

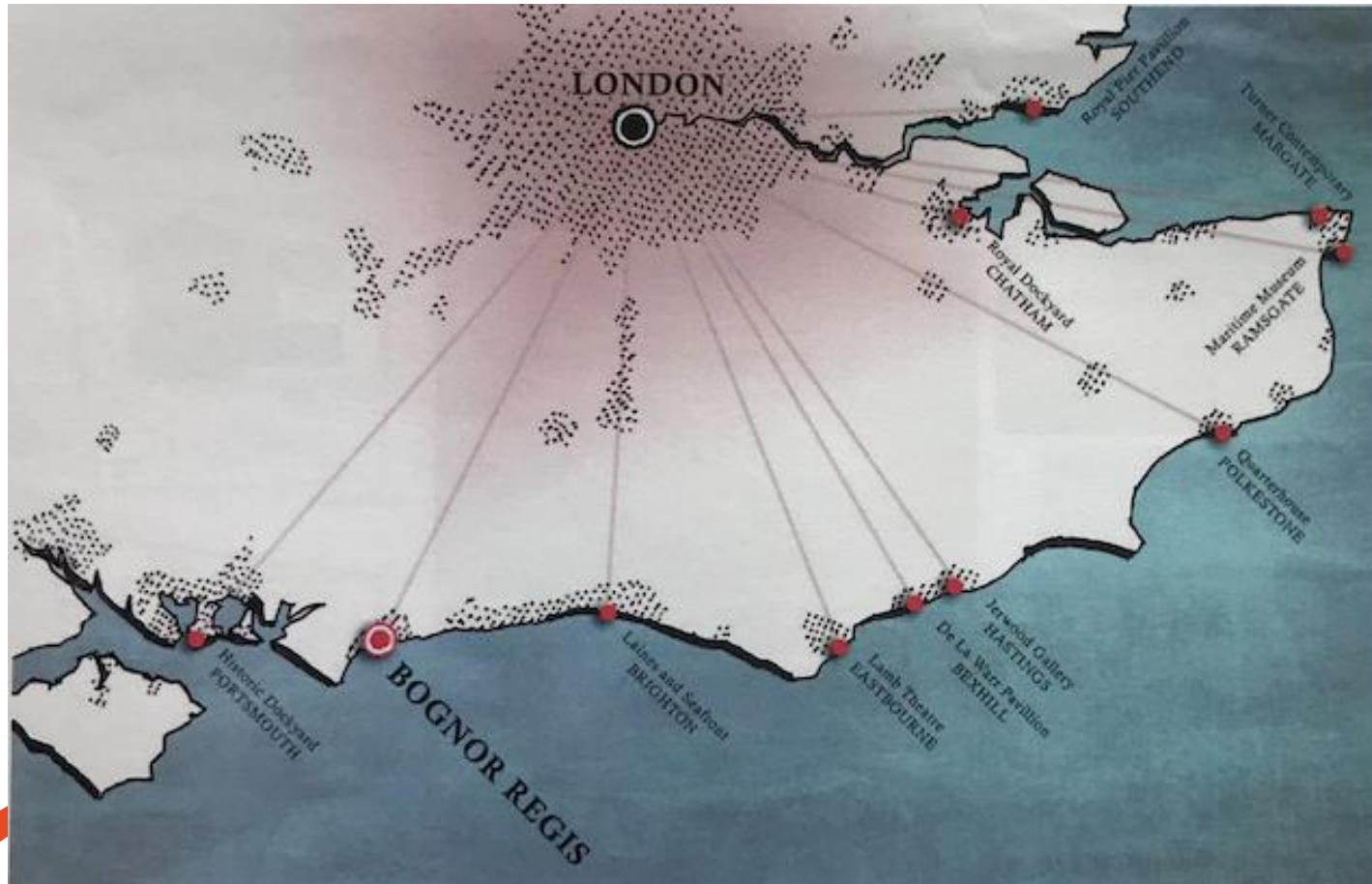


BOGNOR REGIS

How do we propose a sustainable regeneration for Bognor Regis?

- Provide for the local community, support local businesses, retail and leisure opportunities
- A landmark regeneration project to bring Bognor Regis back as a serious tourist destination on the South Coast
- Catalyse the regeneration through the 'Centre for Imagination'; a proposal for a multi-use cultural centre both inspired by and to celebrate William Blake

Bognor Regis is fantastically placed to expand its tourism economy



In order for a proposal to support the continual regeneration of Bognor, it needs to be underpinned with a sustainable economic model.

Various capital and lottery funded regeneration projects, such as Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, The Jerwood Gallery in Hastings and the Contemporary in Margate align to the South Coast.

All are conveniently placed within a day's rail trip from Central London.

Bognor is equidistant from London, why can't Bognor have the same?

Folkstone Quarter House

Design Precedents



£4M Contract Sum

Completed February 2009

Winning scheme of 2 stage completion

Gallery and exhibition spaces

Café and bar

220 seat/500 standing multipurpose auditorium

Business Enterprise Centre

Envisaged as new cultural hub for Folkstone

Designed to act as a beacon for the local area, expressed through the use of materials which enables the building to be illuminated at night

The use of fluted metal mesh cladding inspired by scallop shells and links with maritime story of the city

Jerwood Gallery Hastings

Design Precedents



£4M Contract Sum

Completed March 2012

Awarded an RIBA Civic Trust Award

Primarily functions as a gallery displaying the Jewood Foundation collection

Temporary exhibition spaces

Seafront location

Associated studio spaces

350 seat auditorium

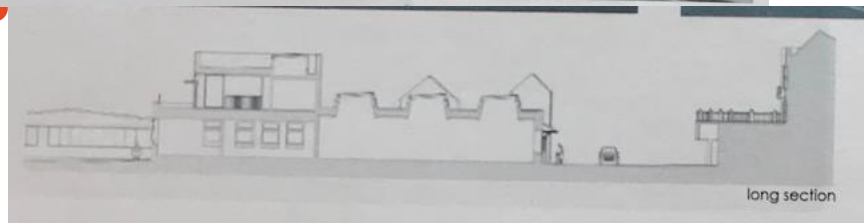
120 seat performance space

Workshops and Artist in Residence

Ancillary and supporting spaces

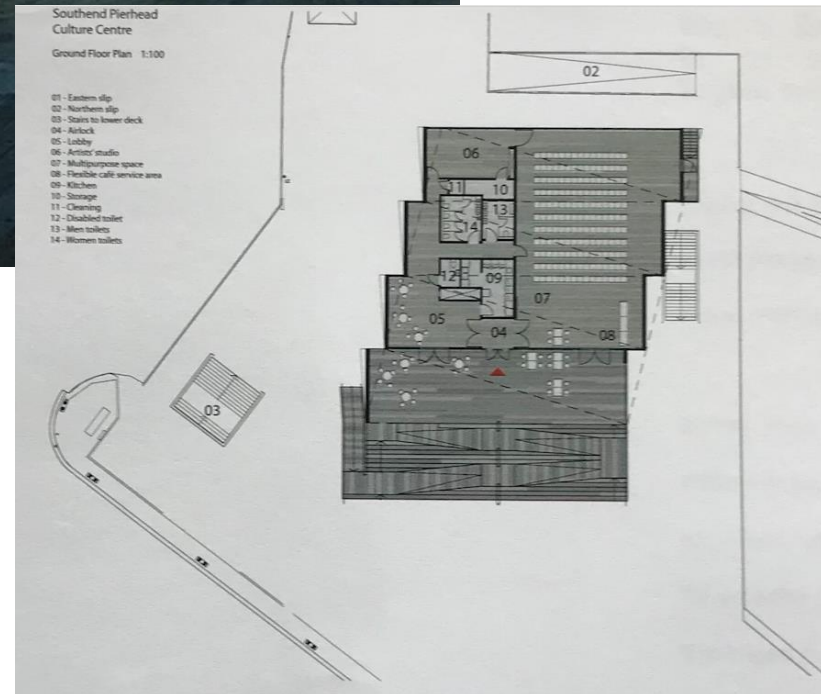
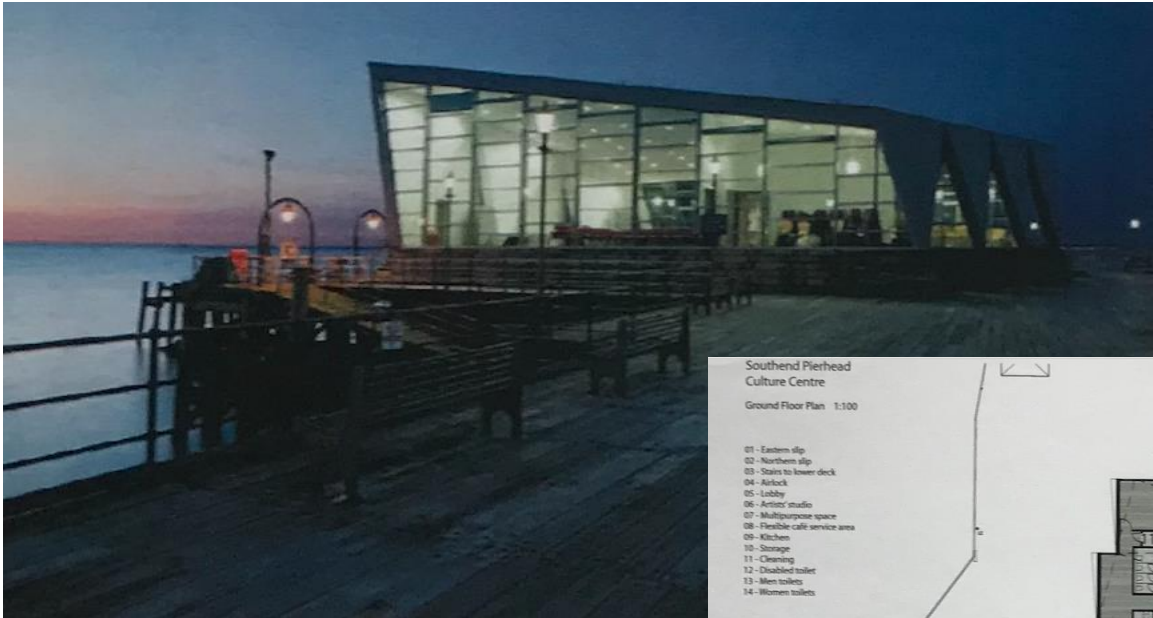
Built on a tight urban site, the layout and design reflects tightly woven street space

Located on a compressed site, spaces are top lit



Southend Pier Royal Pavilion

Design Precedents



£4M Contract Sum

Completed 2009

Set on the world's largest and longest
Grade II Listed pier

Used as Theatre and Art Gallery

Designed as an undulating wave form of
glass and steel cladding to echo the
movement of the sea

Bognor Regis and Felpham lay claim to an association with an iconic English artistic and literary figure

Bognor has the ability to enter the cultural day trip tourist market by celebrating and promoting William Blake, who was once resident of adjacent Felpham.

Rather than a retrospective exhibition space for William Blake, his paintings, thoughts, poetry and legacy. Might not the 'father of imagination' be the seed for a centre?

A place that not just celebrates his work but uses it to inspire a contemporary centre for imagination and creativity, that forms a central burst of regeneration to the Regis Centre site that can ripple throughout the town.



GLAD DAY

An immersive virtual experience created by Mikey Georgeson for the BlakeFest Unpacking Blake panel discussion at Flepham memorial Hall September 2019



How can the historic link with William Blake regenerate the entire town and area?



The Big Blake Project have created and published a Blake Trail, a meandering walk connecting key areas and associated places to William Blake in Bognor Regis.

Highlights of this trail include the Railway Station as a starting point, the seafront promenade and Blake's Cottage in Felpham Village.

This trail includes various opportunities for further regeneration. What if these areas could be strategically linked through the Blake Trail and formed a basis for a masterplan linking up Bognor's existing treasures and new potential regenerative sites?

Potential Regeneration sites;

Hothampton

Bognor Regis Pier

Seafront Promenade

Esplanade/Butlin's corner

Existing 'treasures';

Felpham Seafront

St. Mary's Church

Hotham Park

Waterloo Square/ Regency Waterfront

BLAKE AND BOGNOR

I GIVE you the end of a golden string;
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall...

William Blake similarly enjoyed the restorative power of the sea: In a letter to Thomas Butts (1800) Blake recounts his joy at observing nature from the sands of Felpham Beach.

To my friend Butts I write
My first Vision of Light,
On the yellow sands sitting,
The Sun was emitting
His glorious beams
From Heaven's high streams.

Blake took it as a visionary sign when the first words he heard in Felpham were from a farm boy shouting to his father in the morning, "Father the Gate is Open."

Inspired by a vision Blake wrote about and painted Jacob's Ladder in 1800 as the gateway to heaven. He wrote "All things begin and End in Albion's Ancient Druid Rocky Shore."

Specifically, Blake saw Albion (England) asleep in a materialistic mentality and that an awakening would start with a step, writing-

"He mov'd his right foot to Cornwall, his left to the Rocks of Bognor. He strove to rise to walk into the Deep."



Left: William Blake, Thomas Phillips 1807
Right: William Blake, Albion's Rose from a Large Book of Designs 1793-6



The William Blake Trail
FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX
BLAKE AND BOGNOR
I GIVE you the end of a golden string
Only wind it into a ball
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate
Built in Jerusalem's wall...



The William Blake Trail
FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX
WILLIAM BLAKE'S COTTAGE
This cottage is one of only two remaining
prospect that William Blake took in
Having done so since properties throughout
his life, Blake and his wife moved here in 1800
and Blake considered the village to be his life
and wrote to his friend, Mrs Anna Pooleman that
"The bread of woe though
and the wine of delight
Feed the village of Felpham
by day and by night."

BOGNOR

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Left: William Blake, Thomas Phillips 1807
Right: William Blake, Albion's Rose from a Large Book of Designs 1793-6

the silly Greek & Roman slaves of the sword
rouse up O Young Men of the New Age! set your
foreheads against the ignorant tyrants of War
we have firebrands in the Comb, the Court & the University
who would have us fight for ever against the Men
of the prolong Corporal War; Painters! on you I call!
Sculptors! Architects! Suffer not the fashionable tools
to depress your powers by the prices they pretend to
give for contemptible work or the expensive ad-
vertising boasts that they make of such works; believe
Christ & his Apostles that there is a Class of Men
whose whole delight is in Destroying; We do not
want either Greek or Roman Models if we are but
just & true to our own Imaginations; these Worlds
of Eternity in which we shall live for ever in
Jesus our Lord.

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon English's mountains green
And was the Holy Lamb of God,
On England's pleasant pastures seen!

And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold;
Bring me my Arrows of desire;
Bring me my Spear; O clouds unfold;
Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand;
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green & pleasant Land

Would to God that all the Lords people
were Prophets Numbers XI ch. 26

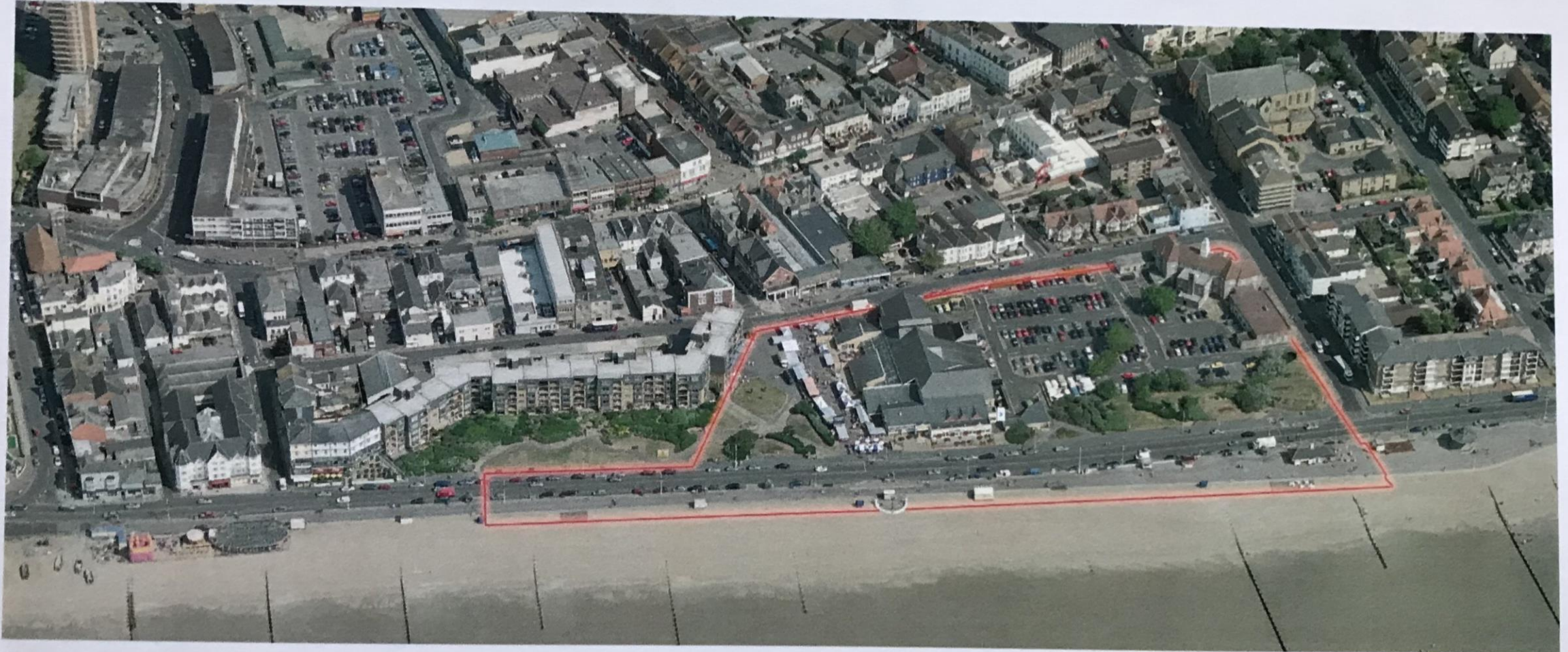
The William Blake Trail
FELPHAM | WEST SUSSEX
A VISIONARY POET
In 1800, William Blake wrote to his friend
Thomas Butts
"I give you the end of a golden string
Only wind it into a ball
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate
Built in Jerusalem's wall..."
Which the vision to me
Appeared on the sea.
He had reportedly been visited twice on dreams
two years of age and his Victorian biographer
Alexander Gilchrist, spoke of him having seen
"a new world with angels, bright angels, winged
appearing every night like men" in the age of
eight or ten in Felpham Bay, London.
As he was walking along the promenade, guests were
asked to sit on the grass and the thought and ideas
of a visionary poet who in his poem, "Argument
of Innocence" wrote as
"TO SEE A WORLD
IN A GRAIN OF SAND,
AND A HEAVEN IN A WILD FLOWER,
HOLD INFANCY IN THE PALM
OF YOUR HAND,
AND FORTY IN AN HOUR."

Towards Hothampton and Queensway potential regeneration sites

Approach from London Road Shopping area

Regis Centre external appearance dishevelled and dated and works against the quality of space

Town Hall



Esplanade route from Pier

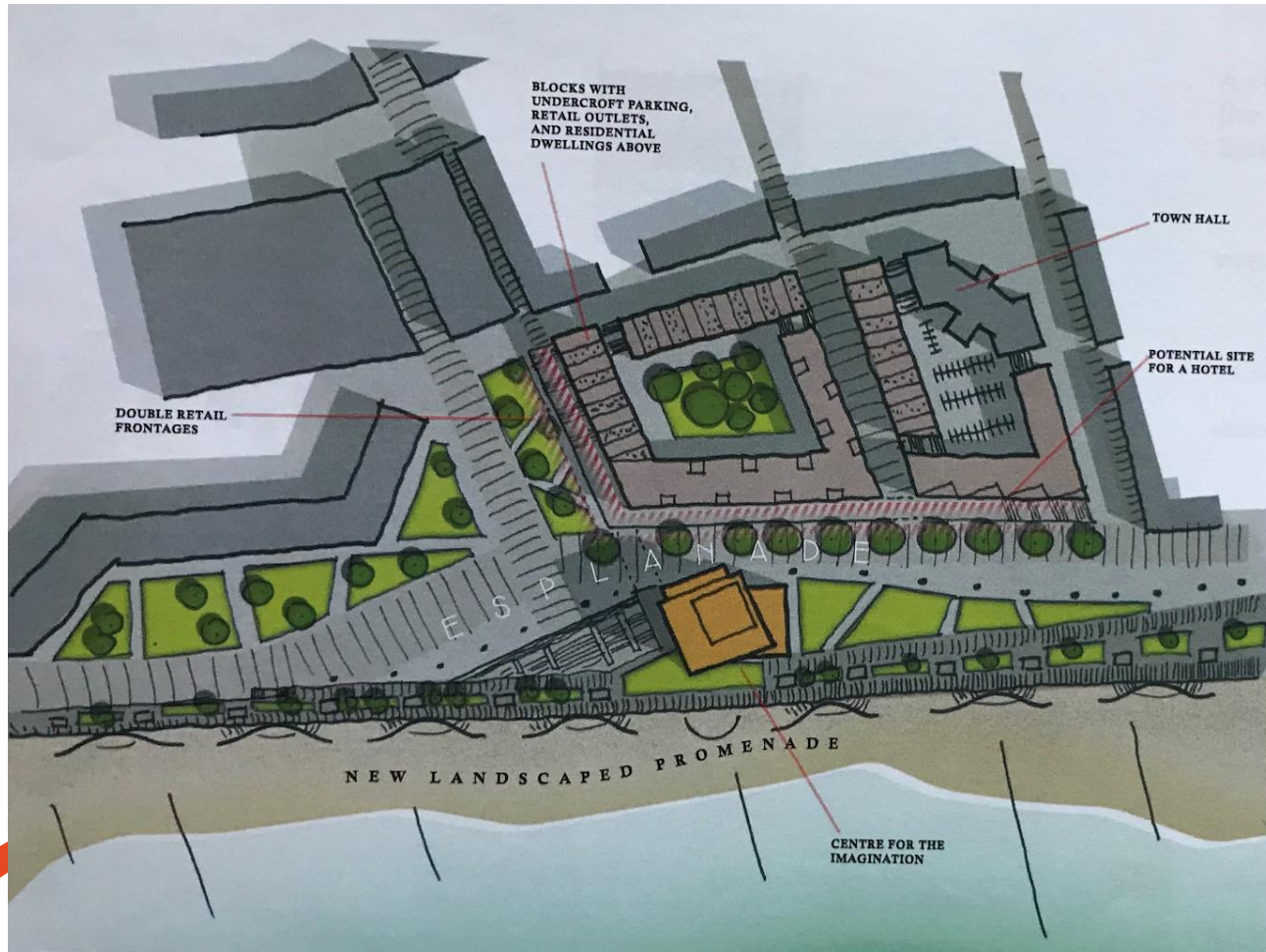
Market space uncomfortably arranged around the Regis Centre

Site in general does not make any celebration of its seafront location

Existing promenade contains an irregular arrangement of facilities and features

Esplanade route to Butlins and Felpham

Regis Centre Site; a suggested proposal to meet the requirements for regeneration with both the local community and tourist market in mind.



The existing proposals for the Regis Centre Site propose a mixed use retail and leisure hub for the local community. This could be built upon with an addition of the William Blake inspired 'Centre for the Imagination', containing a new theatre/ performance space and freeing up more space for development.

This could also provide a residential element to this scheme which could further enhance the quality of the development into a mixed use culture, retail, leisure and residential development that responds and enhances with the existing rich regency architecture and planning prominent along the esplanade.

Centre for the Imagination!

A cultural hub for Bognor Regis inspired by the art, poetry and philosophy of William Blake.



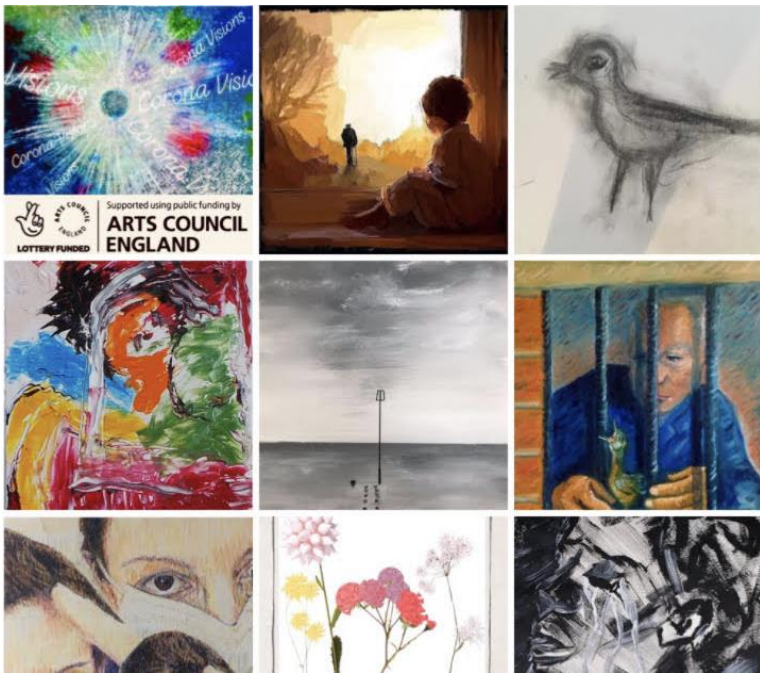
What could this hub contain?

A new and unique
Theatre/Performance/Exhibition space

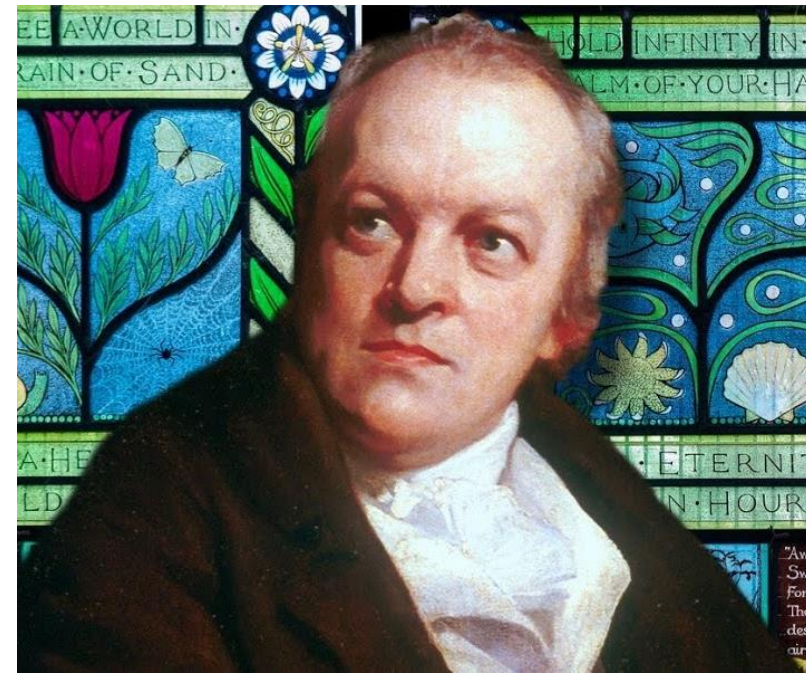
Permanent Exhibition space dedicated to
William Blake

Workshops and Classrooms for schoolchildren
or visitors to promote interactive and creative
activities

Associated retail and catering facilities, with a
restaurant overlooking the town and seafront
with views across the English Channel and coast



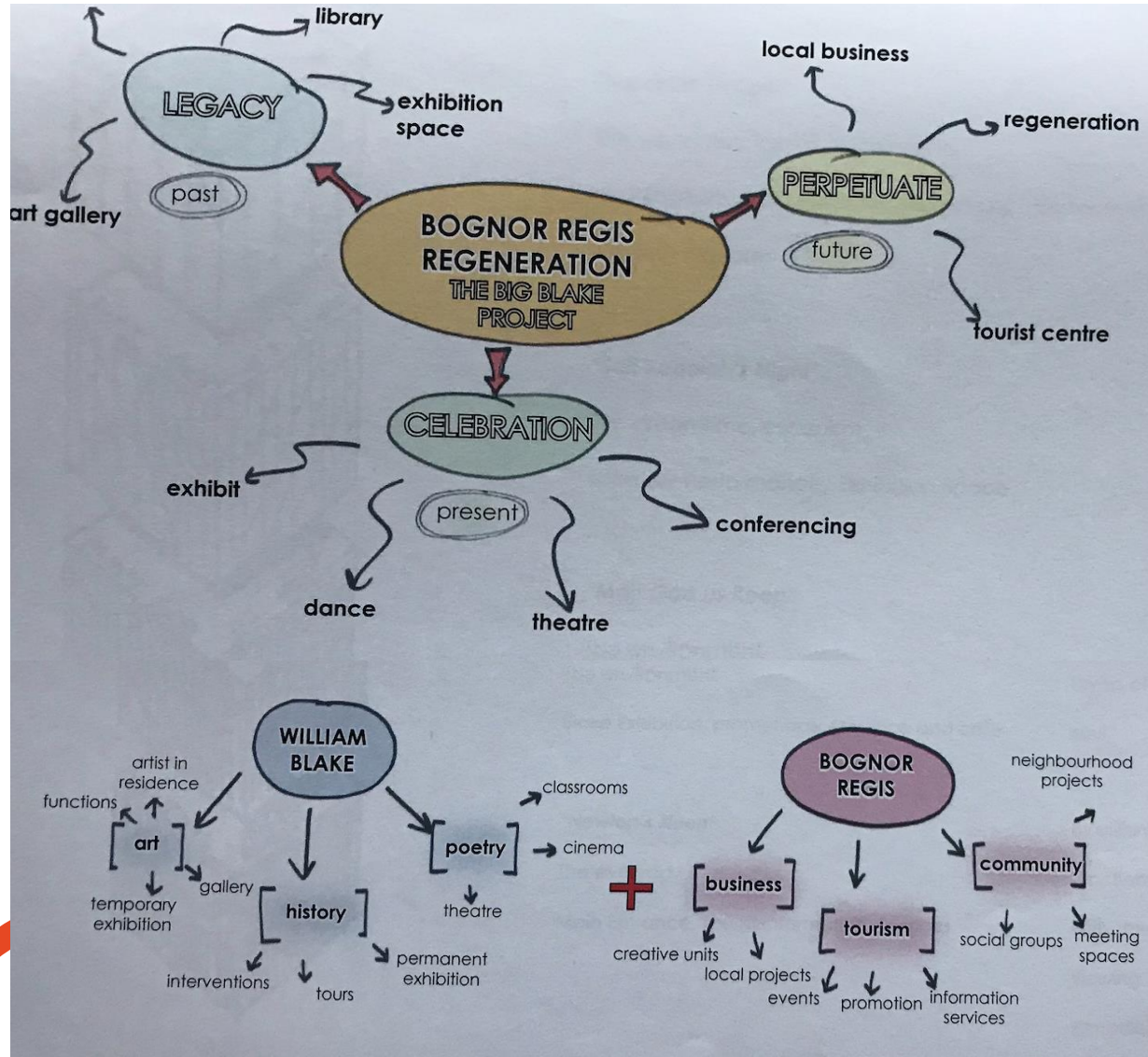
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Who is this for?

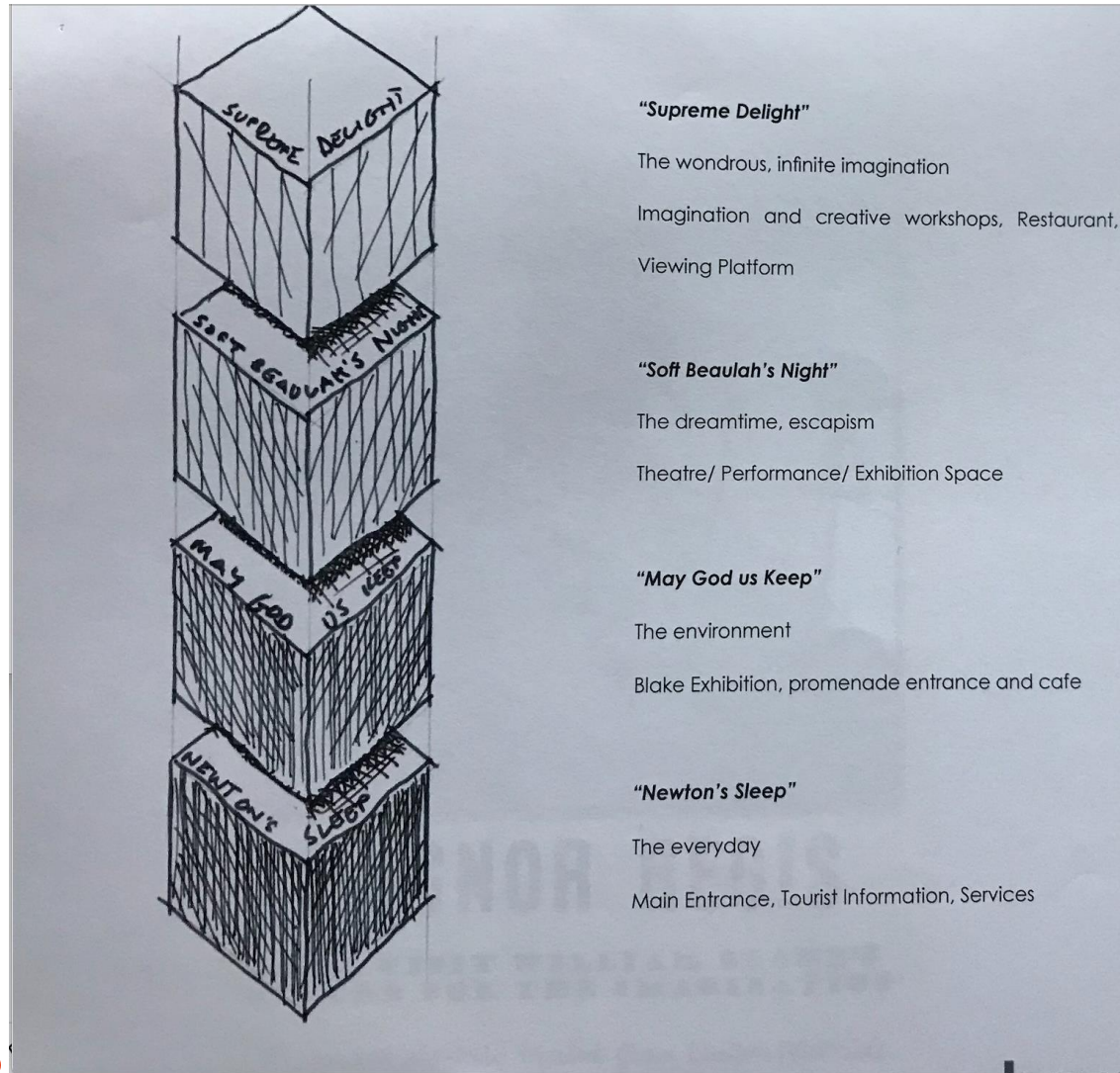


The Local Community; individuals, schools, further education, local businesses and external busines

The tourists; local visiting for an afternoon, sojourn from shopping, the day tripper from London, the holiday makers in Bognor or surrounding areas.

This centre could be a draw to re-imagine Bognor Regis Seafront, not limited to the tourist, but the local community also. The outlined brief attempts to cater for everyone and not just narrowly focus on one group.

Concept



Concept

How to organize the 'Centre for the imagination'
*"Now I a fourfold visions see,
And a fourfold vision is given to me:
Tis Fourfold in my supreme delight
And threefold in soft Beulah's night
And twofold always, may god us keep
From single Visions and Newton's sleep!"*

William Blake wrote these words in a letter while walking from Felpham to Lavant

By utilizing this vision as a concept to order the internal functions of the proposal, the visitor can engage with the narrative through a journey up to the viewing platform, with the horizon over the channel symbolizing Blake's notion of infinite essence

Creative arts could be

GET creative to regenerate Bognor Regis, a new pressure in the town has urged. 4BR said the future of the Regis Centre site should be linked firmly to the arts.

Successful examples of the effect artistic attractions could have on seaside towns could be seen with the Turner Contemporary in Margate, which had brought in £100m to the Kent town, it said, as well as Bexhill's De La Warr building and the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings.

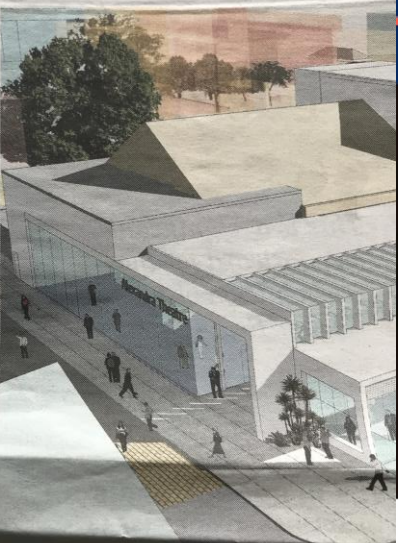
4BR's Steve Goodheart said its vision for the key seafront site of the Regis Centre was far away from the scheme last put forward by St Modwen for Arun District Council.

"The vision of 4BR is embryonic but is based around imagination, ambition and collaboration.

"We share the council's view that one of the key locations for the proposed regeneration is the prominent seafront site, the Regis Centre," he said.

"Likewise, we share their view that is good economic practice to have an 'anchor tenant' secured for a new development to ensure its success. However, where we differ is that we believe this party should be a cultural anchor tenant rather than one based in the retail or leisure sectors.

"We see that this space would best be used to construct a new iconic



An architect's drawing of St Modwen's plans in 2012 for the Alexandra Theatre building.

A large area within such an iconic building could be made available to a national art gallery, both for its own exhibitions and for touring national and international art exhibitions.

"Alongside this, a William Blake destination venue

could be housed – a centre of discovery where Blake's creativity and imagination could be presented."

This space, he said, could attract creative thinkers to the town and inspire a generation to invest in it. "The theatre area could

Artist inspires plan for new regeneration

THE GREAT artist William Blake is at the heart of an imaginative new regeneration scheme for Bognor Regis.

The famous artist, poet and philosopher has inspired plans for a Centre for the Imagination along the town's seafront.

The distinctive building would be constructed on the Regis Centre site as a theatre, performance and exhibition space as well as a permanent exhibition devoted to Blake.

The idea's supporters claim it could revive Bognor like the Turner Contemporary art gallery has boosted the Kent resort of Margate.

Architect Richard Harrison has devised the plans for the centre based on ideas from the enthusiasts in the Big Blake Project.

Project founder Rachel Searle said: "We can show

there is an alternative to overlooking the seafront. Flats could also be built to help pay for the centre and a revamped Place St Maur.

Mr Harrison, of hmw architects, compiled the proposals after Arun announced it was taking on the initial stage of the regeneration work after St Modwen decided to quit.

"William Blake is one of the quintessential British philosophers, artists and poets. There is a lot of interest, particularly in London, in him and his heritage and we want to bring those people down here," he said.

"The idea of a flagship cultural centre at a seafresh regeneration is an established strategy, prevalent in many UK and European urban areas."

The Blake centre was launched on Tuesday night

Completing the uncosted development would be shops with a restaurant



William Blake's final work to be projected on St Paul's Cathedral

William Blake by Thomas Phillip

Thursday, September 11, 2014

NEW VISION FOR THE SEAFRONT



'Centre for the Imagination' to honour artist William Blake

WORLD-RENOWNED artist and poet William Blake has inspired plans for a Centre for the Imagination to regenerate Bognor Regis. Its backers say the celebration of the area's most famous resident – who spent three years in Felpham – with a centre of creativity would attract a large number of visitors. Blake, who died in 1827, was a giant of the Romantic age. Voted one of the 100 Great Britons in a BBC poll, he produced many great works of art and, famously, wrote the poems that became the anthem Jerusalem. The Bognor Regis seafresh regeneration has been devised by architect Richard Harrison and the Big Blake Project members. Rachel Searle, who founded the project, said: "This will be something unique to Bognor. Nowhere else in the world has anything like this." Mr Harrison said: "William Blake only lived in London and Felpham. Much of his work was written in Felpham, including Jerusalem."

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Blake festival will celebrate the poet



William Blake by Thomas Phillip

WILLIAM BLAKE fans are staging a festival next week to celebrate Felpham's most famous residents.

Golgonooza, from next Thursday to Saturday, will feature a crowdfunding campaign to buy Blake's cottage in the next 60 days.

The festival will include events in St Mary's Church, Felpham, Old Rectory Gardens and Bognor Regis town centre, with musicians, writers, poets and performers lined up.

With just two months left to raise £500,000 to buy the poet and philosopher's Grade II-listed cottage, help is urgently needed.

Rachel Searle, founder of the Big Blake Project, said: "We ask that people take into account the full regeneration potential of the cottage and help make the festival truly noteworthy."

The campaign to buy the Blakes Road cottage, where Jerusalem was written while Blake lived there from 1800-03, was launched in parliament in July.

It is intended by its supporters that the building will serve as a keystone for cultural regeneration in Bognor. The details of the festival were being finalised

By KEVIN SMITH kevin.smith@bognor.co.uk 01243 828777

in the past few days. The launch will be from 7pm-9pm next Thursday in St Mary's Church with Wayzgoose, when a range of Blake scholars will offer a variety of lectures.

Next Friday will see an A-Z of comedy, poetry, video and music from 7pm-8pm at the William Hardwicke pub in Bognor High Street.

September 20 will be packed with fun from storytelling by Abbie Palache from 10.30am-2pm to a 3.30-3pm comedy slot by Tom Durkin and Waiting for Robert, a play reflective of Blake's time in Felpham.

Also featuring will be spoken word performances in Create Bognor from midday-12.30pm. Stewart Nichol's Blakean Welcome at 12.45pm-1.05pm and an appearance at 7.30pm from the sharp-tongued, high-energy, social surfer rebel poet and songwriter Artilla The Stockbroker.

More details from Rachel Searle on 07775 893533 or rachelmssearle@gmail.com or Will Harvey on 01903 366353 or info@loosemarbles.co.uk

An architect's drawing of St Modwen's plans in 2012 for the Alexandra Theatre

building. A large area within such an iconic building could be made available to a national art gallery, both for its own exhibitions and for touring national and international art exhibitions. "Alongside this, a William Blake destination venue

could be housed – a centre of discovery where Blake's creativity and imagination can be presented."

This space, he said, would attract creative thinkers to the town and inspire a new generation to invest in it.

"The theatre area could

then be developed into a large community multi-purpose venue with indoor and outdoor facilities.

"Activities that could take place would range from local to national events such as stage performances, conferences, exhibitions,

forums, cinema, music, dance and festivals as well as sports events including boxing, judo, darts and many more.

"Flexibility is the key word here. Spaces for many community groups, family events, tourist information

Conclusions

The idea of flagship cultural centre to spearhead regeneration is an established strategy, prevalent in many UK and European urban areas.

The day trip tourist from London has many options on the South Coast, but a centre in Bognor Regis, focused on a huge figure to English culture and identity could bring a new uniqueness to Bognor Regis and the area, as well as an inspiration to the local residents and businesses to have a new and rich association to their town.

The surrounding Regis Centre site could build upon the existing proposals, and with the new Blake 'Centre for the Imagination' combine with the esplanade and surrounding town developments to once again make Bognor Regis a wonderful place to live, visit and stay.