



BATH PRESERVATION TRUST

Planning Update

September 2021

BPT Events

Hidden Burial Grounds of Bath, 25th & 31st October: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVENT00032>

Beckford's Tower After Dark, 31st October: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVENT00030>

Bath Preservation Trust Guided Walk, 26th September: <https://bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk/product/EVE-BPT-WALK>

News this Month

- Live public consultation on the **Local Plan Partial Update and associated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** - see 1.1
- Live public consultation on **Traffic Regulation Orders** as part of anti-terrorism scheme - see 1.2.
- Redevelopment of the **Homebase site** allowed at appeal inquiry- see 2.1
- Revised plans for **Bath Quays North** - see 2.2
- **Dick Lovett** scheme permitted at Planning Committee - see 2.3
- Redevelopment of **Bath Press** refused at Planning Committee - see 2.4
- Co-living scheme at the **Regency Laundry** refused at Planning Committee - see 2.5
- Nine homes permitted on **Field Between City Farm And Cotswold View** - see 2.8
- Proposed **Planning Reforms** to the English Planning System paused by new Housing Secretary - see 3.1

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) opened on 27th August to run until **midnight on 8th October**. The LPPU addresses issues including the need to update and replenish the district's housing supply to make sure it can meet the requirement for housing up to 2029, transport policies, including reviewing parking standards, and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

The proposed SPDs include guidance on specific measures to help tackle the climate emergency including:

- Revised parking standards, ultra-low emissions vehicles, walking and cycling infrastructure design and travel plans for new development
- Guidance on energy performance requirements for HMOs
- Guidance for homeowners and occupiers on adapting their homes to reduce energy use

The planning team will be carrying out various engagement activities during the consultation period, presenting at Community Forum meetings across the area and hosting a series of online webinars including one on zero carbon development and energy efficiency which will feature as part of the council's Climate and Biodiversity Festival.

All consultation documents can be accessed here: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/current-planning-policy-consultations>

1.2 Traffic Regulation Orders Consultation: A consultation on the proposed city centre security scheme to minimise the threat of “hostile vehicles” has been launched from the 23rd September to run until **14th October**. This consultation seeks to introduce permanent Traffic Regulation Orders, to allow parking restrictions to be implemented and enforced by the local council for anti-terrorism purposes. This follows on from the initial public consultation in early 2021. Proposals include:

- Vehicle access restrictions from 10am to 6pm with controlled access for Blue Badge holders and carers, and taxis or other vehicles serving their needs on Cheap Street, Westgate Street, Saw Close and Upper Borough Walls.
- Extend restricted access operating hours to 10am to 10pm on York Street.
- Increased provision of Blue Badge parking, resident permit and loading space outside of the restricted area.

You can access all consultation documents via the council's website:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/citycentresecuritytroconsultation>

1.3 Bath Area Forum: Residents are being invited to have their say on issues that matter to them with the launch of a new Area Forum for Bath, with an initial virtual meeting held on 31st August. The Forums are supported by B&NES Council and aim to:

- Facilitate discussion about the issues that affect Bath
- Provide people with a place to present new ideas that are not being heard elsewhere
- Enable the community to give feedback about their local services

The Bath Area Forum will have an open-door approach and be temporarily chaired by a representative of council. However, it is hoped an independent Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed early in 2022.

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

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAc6JFBe__K5mugdUAHeF9w

You can sign up to the next Area Forum meeting via the council website:

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/neighbourhoods-and-community-safety/connecting-communities/bath-city-forum>

1.4 Initial Data from the Clean Air Zone: New data shows air quality is improving both in Bath city centre and outside the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) following the introduction of the scheme. A report considered by cabinet on 9th September reveals that nitrogen dioxide levels have dropped by more than 12% compared with the same quarter in 2019, but have the potential to exceed government limits at four locations within the zone:

- Cleveland Place East junction
- Dorchester Street
- Victoria Buildings
- Wells Road near the Churchill Bridge gyratory

The number of chargeable non-compliant vehicles entering the zone since its launch has dropped, with the percentage of compliant vehicles in the chargeable categories, (i.e., taxis, vans LGV's, buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles HGV's) increasing by an average of 49% over the same period. All but three of the 220 buses that operate on scheduled routes in the zone and more than 90% of HGVs and 90% of taxis travelling into the zone are now compliant with emission standards. More than one thousand non-compliant vehicles have so far been approved for the council's financial assistance scheme, in addition to businesses and individuals upgrading vehicles using their own resources.

You can read the report in full via the council website:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=5520>

1.5 B&NES "Alarm" over Suggested University of Bristol Accommodation Plans: B&NES Council have issued the following statement in response to claims that up to 300 University of Bristol students may have to be housed in Bath due to "high demand":

"We are alarmed and concerned about reports, including information placed on their website, that the University of Bristol is suggesting offering accommodation to new students in our area from the start of next term. We have neither been informed nor consulted on this and we are therefore seeking urgent clarification from the University about their position. Any decision by the University to accommodate students in our area would have very significant implications for our communities, especially given the existing pressures on local housing. Students deserve good, local accessible accommodation and it is for the University to make appropriate plans for this. Local residents should not bear the brunt of any lack of preparation by the University of Bristol for the new academic year."

1.6 Climate & Biodiversity Festival 2021: B&NES Council's first Climate & Biodiversity Festival is due to come to an end on 26 September. The festival brought together local groups and communities to run a two-week programme of events on the twin themes of carbon emissions and nature, including food, travel, waste, renewable energy, biodiversity, buildings and finance.

You can access the festival programme via the council website:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/climate-biodiversity-festival-events>

The council has put together a set of resources about what they are doing to address the Climate Emergency, and how local residents can get involved:

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

2. Bath Matters, Planning Applications and Developments

2.1 Homebase: Application [20/00259/FUL](#) for the redevelopment of the Homebase site to provide a new ‘care community’ with mix of care residences and suites, and ancillary communal, care and well-being facilities and offices. The application was refused and went to appeal - see appeal [APP/F0114/W/21/3268794](#). **UPDATE** - The appeal for a new mixed-use care community on the Homebase site was allowed on 2nd September. BPT spoke against the development at the appeal hearing and emphasised that it would result in cumulative harm to views across and within the World Heritage Site, and would not reinforce local distinctiveness due to its excessive height, scale and massing, and incongruous design and use of materials.

The development was considered to enhance the appearance and significance of the conservation area. There was felt to be limited harm to the setting of the Grade II* Norfolk Crescent despite concerns raised by Historic England, Bath Preservation Trust, and the conservation officer. The inspector concluded that harm to the planned views in and across the World Heritage Site would be limited, and would ultimately be outweighed by “*the substantial, cumulative weight of the identified public benefits which are supported by the Framework and which includes a positive enhancement to the setting of the BCA [Bath Conservation Area].*”

2.2 Bath Quays North: Application [20/04965/ERES](#) for the mixed use redevelopment of the Avon Street Car Park site. **Update** - Revised plans have been submitted, following public consultation including comments from BPT. The design of the scheme 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.

2.3 Dick Lovett: Application [20/03071/EFUL](#) for the mixed-use redevelopment of the Dick Lovett car dealerships to provide residential and student accommodation. **UPDATE** - the application went to Planning Committee on 25th August, and was recommended for refusal by the case officer on grounds of a non-policy compliant provision of off-street parking. BPT continued to speak against the scheme on grounds of overdevelopment by virtue of its excessive depth, scale, massing, and height, and failure to sustain or respond to local distinctiveness through the excessive use of inappropriate materials, alien form, height variation, and roof articulation. Councillors considered the balance of public benefit against the single reason for refusal and emphasised that the development would help address housing need and be an ‘exciting’ addition to the streetscape. There was discussion regarding whether car parking provision should be encouraged in light of the Climate Emergency and a push towards more sustainable modes of travel; the pending changes to the Local Plan were acknowledged but not considered to be relevant at this stage. Councillors voted to delegate to permit the scheme on grounds of enhancement of the WHS, good mix of accommodation, good design, and provision of EV charging/cycle spaces addresses the Climate Emergency agenda.

2.4 Bath Press: Application [20/04760/EFUL](#) for the redevelopment of the former Bath Press site ('Pitman Press') to provide a mixed-use development of residential homes and commercial floor space. **UPDATE** - The scheme went forward to Planning Committee on 22nd September, and was recommended for refusal by the case officer. BPT spoke against the scheme due to the proposed harm to a non-designated heritage asset. Councillors voted to refuse the app due to insufficient commercial space, lack of north-south through link, lack of parking, and demolition of the historic chimney. It was felt that the application 'could do better', and a watered down version of the previous permitted scheme shouldn't be accepted just to see the site developed. A more locally distinctive design was encouraged on this 'gateway' site.

2.5 Regency Laundry: Application [20/03166/FUL](#) for the redevelopment of the vacant Regency Laundry site to provide a co-living scheme of 155 studio rooms. **UPDATE** - The application went to Planning Committee on 23rd September. BPT previously spoke against the scheme on grounds of harm to townscape character & local distinctiveness at Planning Committee in August. Councillors voted to refuse the application on grounds of loss of industrial site, and raised concerns regarding the lack of appropriate marketing for the site, despite high demand for industrial premises with 1% vacancy in Bath of available sites.

2.6 5G Mast, Marksbury: Application [21/03977/TEL](#) proposed the installation of a 20m 4G & 5G monopole on the A39 running through the village of Marksbury. 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 Midford Castle: Application [21/01555/FUL](#) for the construction of an agricultural barn and installation of a solar array system on the site of the Grade I Midford Castle and associated Grade II* outbuildings. **UPDATE** - The application has been refused on grounds of inappropriate development in the Green Belt, harm to the setting of a group of listed buildings, and would fail to maintain or preserve the natural beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. BPT maintained an objection to the proposals on the basis of cumulative harm to the landscape setting of an interconnected group of listed buildings, without being appropriately justified.

2.8 34 Field Between City Farm And Cotswold View: Application [21/01588/FUL](#) for the construction of nine dwellings on a green site forming part of the hillside overlooking Twerton. **UPDATE** - The application went to Planning Committee on 22nd September. BPT continued to speak against the application and the principle of development on this "important hillside" site due to harm to the views in and across the landscape setting of the World Heritage Site. Previous, refused application [19/00786/FUL](#) also proposed nine houses on this site and was dismissed at appeal. Councillors expressed concerns regarding the build-up of what is considered to be a site of visual, social, and ecological value. However, councillors were informed that a refusal of this application would not be defensible at appeal due to the previous comments made by the inspector at the appeal for application 19/00786/FUL; there was concluded to be only limited harm to the World Heritage Site, outweighed by the public benefit of the scheme. Councillors therefore voted to delegate to permit the proposal.

3. National News

3.1 Proposed Changes to the English Planning System Paused: The government has paused its controversial planning reforms as new housing secretary Michael Gove prepares to meet Conservative MPs who had criticised the upcoming Planning Bill, due to go before Parliament later this year. Announcing the planning bill, the government had pledged it would create “simpler, faster procedures for producing local development plans, approving major schemes, assessing environmental impacts and negotiating affordable housing and infrastructure contributions”. The new laws would have given councils mandatory housebuilding targets and stopped homeowners from being able to object to planning applications.

3.2 New £4m Fund to Increase Community Led Affordable Housing: The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) announced the launch of a new grant programme which aims to give community-led housing groups increased access to high quality, affordable housing that meets local needs. The fund will support community groups to cover costs of trying to develop housing, including design work and planning applications. The grant programme will be managed by the Community Led Homes Partnership.

You can read the update in full via the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-4-million-fund-launched-to-increase-community-led-affordable-housing>

3.3 Local Government, Climate Change and the Environment: MHCLG released a collection of guidance documents on climate change and the environment for local councils. This advice is broad and does not include specifics on the role of historic or listed buildings in addressing the Climate Emergency. Topics include:

- Climate change adaptation
- Air quality
- Flood and coastal erosion risk management
- Green jobs and skills
- Nature and environment
- Net zero - housing, buildings, heat decarbonisation and green energy
- Planning
- Transport and emissions
- Waste and recycling

All guidance can be accessed via the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-government-climate-change-and-the-environment#adaptation>

3.4 Edinburgh Council to Licence Short Term Lets: The City of Edinburgh Council decided on 11th August to take steps to cracking down on Airbnbs and other short term lets in the capital. In the last five years there has been a significant rise in short term let properties in Edinburgh, particularly through Airbnb. According to council officers, more

than a third of Scotland's STL properties are believed to be in the capital, causing shortages in the property market and forcing residents out of their communities. This has led to the council to propose a citywide "control area" - where property owners must acquire planning permission to operate an STL that has been running for under 10 years. The city could become a critical test case for the regulation of short-term holiday lets through the planning system.

You can read the full update here:

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/13264/should-edinburgh-be-a-short-term-let-control-area->

3.5 Nominations Open for Victorian Society's Top 10 Endangered List: The Victorian Society is seeking nominations for its 2021 Top Ten Endangered Buildings Campaign. The annual event highlights buildings that are in need of repairs or are at risk of being lost completely. With the UK hosting COP26 in November this year, The Top Ten Campaign also raises awareness on how heritage conservation can play a significant role in combatting the causes of climate change. Nominated buildings or structures must be in England and Wales and built between 1837 and 1914, listed buildings are more likely to make the Top Ten, and the closing date for nominations is Friday 15th October at midnight.

You can nominate a building via the Victorian Society website:

<https://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/news/want-to-save-a-threatened-historic-building-nominate-it-for-the-victorian-societys-endangered-list>