

Victorian lamps taken from listed building

by Richard Gladstone

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PRICELESS Victorian lamps have been stolen from the grounds of an old college site.

Two of the former street lights, which were attached to The Archery Villas, at the former Hastings College site in Archery Road, St Leonards, are believed to have been taken around three weeks ago.

Christine Francis, secretary of The Burtons' St Leonards Society, reported the matter to police on April 19.

She said a member of the public discovered the lamps were missing while out delivering newsletters but it is not known what date they were taken.

Mrs Francis said: "The Archery Villas were designed by Decimus Burton in the mid-19th Century and are Grade II listed. So these lamps are part of the town's heritage.

"They will be difficult to replace."

Sam Langley, who used to work as a technician at Hastings College, has done extensive research on The Archery Villas.

He said: "The lamps are quite unique and it is sad that two of them have been taken.

"They are more than 100 years old and used to be on the seafront before they were moved to their present position more than 20 years ago. Students renovated some of them."

Last month the *Observer* reported residents' fears that the college site could be targeted by arsonists following allegations of vandalism, weekly break-ins and graffiti.

Gladedale Homes bought the land when the college, now called Sussex Coast College Hastings, moved to Sta-



One of the lamps identical to the two stolen

tion Plaza.

Almost two years after the developers applied for planning permission for 163 new homes, the proposals still have not come before Hastings Borough Council's planning committee.

A Gladedale spokesman said: "There have been two minor incidents at the former Hastings College site and we are liaising closely with the police in relation them.

"We have enhanced security at the site and increased the number of patrols that are undertaken to address the issue."

The application has been condemned by the Save the Archery Ground (STAG) group which has drummed up substantial support locally against the plans.

The controversial scheme is expected to come before the council during the summer.