



BATH PRESERVATION TRUST

Planning Update

January 2022

News this Month

- Upcoming public inquiry on B&NES' **City Centre Security Proposals** - see 1.3
- Start of **resurfacing works and public realm improvements at York Street** - see 1.4
- B&NES launch public consultation on **Journey to Net Zero plan** - see 1.5
- New application for mixed-use development of **former Bath Press site** - see 2.1
- Residential Development at **Belvoir Castle pub** refused at Planning Committee following Judicial Review - see 2.2
- New Purpose-Built Student Accommodation permitted at the **Jubilee Centre** - see 2.3
- Appeal against refusal of development of two new dwellings in garden setting of **Waterworks Cottage** - see 2.5
- Awaited release of the Government's **Levelling Up White Paper** - see 3.1

1. B&NES Consultations and Projects

1.1 Local Plan Partial Update: The Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) is reportedly on target for its scheduled submission for public examination by Winter 2021, with examination hearings scheduled for Spring 2022. The proposed timeline for the adoption of the Local Plan Partial Update is available on the council website:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/local-plan-partial-update-lppu-public-consultation/plan-adoption-timeline>

1.2 Liveable Neighbourhoods Consultation: Public consultation closed on 3rd January. The scheme is on target to identify schemes to be fast tracked based on the complexity of changes suggested within the public consultation in January 2022. A series of co-design workshops are scheduled for February 2022 with members of each local community to help design a preferred concept design. Public consultation on these concept designs is anticipated March 2022. The project timeline is available here:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/liveable-neighbourhoods-public-engagement-nov-2021/project-timeline>

1.3 City Centre Security Proposals: [Proposals for anti-terrorism security measures](#) which will restrict vehicles in some Bath city centre streets, in order to protect the public, are moving ahead - with access measures for Blue Badge holders also put in place. However, the council will trigger a public inquiry for one street in the scheme after a member of the public upheld their objections to the proposed traffic regulation order for anti-terrorism

purposes in York Street, despite work to mitigate concerns. The public inquiry is anticipated to be held in Spring 2022. Blue badge parking spaces will not be affected and the council will work with community and disability groups to further inform the final design of the scheme.

1.4 Public Realm Improvements on York Street: [Essential works to improve and maintain York Street and complement the opening of Bath’s new state-of-the-art World Heritage Centre and Clore Learning Centre started on 6th January.](#) The works between Stall Street and Kingston Parade are expected to last 16 weeks and will support the opening of the centre, as well as improve the public realm in the long term. The area will be resurfaced in a high-quality natural stone, in keeping with the historic streetscape, and the street will be raised to create a level surface throughout allowing for a smooth transition throughout these spaces. From 6th January, access to York Street will be restricted to emergency and site vehicles only for the duration of the works. A pedestrian diversion will be in place between York Street and Stall Street and York Street and Abbey Street.

1.5 Journey to Net Zero Plan: B&NES has released its new Journey to Net Zero Plan for public consultation. The plan sets out the changes that need to be made to the way people move around our area if the council is to meet its goal of carbon neutrality by 2030. Transport accounts for 29% of the district’s carbon emissions. [The plans are available here for consultation up until 7th February.](#)

The plan sets out targets of reduced vehicle mileage per person, increased take-up of electric/hybrid and low emissions vehicles, and increased use of public transport and walking and cycling. B&NES is now seeking public feedback on proposals, including:

- The introduction of traffic ‘cells’ to remove through-traffic from the city centre.
- Mobility hubs to help people in rural communities access bus services into Bath.
- A potential new mass transit system for Bath.
- Improved access into Bath along the main corridors.
- New, safer cycling routes, improved crossing facilities and secure bike storage at school sites.
- Improved accessibility for disabled transport users including developing new technologies.

1.6 Cleveland Bridge Update: [Engineering work on Bath’s historic Cleveland Bridge resumed on 4th January.](#) The bridge will remain closed to HGVs, and open for vehicles under two metres in width. Since temporary supports were installed at the end of October 2021, crucial sections of the bridge trusses have been repaired. However, repairs on a fourth truss are more extensive and work is ongoing. Further repair works have also been identified. An update on the programme of renovation works is anticipated mid-January.

1.7 Bath Area Forum: You can register to attend the next meeting on 2nd February 2022, with a presentation from Youth Connect, here: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/connecting-communities/bath-city-forum>

1.8 Changes to B&NES On-Street Parking Permits, Charges and Pay & Display Machines: [From 6th January, a number of changes have come into effect regarding parking permits, parking charges, and Pay & Display machines.](#) They aim to improve air quality and reduce

the risks posed by air pollution while also meeting the council's wider transport policy aims.

- A reduced number of Pay & Display machines as more people switch to paying for their parking digitally.
- The cost of on-street residents' parking permits will be based on a vehicle's CO2 emissions, or engine size where CO2 information is missing. Charges for higher polluting vehicles increase by five per cent for each subsequent emissions band with diesel vehicles subject to an additional 25 per cent surcharge in order to reduce NOx emissions.
- Moving long-stay visitor parking to off-street car parks and the introduction of digitised hotel, guest house and holiday let permits.
- The introduction of digitised medical permits to counter misuse and an increase to bring the charge in-line with existing residents' permits.
- An increase in trade permit charges.
- The introduction of half day paper visitor permits to support vulnerable residents unable to access the financial savings offered by digital permits.
- An increase in on-street parking charges of 10p per hour including charging on Sundays.
- All residents parking zones are now also operational on Sundays.

2. Bath Matters, Planning Applications and Developments

2.1 Bath Press: Resubmitted application [21/05672/EFUL](#) has been submitted for the mixed-use redevelopment of the Bath Press site, with 277 residential units and ground floor commercial space. This follows the refusal of previous application [20/04760/EFUL](#) at Planning Committee in September 2021. The revised application seeks to address the previous reasons for the refusal:

- A stepped/ramped pedestrian access to the south will be included, to connect the site with the residential streets to the south.
- The historic 1920s chimney will be retained.
- The onsite office/Class E space provision will be increased to 1608sqm exceeding the minimum allocation of 1500sqm set out for the site in the Local Plan.
- The total number of apartments provided will be reduced by 9 units from 286 units to 277 units.

The application continues to propose no affordable housing. As part of the determination of refused application 20/04760/EFUL, the council's independent viability assessor confirmed that it would not be viable to deliver affordable housing on the site. This conclusion remains unchanged.

BPT remains supportive of the principle of brownfield development. We are pleased to see that the historic chimney will be retained as part of the Press façade, although we maintain concerns about the relationship of the chimney with the scale of the surrounding buildings which would detract from its landmark value in streetscape views. We maintain that a lack of affordable housing in a development of this scale is unacceptable.

BPT's original objection is available on our website: <https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/revised-plans-for-former-bath-press-site-risks-unbalanced-harm-to-heritage-says-bpt/>

2.2 Belvoir Castle: Application [18/02500/LBA](#) for the demolition of a skittle alley to the rear of the Grade II Belvoir Castle public house, and the development of 9 apartments, a new community room, provision of new accessible toilets, and the refurbishment of the public house. **UPDATE** - This application had previously been granted consent at Planning Committee in 2018, against the planning officer's recommendations to refuse the scheme. The decision was challenged at High Court and consequently quashed as unlawful. As such, the application came back to Planning Committee on 15th December to be redecided. BPT spoke against the application on grounds of harm to the setting of multiple listed buildings, harm to local distinctiveness and townscape character, and likely harm to the viability of a historic pub. Councillors discussed concerns regarding the loss of outdoor space, harm to the setting of multiple heritage assets, and that the provision of the nine apartments is not linked to the retention and viability of the public house. The case officer clarified that there was no guarantee that the apartments would remain in the same ownership as the public house, or that the apartments are linked to the long-term survival of the public house. Councillors voted unanimously to refuse the application.

BPT's original objection is available on our website: <https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/planning-application/32-33-victoria-buildings-westmoreland/>

2.3 Jubilee Centre: Application [21/02354/FUL](#) for demolition of existing building and mixed-use redevelopment of site for storage and distribution (Class B8) and 120 units of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA). **UPDATE** - The application has now been permitted. The principle of PBSA was considered acceptable by the LPA and did not form part of the reasons for refusal for previous application [20/01794/FUL](#). This latest application was considered a "significant evolution in terms of design" from the refused proposals. The proposed height was considered to suitably reference the scale of the nearby Twerton Mill student accommodation. The conservation officer raised no objection, "advising that the design approach is now contextual and references the industrial character of this part of the city. They explicitly note that the height, scale and massing is regarded as acceptable within the heritage context of this part of the city."

2.4 Snowy the Bear, Bear Flat: Application [21/05237/AR](#) proposed refurbishment works to The Bear as part of the pub's handover to Greene King, including the removal of the life-size model of a polar bear named 'Snowy' by local residents. [BPT maintained concerns with the loss of the polar bear](#) and emphasised that the bear should be retained as a well-recognised local landmark. Revised plans came forward for the bear to be retained and repainted brown. Following significant local backlash, it has been confirmed that Snowy the polar bear will be kept as part of the pub changeover.

2.5 King's Head, Upper Weston: Application [21/05495/LBA](#) proposed the development of 6 apartments and a new retail unit with integrated living space upstairs in the rear car park of the King's Head, a Grade II pub in Upper Weston. There is a pending planning application for the pub's change of use to a bakery and pizzeria. BPT has strong concerns that the proposed development would over-dominate the setting of a listed building and

be excessive in height, scale, and massing. We feel that the loss of the car park may have an adverse impact on the viability of the King's Head as a business.

2.6 Waterworks Cottage: Application [20/04067/FUL](#) for the development of two new detached dwellings in the garden of Waterworks Cottage, a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA). **UPDATE** - This application was previously refused at Planning Committee on grounds of overdevelopment of the site, harm to the local landscape setting, and biodiversity harm. BPT maintained an objection to the scheme due to perceived harm to the setting of a NDHA, harm to the setting of the Bath conservation area and AONB, and harm to the Green Setting OUV of the World Heritage Site. [The application has now gone to appeal; the deadline for the submission of public comments is 10th February.](#)

2.7 St Martin's Hospital, Odd Down: Application [20/04546/OUT](#) for the development of 8 apartments within the setting of the Grade II St Martin's Chapel. **UPDATE** - This application was previously refused on grounds of harm to the setting of the Grade II Chapel and the wider setting of the Grade II St Martin's Hospital, formerly the Bath Union Workhouse. BPT maintained a similar objection to the scheme. [The application has now gone to appeal; the deadline for the submission of public comments is 10th February.](#)

3. National News

3.1 Levelling Up White Paper: Originally [anticipated before Christmas](#), the [Levelling Up White Paper](#) is now due to be published in January 2022. It has been reported that the White Paper will seek to address regional disparities in issues such as housing costs and living standards, looking away from London to other areas such as the North and Midlands. Among the reasons for the delay is said to be the Government's need to focus on dealing with the new Omicron Covid variant.

Following on from the previous [Planning White Paper](#) which has since been "paused", the government intends to produce a "final response" to the feedback on the white paper, likely to be released in early 2022.

3.2 Green Belt Protection Bill: A Bill was introduced on 21st June 2021 to [establish a national register of Green Belt land in England](#), to restrict the ability of local authorities to de-designate Green Belt land and to make provision about future development of de-designated Green Belt land. The second reading of the Bill is planned for 14th January 2022.

3.3 Amendments to The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No.3) Order 2021: A number of changes have been scheduled to the Act to take effect on various dates through January 2022. Amongst these are changes in relation to moveable structures as below; originally introduced as temporary measures, these are now being made permanent following public consultation:

From 11th January, markets can be held for an unlimited amount of days, including the provision of moveable structures related to this use. It excludes markets on sites designated as Scheduled Monuments and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

From 2nd January, unlisted pubs, cafes, and restaurants (not in the curtilage of a listed building) can put up one moveable structure on a permanent basis. Listed pubs, cafes, and restaurants, and ‘historic visitor attractions’ can put up one moveable structure for up to 120 days in a 12-month period. For both of these provisions, there are restrictions relating to Scheduled Monuments, and to minimising impacts on surrounding communities (including limits to size, height, and distance to residential boundaries). For moveable structures associated with listed buildings, further provisions include requirements for land to be reinstated to its original condition, prior approval from the local planning authority in relation to siting and the method of installation, and consultation with Historic England.

3.4 Fears of more ‘cultural vandalism’ of Victorian bridges in England and Scotland: In July 2021, [National Highways poured 1,000 tonnes of concrete and aggregate under a bridge at Great Musgrave in Cumbria without planning permission](#), triggering national backlash. The works formed part of an estate-wide programme of the planned infill and demolition of a number of bridges in National Highways ownership. The programme has since been paused due to the significant opposition raised. However, documents released under the Freedom of Information Act show that the agency has spent tens of thousands of pounds on the sites for the prospective infill or demolition of 14 bridges from Kent to East Lothian. The agency says the work is part of routine maintenance but campaigners say it has the hallmarks of preparing for filling in or demolition. Whilst “The government has halted all demolition and infill works for an indefinite period”, a National Highways civil engineer claims that works are proceeding as if demolition were going ahead. A spokesperson for National Highways said its previous plans to demolish nine historical bridges and fill in a further 69 remained on pause. She said: “We cannot risk a delay to any safety critical work so we must be ready to proceed with any agreed work once the pause is lifted.”