.

I hastily pulled on my trousers, which were unnaturally tight, to cover my embarrassment, threw on my shirt, picked up the hat and cane and duly strutted my stuff. In complete agony throughout. If you've ever tried to dance in an elegant and stylish way, in a pair of tight trousers pretending to be Fred Astaire, whilst in an advanced state of semi-tumescence, you'll know exactly what I mean.

There is a phrase we use in this business to comfort ourselves when something goes awry on-stage; "Oh don't worry about the audience, they won't have noticed. They'll just think it was all part of the show." But on this occasion I fully expected to be hauled off by the law afterwards for lewd and obscene behaviour in a public place. Happily I can report that no such thing happened. Perhaps I had rather over-estimated the size of the problem, as it were, and that indeed no-one had noticed. It was really all just part of the show.

By the way, her name is Rowan Suart.

Rowan Suart



A tribute to Rex Doyle who passed away in May

Toby Valley of Farnham Rep writes: "I spent many hours in Rex's company when as a young teenager I attended his Saturday morning improvisation sessions that he ran as part of 'Theatraction' at the Castle Theatre. Though I have not seen Rex since 1989, I remember him as a lovely, kind man and I will always remember him with fondness, and as someone who played an important part in my formative years and who helped cement my love of Theatre".

And Brenda Longman of Farnham Rep concurs "How sad to hear of Rex Doyle's demise. Yes we **all** knew him, both at the Castle and Redgrave Theatres and many of us have worked with him.

The last time I saw him was when he came with wife, actress Sandra Voe, (married in 1966 with 3 children) to "**Kolbe's Gift**" at the Polish centre in Hammersmith when we toured it there in 2006.

I shall never forget Rex in a wonderful production of Twelfth Night at the Castle when I was at school! It still makes me laugh.

He was a great force of energy and will be remembered for masterminding "**THEATRACTION**" which was an innovative Youth Theatre group. There were articles on Theatraction every single week in the Herald in those days of the sixties and early 70's.

Indeed in 2003 Rex published a book called "STAGING YOUTH THEATRE" and although he was a fine actor that, I feel, was what really "floated his boat."

Rex Doyle performing
at the Sheffield
Crucible Theatre



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