



BATH PRESERVATION TRUST

Planning Update

October 2021

BPT Events

- Hidden Burial Grounds of Bath, 31st October: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVENT00032>
- Halloween at the Herschel Museum, 31st October: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVENT00035>
- Beckford's Tower After Dark, 31st October: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVENT00030>
- Spooky Stories at Beckford's Tower, 31st October: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVENT00029>
- 12 Tales of a Georgian Christmas, 27th November - 31st December: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVENT00034>

News this Month

- BPT response to public consultation on the **Local Plan Partial Update and associated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** - see 1.1
- New visitor experienced launched in the **opening of the Roman Gym** at the Roman Baths - see 1.2
- Controlled **reopening of Cleveland Bridge** to vehicles with 2m width restriction - see 1.4
- Revised plans for **Bath Quays North** - see 2.1
- Resubmitted application for the redevelopment of **the Scala, Oldfield Park** - see 2.3
- Proposal for energy efficiency retrofits to the Grade I listed **23 Grosvenor Place** - see 2.7
- Proposed **Planning Reforms** to the English Planning System paused by new Housing Secretary - see 3.1
- Live public consultation on **proposed changes to permitted development** - see 3.2

1. B&NES Consultations and Projects

1.1 Local Plan Partial Update: Public consultation on the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) and three new and revised Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) has now closed. BPT comments have been submitted and can be read in full on our website:

<https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/bath-preservation-trust-responds-to-consultations-on-local-plan-partial-update-and-changes-to-supplementary-planning-documents/>

1.2 Unveiling of a New Attraction at the Roman Baths: A new part of the archaeological site at the Roman Baths, located under the new World Heritage Centre, opened to the public for the first time on 22nd October. The Roman Gym will include the remains of an ancient sauna (a laconicum), the remains of the paved courtyard the Romans would have used, and one of the best preserved doorways from Roman Britain. The opening will be accompanied by new interactive interpretation showing what the Roman spa experience was like. The new exhibit forms part of the Archway Project and works were funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

You can find out more about the new visitor experience here:

<https://www.romanbaths.co.uk/roman-gym#:~:text=On%2022%20October%202021%20the,heading%20into%20the%20Baths%20themeselves>.

1.3 West of England Central Authority (WECA) Prospectus for Sustainable Transport: WECA has sent its “Prospectus” to central government’s [City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement fund](#). The aim is to decarbonise transport, reduce car use, tackle congestion, improve air quality and create healthier places across the WECA region. Proposals include improvements to walking and cycling routes to make ‘active travel’ options safer and easier to use and improvements to key travel corridors:

- Improved public transport and cycling and walking infrastructure, and a new transport hub at Hicks Gate on the A4 between Bath and Bristol.
- Improved public transport and improvements to walking, cycling and the public realm surrounding access points to the network on the A37 between the Somer Valley and Bristol and the A367 between the Somer Valley and Bath.
- Development of low traffic and Liveable Neighbourhoods (15 areas delivering the first phase of this in B&NES).
- Investment in walking and cycling facilities to improve the attractiveness of active travel, including e-scooters, increased provision of cycle parking spaces and off-road and segregated walking and cycling routes.
- More electric vehicle charging points.
- Improvements to Oldfield Park station.

The Prospectus document can be accessed here: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/West-of-England-Combined-Authority-CRSTS.pdf>

1.4 Cleveland Bridge Refurbishment Update: Cleveland Bridge has reopened to traffic on 25th October, but will be controlled with traffic lights and a two metre width restriction as part of a phased reopening. The bridge will remain closed to HGVs. Pedestrians and cyclists will still be able to use the bridge. Regular updates are available here:

<https://medium.com/cleveland-bridge-renovation>

1.5 Bath Area Forum: The next meeting of the Bath Area Forum is scheduled for 1st December, 6pm-7.30pm. This meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss the Terms of Reference for the Forum.

You can register to attend here: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/connecting-communities/bath-city-forum>

Recordings of Bath Area Forum meetings will be available on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAc6JFBe_K5mugdUAHeF9w

1.6 Bathscape Walking Festival 2021: The Bathscape Walking Festival has ended and is due to return September 2022. You can catch up with festival events on the podcast Bathscape Footprints: <https://footprints.captivate.fm/>

1.7 Climate & Biodiversity Festival 2021: B&NES Council's first ever Climate & Biodiversity Festival saw hundreds of residents taking the opportunity to learn from and inspire each other on ways to reduce carbon emissions and restore nature. The programme of more than 35 events over two weeks engaged residents with a broad range of issues relating to tackling the climate and ecological emergency. The council is looking to bring the festival back in 2022, but have released a green newsletter to update residents on local activity around the climate and ecological emergencies:

<https://mailchi.mp/b810a2abd075/green-bath-nes-newsletter>

The Climate & Biodiversity Festival Playlist on You Tube includes photographs and recorded discussions that took place during the two weeks:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9JE6hqzoLeXeqJb1sw260Va_H6s6uPrW

You can find out how the council is responding to the Climate Emergency here:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/responding-climate-emergency>

1.8 'Sinking House' Art Installation at Pulteney Weir: On 31st October, a semi-submerged house was installed in the River Avon just below Pulteney Bridge by architects Stride Treglown. The project was created with Bath-based Format Engineers, local sculptor Anna Gillespie and Fifield Moss Carpentry. The art piece is intended to highlight the precarious point that has been reached in the climate emergency, ahead of COP26 talks on the same day. The house is constructed in timber and appears to be sinking into the river, with the figure of a person on the roof 'clinging' to the line that attaches the house to Pulteney Bridge. The architect has said that the piece is inspired by Greta Thunberg's 'Our house is on fire' speech at the 2019 World Economic Forum, as well as increased and worsening flood events experienced in the UK and across Europe in recent years.

You can find out more about 'Sinking House' here:

<https://stridetreglown.com/initiatives/sinking-house/>

2. Bath Matters, Planning Applications and Developments

2.1 Bath Quays North: Application [20/04965/ERES](#) for the mixed use redevelopment of the Avon Street Car Park site. **UPDATE** - BPT has responded to the submission of revised plans for the scheme. The design has been amended to introduce more variety in the elevations of the building plots, particularly as viewed as part of the riverside, as well as an increased vertical emphasis to 'break up' the strong horizontal line of the development.

BPT has welcomed the move away from the horizontal focus of elevational treatments. We feel that the use of piers and porticos are largely successful and better define key entrances. However, we had some concerns that these may be too visually bold and

suggested that the bays could be slimmed down, or the horizontal beams could be removed, to improve their appearance. We maintain the need for further details on the finish of the proposed 'pink' brick which would be visible in riverside views.

You can read our response in full on our website: <https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/bpt-responds-to-latest-design-revisions-to-bath-quays-north-scheme/>

The application is scheduled to go forward to Planning Committee in November.

2.2 Western Riverside: Application [19/05165/ERES](#) for the erection of 2x 5 storey student blocks comprising 290 student bedrooms. **UPDATE** - Appeal [APP/F0114/W/21/3268711](#) has now been withdrawn, following the granting of planning permission to the Dick Lovett scheme which incorporates the development of student accommodation on the same site (see application [20/03071/EFUL](#)).

2.3 The Scala: Resubmitted application [21/04049/FUL](#) for the redevelopment of the Scala site to provide mixed-use residential and student accommodation. Previous application [20/00552/FUL](#) was refused on grounds of the inappropriate height and massing of the central courtyard building. The main changes to the scheme are a reduction in student accommodation from 92 to 72 units, a reduction in residential accommodation from 16 to 9 units (now excluding the requirement for affordable housing), and the reduction of the height of the central courtyard block by a storey.

BPT has welcomed the reduction of the height of the scheme and the use of a more sensitive pitched roof profile. However, we maintain strong concerns that the scheme constitutes speculative purpose-built student accommodation; there is no longer reference to the provision of student accommodation being exclusively for Norland College students. The dance studios on the upper floor are now vacant, but remain a significant space for community activities and events which needs to be safeguarded as a crucial aspect of the scheme's delivery.

You can read our response in full on our website: <https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/planning-application/the-scala-shaftesbury-road-oldfield-park-bath/>

2.4 Friends Meeting House: Applications [21/02980/LBA](#) & [21/02981/AR](#) for four hardwood wall-mounted signs across the front of a Grade II building. **UPDATE** - The applications went to Planning Committee on 22nd September and were recommended for refusal by the case officer on grounds of harm to the character and significance of the listed building and the wider street scene. Councillors felt the proposed signage would be modest and of benefit to the commercial use of the building, and voted to permit both applications.

Applications [21/04062/FUL](#) & [21/04063/LBA](#) for the installation of a removable balustrade within the portico of a Grade II building. **UPDATE** - BPT commented on both applications with concerns about the insertion of balustrades in the portico and their visual impact. We recommended these should be relocated to sit behind the Ionic columns to minimise visibility in head-on views of the principal façade. Both applications have been permitted on grounds of the balustrade constituting a public benefit by protecting customers from the drop at the edge of the portico. This was considered to outweigh the limited harm to a listed building. The repositioning of the balustrade behind the Ionic

columns was not considered suitable as this would have interfered with the opening of the central doors.

You can read our comments in full here: <https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/planning-application/friends-meeting-house-york-street-city-centre-3/>

The Friends Meeting House is due to open to the public as the new Toppings book shop (relocated from the existing shop on the Paragon) on 30th October.

2.6 5G Mast, Marksbury: Application [21/03977/TEL](#) for the installation of a 20m 4G & 5G monopole on the A39 running through the village of Marksbury. **UPDATE** - The application was refused on grounds of being an incongruous addition to the local area with harm to its visual amenity. The development would fail to respond to the character of the area. It was also considered to prejudice highway safety by limiting visibility on the junction with the A39. However, the case officer concluded that the mast would read as part of the wider landscape and would not constitute harm to the setting of the WHS or the Cotswolds AONB. Consideration of whether the scheme would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt was dismissed as part of this application. BPT opposed the scheme on grounds of a failure to sustain or enhance the rural townscape character of Marksbury, and inappropriate development within the Green Belt without demonstration of ‘special circumstances’. We continue to emphasise the need for a masterplan across the World Heritage Site for ongoing and future mast installations.

2.7 23 Grosvenor Place: Application [21/04276/REG13](#) for energy retrofits to a Grade I building, including secondary glazing and PV panels on the inner roof slope. BPT is supportive of sensitive sustainability retrofits, where deemed appropriate, within the historic environment. We feel that this application offers an exceptional opportunity to create a major case study and set the standards for the energy retrofit of a high significance Grade I building. We are therefore supportive of the proposed measures, but we do not feel that the proposed retrofits go far enough in addressing the council’s own policies and Climate Emergency Action Plan.

You can read our comments in full on our website: <https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/planning-application/23-grosvenor-place-lambridge-bath/>

2.8 Frome House: Application [21/04147/FUL](#) for the extension and refurbishment of Frome House for change of use from office space to 67 student bedrooms, and the retention of the ground floor tyre repair centre. BPT has objected to the scheme on grounds of the excessive height and massing of the proposed development which would constitute overdevelopment of the site. We feel that the proposed design is out of keeping with the local area. We continue to oppose the principle of speculative purpose-built student accommodation, but did highlight opportunities to link up with Locksbrook Campus and work in partnership with the university to justify demand for student accommodation.

You can read our comments in full on our website: <https://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/planning-application/frome-house-lower-bristol-road-westmoreland-bath/>

3. National News

3.1 National Planning Reforms on Hold following Cabinet Reshuffle: As part of a second cabinet reshuffle, Michael Gove has now replaced Robert Jenrick as Secretary of State of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). It has been announced that the MHCLG will be renamed the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in line with the Government's "central mission" to "level up every part of the UK". The new Levelling Up Taskforce, headed by Andy Haldane, will jointly report to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State.

Michael Gove has put the UK government's 'flagship' planning reforms on hold to re-think reforms. The White Paper intended to enable the annual delivery of 300,000 new homes nationally, and the creation of 10-20 year plans by local councils to identify 'zoned' areas of renewal and growth with no requirement for planning permission. Robert Jenrick had previously made changes to this model, with the development of growth zones having a *presumption* for permission rather than automatic permission.

Boris Johnson announced in his conference speech on 6th October that "beautiful" new homes should be built "on brownfield sites in places where homes make sense", rather than on green field sites or "jammed in the South East". The CPRE has celebrated this as a 'brownfield-first approach' and a possible indicator of the softening of planning overhaul.

3.2 Proposed Changes to Permitted Development Rights: A public consultation has been launched to make outdoor measures for high streets permanent. Temporary measures were put in place to help hospitality and businesses throughout the pandemic including pavement seating, outdoor coverings such as marquees, and pop-up stalls and markets, on the basis that these would be for a restricted period of time.

Proposed measures that could be installed permanently include:

- Right for markets to be held by or on behalf of local councils.
- Right for moveable structures in the grounds of pubs, cafes, restaurants and historic visitor attractions, **including within the setting of listed buildings**. This would include a height limit of 4m and a size limit of no more than 50% of the existing buildings on site.

The consultation is open until the **14th November**. You can access all consultation documents on the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/supporting-defence-infrastructure-and-the-future-of-time-limited-permitted-development-rights>

3.3 RIBA Publishes 'Built for the Environment' Report: RIBA has published a global report in partnership with Architects Declare, calling for the decarbonisation of the built environment to work towards net zero. The report seeks to highlight the role of the built environment, responsible for 38% of emissions globally, in addressing climate change.

The report prioritises the following recommendations:

- Governments to ensure environmental targets are science-based and fair.
- Governments to shift focus onto reducing absolute emissions.
- Governments must both mitigate and adapt to the climate and biodiversity emergencies.
- Those operating within the built environment to actively adapt practice.
- Information to be openly and widely shared.

- Social justice to remain at the heart of all action.

You can read the report here: <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/GatherContent/Future-Architects-Resources/Additional-Documents/Built-For-The-Environment-Reportpdf.pdf>

3.4 Dorman Long Tower Delisted and Demolished: The Brutalist-style 1950s tower was granted an emergency Grade II listing by Historic England, after it was announced that the tower was earmarked for demolition. The tower was noted as a rare survivor of Teeside's 20th century industrial heritage and the internationally-renown Dorman Long steel works. However, the listing was overturned by new Secretary of State for Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Nadine Dorries, and the tower was demolished 19th September. A spokesperson for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport said Dorries' decision was 'based on further evidence which, in the secretary of state's view, highlighted that the building is not of the required special architectural or historic interest to remain listed'. Ben Houchen, mayor of Tees Valley, stated that 'Historic England has accepted that the listing was a mistake; it was made by a junior officer, who agreed the listing without ever seeing the structure itself.' However, Historic England denied that it had made a mistake: 'We were able to visit the site and after further assessment we confirmed our advice that the tower merits consideration for listing at Grade II.'