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Advertising: (0628) 771100

Fax: (0628) 770944

Editorial: (0628) 771155

Fax: (0628) 770370

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A NEW SKINDLES?

Talks on plans for riverside project

DEVELOPERS behind a multi-million pound scheme to transform the riverside by Maidenhead Bridge — with a new hotel as the focal point — are to meet with local residents and groups as part of the major consultation exercise in the coming weeks.

Birmingham Estates, which acquired Skindles last year, plans to demolish the existing 18th century buildings to make way for a bigger, luxury hotel with conference centre and leisure facilities.

The new development would be set back from the river and act as a catalyst for the re-routing of Mill Lane. A new roundabout onto the A4 is suggested, together with the resting and expansion of the nearby Normans garage, which would make way for starter homes and flats.

A business park or prestige headquarters building is also proposed, with additional riverside housing. And the scheme could incorporate new facilities for Maidenhead Rowing Club and the sea cadet unit in River Rd, Taplow.

The company, which has its head office in London and specialises in residential, leisure and secondary commercial developments, is undertaking public consultation before any formal plans are submitted.

The aim, according to communications management consultant Steve Hare, is to keep local conservation, amenity and sporting groups — as well as residents — informed about the proposals as they evolve.

"Before any planning approval is sought, it is the developers' strong wish not only to inform everyone with an interest in the site, but further to seek their opinions and advice," he explained.

The feedback so far was reported to be positive, with suggestions such as disabled and public access to the river-

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M4 DEATH CAR ENDS IN TREE

A Maidenhead man was killed at the weekend when his car veered off the M4 into a ditch and crashed into a tree.

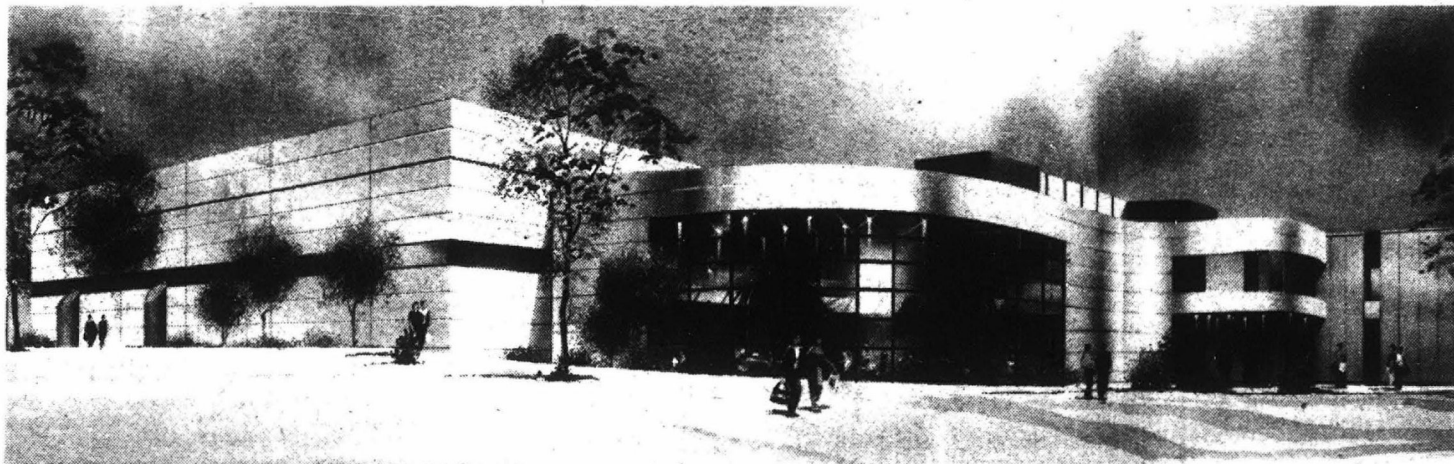
Mr. John Richards (42) of Shoppenhangers Rd. was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident on the London-bound carriageway just east of junction 6 at about 9.45 a.m. on Saturday. No other vehicles were involved.

Two fire appliances from Windsor and Slough went to the scene and found Mr. Richards' BMW car stuck in the branches of the tree. Firemen were forced to use cutting equipment to free his body.

Police have appealed for witnesses, who should contact P-c. Walker at Taplow.

Call for full council debate

YES TO MAGNET £6.5m SCHEME



This is how the Magnet could look by March 1993. Most of the centre's problems have involved the pool, which is to be replaced by a sports hall in the new plans.

The Hogg cubs are tops at chess



Matthew (left) and Richard Hogg.

Two local boys named Hogg — who are friends but unrelated — took the first two places in the recent District Cub Chess Championships held at the 5th Maidenhead Headquarters in Holmanleaze.

Richard Hogg of Cannon Lane, who came first, and Matthew Hogg of Twyn-

ham Rd, who came second, are members of both the 1st Maidenhead Cub Pack and the Maidenhead Junior Chess Club. Their win has meant that they will go on to represent Berkshire at the County Cub Chess Championships being held in Holmanleaze on November 17.

The success has pleased their Akela, Janice Groves, for the pack has had its fair share of problems. The cubs had to leave their St Marks Rd premises when the land was put up for sale, and they are now hoping to hear from people who may be able to help them find a new permanent home.

THE controversial £6.5million scheme to modernise Maidenhead's Magnet Leisure Centre has been approved by the District Council's leisure services committee.

The plan will add £3.50 to every poll tax bill in the Royal Borough next year, and £6.37 the following year.

The upgraded leisure centre will have:

- a 25-metre eight lane competition pool;
- a small family pool;
- a leisure hall in place of the present pool;
- new changing rooms;
- fire escapes to increase the capacity of the main hall to 1,500.

Building could start as soon as next May and be finished within two years.

Many members — Tory and Liberal Democrat — are worried over the high cost and furious at the way the plan has been handled by leading Conservatives.

When the leisure services committee last considered the scheme to modernise the 16-year-old centre in St. Cloud Way on May 15, it was defeated by eight votes to seven.

ABSENTEES

But on Thursday last week — with several opponents of the plan unable to attend — it was approved by nine votes to four.

Cdr. Mrs. Maureen Mallet, a vocal opponent of the plan, was in Bournemouth for the Conservative Party conference.

Another member worried about the cost, Cdr. George Chamberlaine, was unable to cut short a business trip in Italy to attend.

Fellow Conservative, the Baroness Flather, was absent from the council chamber, as were two opposition members, Cdr. Martin Rimmer (Lib. Dem.) and Cdr. Mrs. Eileen Penfold (Ind.).

The modernisation scheme must be approved by the finance committee, which next meets on November 26. Its chairman, Cdr. David Maskell, voted in favour of

By Dominic Hurst

the plan on Thursday last week.

But opposition members are calling for the future of the Magnet to be debated by all 58 councillors.

"An issue of such financial importance with such an effect on the poll tax should be decided at a full council meeting," Liberal Democrat leader Cdr. Tony Langdown told the Advertiser.

The annual cost to community charge bills will slowly fall to £5.91, £5.73, £5.34, £4.93 and to £2.86 a year by 2000/1.

NO PROBLEM

Leisure services committee chairman Cdr. Bob Lintott says he cannot see any problem in the timing of last week's crucial meeting.

Opening the debate he told members he wanted to have an early meeting while the issues were fresh in people's minds.

"We met in May and requested an examination of the options. It seemed to me we should get back and review these as soon as possible."

"We also had an information visit on September 26 attended by 36 councillors. We know all there is to know and it is still fresh in our minds."

"All of the figures here are based on bids from contractors for this year," he said, adding an early decision would be advisable.

DELIGHTED

The 5,000 members of Maidenhead Arts, an umbrella group of more than 40 clubs and societies with interests ranging from painting to music and drama, are delighted at the prospect of having their own centre.

"That's the best news I've heard for a very long time," chairman Rudi Sheldon told the Advertiser, though he admitted celebration was a little premature.

• Debate and background to the news — see Page 9.

Sixteen sports pages



This week's Advertiser contains 16 pages of sport.

Maidenhead United beat Hungerford Town 3-1 on Tuesday evening. Benny Laryea (pictured) scoring twice. It was the Maggies' ninth straight win in Division 2 (South) of the Vauxhall League.

Marlow beat Andover 1-0 to move into the fourth qualifying round of the FA Cup, and followed it up with a 3-0 win over Bishops Stortford on Tuesday in the Premier Division of the Vauxhall League.



Both local rugby clubs suffered their first defeats in the Courage League on Saturday.

Maidenhead were beaten 27-12 at Southend and Marlow lost 3-6 at home to Newbury

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