



BATH PRESERVATION TRUST

Planning Update

April 2022

News this Month

- Progress towards Examination hearing sessions for the **Local Plan Partial Update** - see 1.1
- **Wera Hobhouse** speaks out against speculative student development & Airbnbs - see 1.3
- **World Heritage Day 2022** scheduled for 18th April - see 3.2
- Historic England launches new aerial photography tool as part of ‘**Historic England from the Air**’ project - see 3.5
- Bath awarded **Champion City Status** - see 1.6
- Revised student accommodation scheme for **Frome House** - see 2.3
- New scheme for housing in Green Belt on **Deadmill Lane** - see 2.1
- **Plumb Center Development Site** sold to Bath Spa University - see 2.4
- Appeal dismissed for proposed **5G mast in Wellsway** - see 2.6

1. B&NES Consultations and Projects

1.1 Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU): The LPPU has been submitted to the Inspector (Philip Lewis) for Examination. The Inspector has asked a number of initial questions and B&NES have answered [here](#).

[Updates on the progress of the Local Plan Partial Update are available here.](#)

1.2 Update on Council’s Housing Company: B&NES Council’s housing company Aequus has returned a total of £7.9m to the council in capital receipts and revenue over the past five years. The figures are set out in a report presented to full Council on Thursday 24 March which also recommends approval of the Aequus Business Plan to 2023/24.

Aequus was set up five years ago to provide affordable sustainable homes to meet the housing needs of local residents and help finance council services. It has so far delivered a total of over 140 new homes in Bath and Keynsham.

[The report to full Council can be read here.](#)

[A recording of the informal meeting of the full Council can be watched here.](#)

1.3 Wera Hobhouse Speaks Out Against Speculative Student Development & Airbnbs: In a speech in the House of Commons, [Wera Hobhouse raised concerns over whole households being lost to Airbnb in Bath as well as the impact on traditional hotels and B&Bs](#). She asked for a statement from the Business Secretary on how it is intended to manage the damage to “local family life and to local businesses”. In response, Mark

Spencer raised the comparative benefits of Airbnbs to the local economy and the need to facilitate people's ability to visit tourist attractions. This follows on from calls for tighter controls on short-term holiday lets in 2018, and subsequent plans in 2020 for Airbnb to meet with Bath policymakers about possible restrictions.

More recently, [Wera Hobhouse has called for fresh support for her campaign to stop speculative student development which she says is driving housing prices up](#). This coincides with new policy in the Local Plan Partial Update that would require student accommodation to be built on the campuses of the two universities in Bath unless need is appropriately evidenced by a formal agreement between the developer and a relevant education provider.

1.4 Liveable Neighbourhoods: The [Phase 1 Liveable Neighbourhood areas](#) are due to be co-designed with members from each community; a series of co-design workshops are due to go forward from March 2022. Four trial areas have been identified for 'fast tracking' of design work before being made available for public consultation in April 2022.

[See the Liveable Neighbourhoods timeline here.](#)

1.5 Additional Investment for Street Cleaning Services: More street cleaning, free graffiti removal for domestic properties and a new 'Clean and Green' team to respond to issues reported by residents are among [plans for an extra £950,000 spend on neighbourhood services by B&NES Council](#).

1.6 Bath Awarded Champion City Status: B&NES Council has been celebrated for its tree planting projects under the [Queen's Green Canopy](#) (QGC) initiative which aims to highlight outstanding cities which have trees as a central part of their plans for green spaces. Activities have included:

- Every school in B&NES offered a tree to plant in their grounds, as part of the UK-wide initiative to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'. Trees were delivered to 56 schools, including Swainswick Church School in Bath.
- Several tree giveaway events with 4,000 trees taken by residents to plant in their gardens.
- Trees planted across B&NES in projects funded by the Trees for Climate grant via the Forest of Avon Trust, with the help of residents, Friends groups, Bathscape, Grow for Life, and More Trees For B&NES.
- In 2021/2022 tree planting took place in Pennyquick Park, Brickfields Park, Rush Hill, Corston View, Moorlands Park, Purlewent Village Green, Weston Recreation Ground, and Bloomfield Green.

This season the council is also planting more than 200 trees on streets for their many benefits including air filtering, temperature regulation and improving wellbeing for the community. The council plans to work with schools to adopt the [One Tree Per Child](#) initiative.

1.7 Bath in Time: The [Bath in Time website has been relaunched](#) with an improved search function for its library of historic photos of Bath and its surroundings.

1.8 Bath Area Forum: [Register in advance for the next meeting on 16th May at 6pm here.](#)

2. Bath Matters, Planning Applications and Developments

2.1 Deadmill Lane: Application [22/01220/FUL](#) has been submitted for two detached 5-bed dwellings on the southern half of a greenfield site in Larkhall. This follows two unsuccessful proposals for up to 18 affordable dwellings on the site, which is located within the Green Belt. As part of this latest planning application, it is not indicated that the proposed homes are to be affordable. BPT maintains ongoing concerns regarding inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the potential for ‘development creep’ to the north of the site, as well as ongoing harm to the setting of the conservation area and the local character of Larkhall.

2.2 Sulis Down: The [South of Bath Alliance \(SOBA\)](#) has published drone footage of the Sulis Down site here, where construction for Phase 1 of development (171 dwellings) has started. The footage additionally highlights the extent of the proposed Phase 3 & 4 sites. [You can watch the drone footage here.](#)

2.3 Frome House: Following the refusal of application [21/04147/FUL](#) for the change of use of Frome House to provide 66 student bedspaces over the existing ground floor tyre repair centre, new application [22/01299/FUL](#) proposes a revised scheme for 25 student bedspaces. The new application proposes the change of use of the existing building with minimal external changes and as such the building’s height, form, and profile would be retained as existing. [BPT previously objected to the original scheme on grounds of the excessive height, scale, and massing of the proposed development, and poor design which would fail to sustain or reinforce local distinctiveness.](#) We maintained an in-principle objection to the development of speculative PBSA, and as such we continue to oppose the scheme.

2.4 The Plumb Center, Locksbrook Road: Application [18/05047/FUL](#) for a 3 storey (plus mezzanine) mixed use building for 1354sqm of B1c Light Industrial, 364sqm of D2 Assembly and Leisure, 52 student studios and 28 student ensuite rooms in cluster flats - application refused, allowed at appeal. Subsequent planning permission was granted for application [20/00023/FUL](#) to renew the scheme. [The site has now been sold by the developer Summix to Bath Spa University as part of plans to create a ‘walkable’ campus.](#) This follows the refurbishment of the Herman Miller Building to create the university’s Art and Design Building and the focal point of the new Locksbrook Campus.

This follows the sale of Bath Spa University’s student accommodation at Green Park House to Aviva Investors (on behalf of the Lime Property Fund) in February. As part of the transaction, the Fund has simultaneously entered into a 27-year lease agreement with the University of Bath, which included annual CPI rent reviews, collared and capped at 0 per cent and 6 per cent respectively.

2.5 Storage Yard Adjacent To Argyle Works, Lower Bristol Road: Application [22/00687/REG03](#) has been submitted by B&NES Council for the development of eight affordable apartments, to be rented as social housing, on Lower Bristol Road. BPT is

strongly in favour of the development of much-needed affordable housing, but we maintained some concerns with the car-dominated layout of the scheme and a lack of green amenity space. [You can read our comments in full here.](#)

2.6 5G mast at Wellsway: Application [21/03944/TEL](#) for a new 18m 5G monopole in Wellsway - refused. **UPDATE** - The appeal has been dismissed; it was concluded that the installation would result in moderate harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed 18m height of the mast was not considered to be justified as the appellant's statement of case indicated that a 15m height would work effectively for the operator. The Inspector concluded that *"whilst I am satisfied that no visually preferable sites are available for the provision of a new installation, the appellant's own evidence demonstrates that the desired coverage could be achieved with a lower mast, which would be a less dominant feature in the street scene. For these reasons, and taking into account suitable alternatives, I conclude that the moderate harm to the character and appearance of the area, is not outweighed by the need for the installation as proposed."*

3. National News

3.1 Levelling Up: [Round 2 of the Levelling Up fund has been launched](#). This follows the first round of funding in 2020 which supported £1.7 billion of projects in over 100 local areas across the UK. A total of £4 billion has been allocated to the Levelling Up Fund. The second round of the Fund will focus on the same three investment themes as the first round: local transport projects that make a genuine difference to local areas; town centre and high street regeneration; and support for maintaining and expanding the UK's world-leading portfolio of cultural and heritage assets.

In addition, for the second round of the Fund, it is proposed to fund up to two large bids for up to £50 million under the Fund's culture and heritage investment theme. These bids must be for flagship projects and be in line with the Fund's focus on highly visible interventions that boost local pride in place. These must be for at least 90% culture.

The deadline for bid applications is 6th July.

3.2 World Heritage Day 2022: This year's World Heritage Day is scheduled to take place on Sunday 18th April, on the theme of ['Heritage and Climate'](#). This follows ICOMOS' declaration of a Climate & Ecological Emergency in December 2020. As part of this declaration, ICOMOS recognised not only the need to safeguard heritage from the effects of climate change across the world, but also the "potential of cultural heritage to enable inclusive, transformative and just climate action."

From 26th March, [Heritage Minister Nigel Huddleston has put out a call for new UK submissions to go forward for World Heritage Site nomination in 2024](#). The successful sites could join the UK's 33 other UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

3.3 Government Response to the Technical Consultation Changes to 'Permitted Development Rights for Electronic Communications Infrastructure': On 7th March, [the government proposed new permitted development rights](#) which will support the installation of 5G infrastructure and help extend mobile coverage.

Amendments will include:

- For existing ground-based masts:
 - A specified increase in width will be permitted (either alteration or replacement) without prior approval in all areas. This includes Article 2(3) land (eg. conservation areas). Increases beyond those specified will be subject to prior approval.
 - An increase in height up to 25 metres will be subject to prior approval on Article 2(3) land or land on a highway. Prior approval would not be required outside of Article 2(3) land or within sites of special scientific interest.
- For existing building-based masts:
 - Permit the installation, alteration or replacement of building-based masts up to 10 metres above the tallest part of the building within 20 metres of the highway, on buildings less than 15 metres in height - subject to prior approval outside of Article 2(3) land and land on or within sites of special scientific interest.
 - Building-based masts up to 6 metres in height above the tallest part of the building would not require prior approval outside of Article 2(3) land or within sites of special scientific interest.
- For new ground-based masts:
 - Permit the installation of new ground-based masts up to 25 metres on Article 2(3) land or land on a highway, and 30 metres on all other land (except land on or within sites of special scientific interest) subject to prior approval.

Regulations will be altered to include conditions that require Code Operators to consider and minimise:

- Visual impacts of equipment deployed without the need for prior approval as far as practicable.
- The potential impacts on Article 2(3) land or designated heritage assets of any nearby proposed deployment (taking account of the reason for the Article 2(3) designation).
- To maintain accessibility of footways and access to properties.

3.4 Chancellor of the Exchequer's Spring Statement: [The Spring Statement was delivered by Rishi Sunak on 23rd March](#). Amongst the announced changes to taxes and spending, it is proposed to reduce the rate of VAT on energy saving materials (such as solar panels) from 5% to 0%, for five years from April 2022. Wind turbines and water turbines will be added to the list of energy savings materials. This is intended to help households improve energy efficiency and keep energy costs down, as well as supporting the UK's long-term Net Zero ambitions.

3.5 Historic England Launches 'Historic England from the Air' Tool: Historic England is launching an aerial photography tool that allows users to [explore over 400,000 digitised photos of England over the past century online](#) for the first time. By opening up these images to the public through this accessible online tool, Historic England hopes that people will use it to research their local areas, offering an insight into a century of changes and development.

3.6 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Publishes Sixth Assessment Report: [The IPCC has released its third report of its Sixth Assessment \(AR6\) series](#), assessing the impact of climate change on ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities at global and regional levels. The report has identified the significance of urban and built-up areas in delivering urgent climate action; *“retrofitting, upgrading and redesigning existing urban places and infrastructure combined with planning and design for new urban infrastructure can utilise existing knowledge on social policy, nature-based solutions and grey/physical infrastructure to build inclusive processes of adaptation into everyday urban planning and development (Technical Summary).”*