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34p

£22m GATEWAY

WIN LES MISERABLES ON DVD

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By DANIEL COLLINS

A MULTI - MILLION pound re-development plan for the Sackville Road roundabout area has been approved.

It should be completed by 2006 according to the businessman behind the scheme.

Wealthy property developer Hamayun Khan has been given the go-ahead to build a luxury eight - storey retail and apartment block.

And the Observer can reveal Mr Khan intends to build a matching complex on the Skoda garage opposite - completing a £22 million investment he says can be 'the gateway to Bexhill'.

The private scheme has been broadly welcomed by councillors as a vital first move in town regeneration.

Either part of the project represents one of the biggest investments in the town for decades.

Shabby shops on the eastern corner of Sackville Road will be replaced by 24 luxury apartments - valued at up to £500,000 - two restaurants and an underground car park. Building is due to begin in the spring.

Mr Khan believes a market exists for the complex, including roof-top apartments with panoramic views.

The scheme casts doubt on any future plan for a controversial hotel complex on the open green opposite.

The planning application for the garage site should go before Rother in January. Speaking to the Observer with business partner, Sanjay Karia, this week, Mr Khan said: "It's a great place to invest. We see this as a beginning to regeneration and want to set an example in a gate-

Restaurants, luxury flats, underground car park: major private scheme gets green light

way to the town. We are looking to spend something in the region of £22 million and that is a massive injection to the regeneration of the town."

And Mr Khan said he could be tempted to invest yet further if the right locations are available. "It's a seaside town and I love to do projects by the water," he added. "We would be looking to other sites in Bexhill."

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▲ This artist's montage by architects Faulkner Associates gives an indication of the building coming to the Sackville Road roundabout.

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Sackville Road plan 'major step forward'

ENTREPRENEUR Hamayun Khan has had his plans for a luxury development at the east end of Sackville Road strongly backed by councillors.

Members of Rother's planning committee followed officer's recommendations and granted delegated planning permission for 24 flats, two restaurants and basement parking.

The plans - outlined on the front page - met with a positive response from many of the councillors and comments were made that the private investment could 'kick-start' town regeneration.

In a separate plan architects ABK have already developed a town 'masterplan' for redevelopment with public money.

Mr Khan's complex would be no more than a few meters away from the much-debated seafront hotel proposed by Sea Space and designed by ABK.

Cllr Deirdre Williams, said: "I think this is a major step forward in the regeneration of Bexhill."

"That corner has been an eye-sore for so long and we have to do something somewhere with a large important building



Hamayun Khan and an artist's impression of the new development.

and I believe this is it. It will be a real added bonus with the Pavilion coming back next year."

Cllr Ron Dyason agreed the development is crucial to the future prosperity of the town.

He said: "We have talked about regeneration for a long time but we can't say 'not just yet' and get behind."

"If we want to see this town regenerated there are times we have to jump into the water and say 'I'm prepared to do something'. Here we have the oppor-

By DANIEL COLLINS

tunity where someone in the private sector is prepared to invest in this town.

"We have had expert advice from English Heritage (on the design) and we have come to the point where we have to make a decision and I would support this because I want to see Bexhill get the facilities it needs for the next generation. If it becomes a back-water it would be

disastrous."

Cllr Sue Prochak, who does not sit on the committee, was less enthused, accusing the Conservative group of 'rushing' the plans.

She said: "Why on earth wasn't this site included in ABK's masterplan? All the sites need to be looked at as one and this site and the Skoda building opposite are marvellous sites for Bexhill."

Committee member Cllr John Kemp also felt the scheme

may be of limited value.

He said: "I hope that those who spoke in favour of this on the basis of regeneration are right. I don't see how it will regenerate the town because it will not provide much employment."

The suggestion was countered by a clearly riled Cllr Carl Maynard.

"At the very least you will have about 48 people living in the block of flats contributing to Bexhill and spending money in the immediate area."

He added: "I really am rather disappointed with some of the comments today. It's not about Bexhill Conservatives pushing something through, it's about regeneration - to get rid of something and replace it with something is regeneration - it should be applauded and supported."

"We are not just pushing it through, we want to get something going."

Chief planning officer Frank Rallings, reminded members although regeneration was topical, the site had been primed for development for some time and could be thought of as a separate entity rather than, "the be all and end all of regeneration."

'Nothing to fear from regeneration'

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Observer Comment - page 6

£22m gateway

Dog in a drain

□ FROM PAGE 1

The Viking Fish Bar

We are happy to announce that, following refurbishment,

The Viking Fish Bar will be re-opening at

**5pm, Monday
15th November 2004**

and from then on as usual.

We look forward to seeing all our regular customers again, and inviting any new ones.

We would like to apologise for any inconvenience our closing has caused, and remind any motorists that there is still no drive-through facility...

The Coppola Family

□ FROM PAGE 1

Mr Khan said: "It (Bexhill) has a lovely safe atmosphere and there is a huge shortage of flats of this kind and a lot of interest. We could have gone for small flats and could have got more in, but chose not to."

"In the restaurants we want real quality. Whatever we put there will be classy - that's part of my contribution to the town, to produce something that's excellent."

And what if one of the high-street burger chains wanted to set up within the complex?

"They will be told very politely they are not wanted," added Mr Karia.

Mr Khan believes the new development complements the De La Warr Pavilion's design but is also well suited to the 21st century.

He said: "We could have produced something Edwardian but, I particularly, would have been bored to tears."

"We have gone for something modern and for something exciting that I think will be of the greatest benefit to the town."

"It's difficult to get planning permission for this kind of site (the east side of Sackville Road) and the representatives of the town have been very helpful. I would like to extend my thanks to them."

Darran Cohen, senior manager of Ward and Partners estate agents - acting for Mr Khan's company, Kingston Homes South East Ltd - added: "The next site should be just as exciting. It could be a heartbreak of the town which Bexhill sadly lacks at the moment."

The development, provisionally known as De La Warr Mansions East, is shown in the pictures released by site architects Faulkner Associates. The plan in the aerial image has since had minor alterations.

Should a hotel be built on the Metropole putting green it would stand directly between Mr Khan's development and the sea.

Asked to comment on the possibility of a seafront hotel and the raging debate on the subject, Mr Khan said: "I understand there is a great reluctance for anything to be built on the green."

The firefighters received their unusual call at 6.30 on Tuesday morning. They found the white-and-tan Jack Russell with just its head poking from out of a narrow drain near some lock-up garages at Faygate Close, Sidley. It is thought Cindy had been trapped all night. With her safely muzzled, firefighters quickly released her. Initially, Cindy's owners could not be traced so, although unharmed by the ordeal, she was taken to the Greensievas Night Clinic to await reclaim.

A grateful Theresa Richards said: "We live in Carfax Close. Cindy had been missing since the night before. My husband had been out all night looking for her. I was out at first light and saw the fire engine in the distance and thought 'I wonder what they are doing there...?' "It was only later that we found out Cindy is old and overweight. She doesn't wander far normally. But occasionally she forgets she's old and tries to chase things!"

"She was unharmed but quite traumatised when she came home. She needed a lot of cuddles and reassurance. In fact she won't go outside unless we carry her out."