

## **BPT Responds to Local Authority's Installation of City Centre 'Parklets'**

January 26, 2021

As part of the temporary vehicle restrictions to Kingsmead Square, two parklets and associated bicycle parking have been temporarily installed in parking bays, informed by the September 2019 trial scheme.

The parklets incorporate seating and planting to reclaim the square's pedestrian character whilst facilitating social-distancing. The scheme has installed two further parklets in designated parking bays up Milsom Street.

The Trust responded to a consultation from B&NES Hight Street Project Manager just weeks before their installation, given that this first round of parklets has already been designed and manufactured. Whilst generally supportive of the principle of appropriately designed, Bath specific parklets in the right location, the Trust emphasised the importance of even earlier consultation with stakeholders, and expressed some concerns that the addition of a new 'layer' of public infrastructure could add unnecessary clutter to the area.

In our consultation response we stated some reservations regarding the introduction of parklets into areas with a high quality, designed public realm such as Kingsmead Square, in which the introduction of parklets would result in further clutter at odds with the established design, materiality, and colour palette of the space.

In particular, we felt timber should not be over used in the form of cladding or boarding within Bath's urban locations, except perhaps for bench slats.

Going forward we maintained the importance of establishing a coherent, Bath-specific design and approach to street furniture to avoid the introduction of discordant designs within the conservation area. We felt that new seating and planting should add to and strengthen the existing character and appearance of the Square rather adding a new (albeit temporary) layer.

At present, we remain concerned about the visual impact of a suite of varied, and discordant parklet designs, on the coherent character of the Bath Conservation Area and World Heritage Site. Whilst intended to be temporary structures, once in place they could become more stationary additions to Bath's streetscape. Rather, we feel that it's more appropriate to have single, Bath-specific bespoke design.