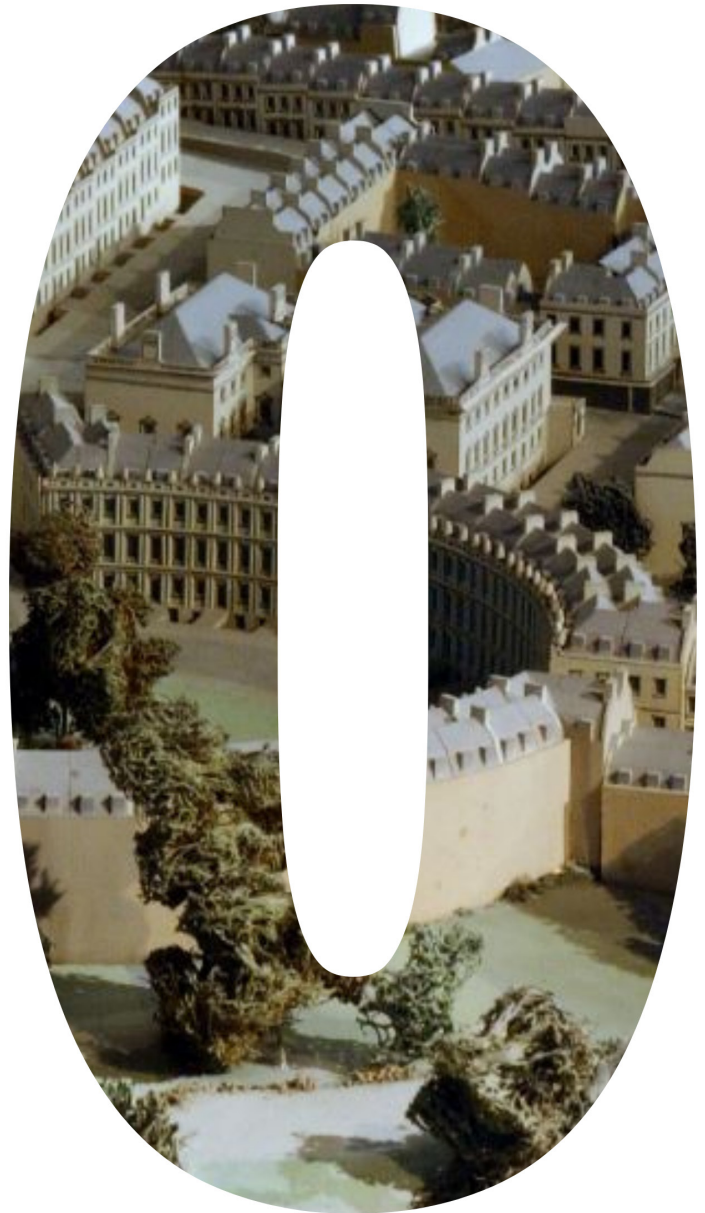
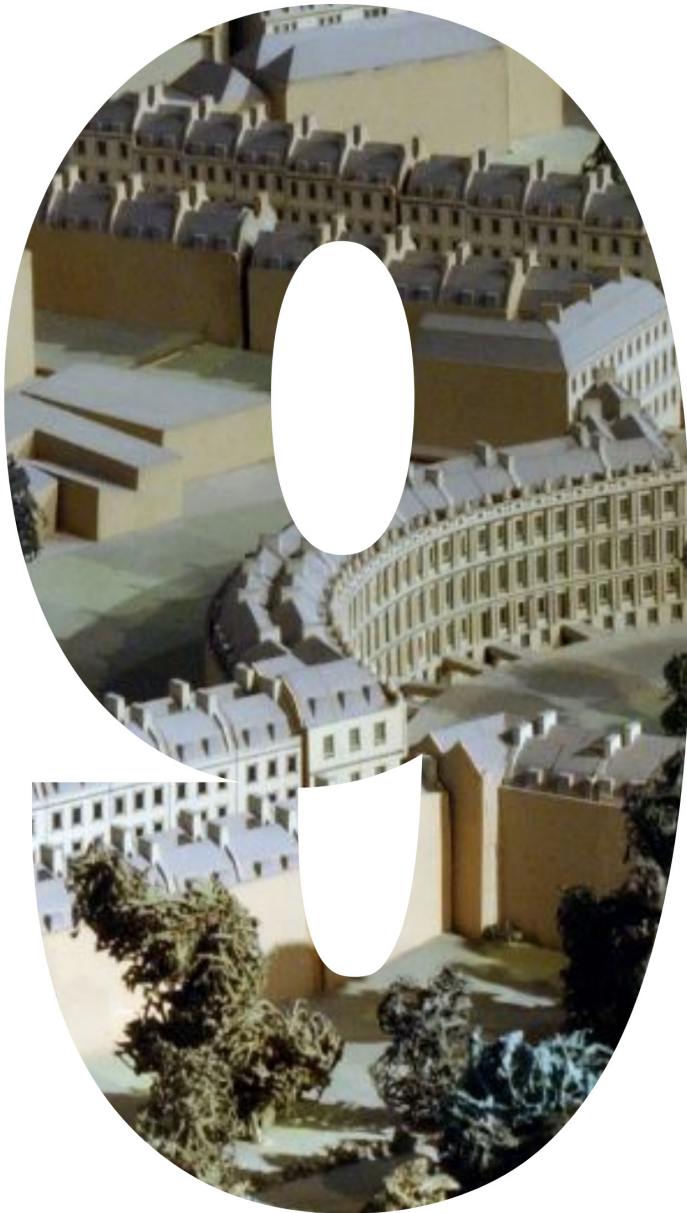


BATH MATTERS

THE BATH PRESERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER



BATH
PRESERVATION
TRUST

All four museums open again

With the Museum of Bath Architecture now open and Beckford's Tower soon to follow suit, it has never been a better time to be a Bath Preservation Trust member! The Museum of Bath Architecture has been closed since early 2020, and Beckford's Tower since late 2022, so we cannot wait to have all four museums open again next month.

Members enjoy free entry to our museums which normally cost between £7 and £15.50 to enter.

Pictured: The Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel, which houses the Museum of Bath Architecture



Welcoming new faces

With two museums reopening and our advocacy and campaigns team expanding it's a time of healthy growth for BPT. In recent months we have welcomed the following new faces to our team: Charlotte Clark – Community Engagement Officer; Nikita Hooper, Planning Officer - Conservation; Sarah Frysol, Museum Assistant; Ben Hughes, Museum Assistant; and Netty Miles – Events Officer.



Sarah Frysol
Museum Assistant



Ben Hughes
Museum Assistant



Nikita Hooper
Conservation Officer



Charlotte Clark
Community and Engagement Officer



Netty Miles
Events Officer

Upcoming member events

Event:
Beckford's Tower reopening event

Venue:
Beckford's Tower

Date:
Date and time TBC

RSVP:
Booking will be available via our website in due course.

Welcome to the 97th issue of *Bath Matters*. While only six months have passed since the last issue, we're experiencing such rapid change here at BPT that we could easily fill double these pages with updates about our current activities and future plans.

Beckford's Tower remains centre stage as we move ever closer to the "Our Tower" project's completion, with reopening scheduled for summer. Read more on pages 14-15. Members are warmly invited to join us at a special preview day on a date to be confirmed – please book your place via our website in due course.

The Museum of Bath Architecture reopened at the end of March in order to seek consultation from the public as to the future development of the building, and we've been delighted to hear so many interesting ideas from visitors. Read more on pages 18-19.

The Herschel Museum is also seeking consultation on its future so do pop in to share your views. We also have a new object on display, the James Short telescope. Read more on pages 16-17.

Finally, No.1 Royal Crescent is reintroducing special late night openings from June onwards. Read more on pages 12-13.

Tower *appeal update*

After three years of careful planning and development we are fast approaching the reopening of Beckford's Tower in June 2024. We are delighted with the quality of workmanship to restore the Tower, and the newly gilded Lantern is already shining out over Bath once more. The redevelopment of the museum rooms and landscape will allow us to tell the story of William Beckford from multiple perspectives, including a focus on his passions, prejudices and how his involvement in the transatlantic slave trade funded the construction of the Tower and his collection. We are grateful for the generous public and private donations that have enabled this project to take place, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England. Details of the exclusive reopening event for members, planned for late June 2024, will be available to purchase via our website in due course.



Beckford's Tower, credit Casper Farrell Photography

Welcome



Comment from the Chair

by BPT Chair Eve Salomon CBE

The last few weeks have seen a tussle between the early sparks of spring and the urge to re-establish the primacy of winter. But regardless of how long it takes, one thing is for certain: the seasons will change. Change is a constant in life, and without change, we cannot grow.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of Bath Preservation Trust. We started in 1934 as a small pressure group dedicated to the specific aim of buying buildings to obstruct a planned road development through the centre of the city. We, and Bath, have changed over and over since then. I remember living in a very black and rundown Gay Street in the 1970s when I was at University. I very much doubt there are any student flats there now, in that cleaned-up, gentrified corner by the Circus!

So as the seasons, and Bath, change, we at Bath Preservation Trust need to ask ourselves: how do we need to change? What should we do differently to make the greatest impact for the benefit of Bath?

As the new chair of BPT, one of the first things I've realised is that our name is misleading: we are not in the business of preservation, which means retaining things as they are. Rather, we are in the business of conservation and amelioration, of preventing decay and destruction, and enabling enhancement. Our focus is on using our museums, our knowledge of buildings and sustainability to improve our lives, not to keep things preserved in aspic.

J.F. Kennedy said, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." We look to a future which will benefit from all that is good from our past and present. Simply put, how can we work to retain the best of Bath's present, while ensuring the best for Bath's future?

Over the coming year or so, we intend to explore with you, our members, what is important to you about Bath and what are your priorities for the future; what do you like, dislike, and what could be improved? What should the Bath of the future look like, taking account of sustainability goals and our desire to celebrate our beautiful and unique heritage, with the best in new design? Some of your ideas may well be beyond our remit and capabilities, but some may also help us reframe our thinking to ensure we can continue to do the best we can for Bath for another 90 years to come.

But as another US President, Woodrow Wilson, warned, "If you want to make enemies, try to change something." As the new chair, I intend to lead lightly, yet knowing that if we are to survive, we must adapt, but bring everyone along on the ride – hopefully making as few enemies along the way as possible!

To 2114!



Comment from the CEO

by Chief Executive Alex Sherman

This edition of Bath Matters has been prepared during the same month in which many of us at BPT have diverted a significant amount of time into analysing the Local Plan Options document. The timing of it means our full response will not have been compiled in time for publication but it will be provided on our website in due course.

The Local Plan is a critical local policy which will guide the course of development in Bath and North East Somerset for the next 20 years. Whilst it cannot wholly control the who and the what, it is important to define land allocation and design principles for residential and commercial sites and growth. It also defines the land to safeguard – our shared amenity space and local green spaces.

BPT's role in responding is to influence in the most positive and constructive way possible. Social and community, environmental and economic factors are all important to safeguard and plan for and must be integrated rather than separate. The document does not sit in isolation and there is a suite of ancillary policies and plans which dovetail together: green infrastructure, economic development and health and wellbeing amongst them. Key documents such as the Building Heights Strategy will be subject to review. It is this detail which we engage with.

There are undoubtedly areas where we want change or where we don't agree with proposals. However it is also essential to recognise the positive elements and where the council has responded to calls for change. BPT objected strongly to the omission of any reference to heritage in the guiding principles document last year as did many other civic groups and individuals. This message clearly landed with the council and the respect for and conservation of the heritage of the district is now woven throughout the Local Plan options documents. Unsurprisingly, given the 2019 declaration of a Climate and Nature Emergency, sustainability is also a feature throughout.

The lack of sustainable, carbon neutral, affordable and keyworker housing in Bath continues to be a major problem. This is not only strongly felt by those who cannot afford to buy or rent in the city but who work here, but it is also one of the highest priorities for employers. There are increasing numbers of very good examples of developments in inner-city conservation areas throughout the UK, providing affordable design excellence coupled with sustainability, based on comprehensive community engagement. Amongst them are Lewes, Norwich, York, Oxford, Edinburgh and Cambridge. As yet, there are none in Bath but it is hoped that the new Local Plan will enable the context

and the political tools to effect that change without compromising our World Heritage nor the integrity and beauty of our city. And whilst there are brownfield sites still to develop, we don't believe the 'exceptional circumstances' exist which would justify the sacrifice of Green Belt - it would be an unacceptable compromise, not only to the World Heritage status of Bath but also in the face of the climate and nature emergency. Frankly, ploughing through 450 pages of policy options, cross-referencing with ancillary plans and policies (including the previous Local Plan) is exhausting and intensive work, but it is necessary to make informed responses. Thank-you to our trustees and volunteer advisors and our team who have been so instrumental and supportive to enable BPT to undertake this work.

This is our primary purpose, to influence policy and the decision-makers who form it, and our impacts demonstrate the importance of civic organisations like Bath Preservation Trust, to influence better outcomes for the city and the communities, environment and economy it supports.

Thank-you for your continued support which is fundamental to enable us to do this.

Alex Sherman

Advocacy and Campaigns

Plan and deliver



Bath is a globally important World Heritage City continually evolving and changing to meet the needs of current and future generations. This spring we will begin to engage in a long consultation process that weaves together views from all corners of the community in planning for how change should be managed, through local policy and strategic tools which address the climate and ecological emergencies and deliver inclusive, decarbonised, sustainable development and a stronger more resilient future for the city.

Housing is just one of the issues and priorities addressed through the B&NES Local Plan Options Document which sets out some of the key issues priorities and objectives. The Local Plan is just one of the tools which can address the supply of affordable homes. To start, we must acknowledge the capacity we have on more sustainable brownfield sites which can be brought back into use, ahead of the release

of further land from the green belt . Industry, offices and employment sites are also needed to support a more prosperous and sustainable economy and social equity. The Local Plan includes site allocations where policy requirements and design expectations are set out and there are many existing site allocations and new sites contained in the Options Document, such as the Newbridge Riverside and Weston Island areas. The Council has also tested a potential development option to locate housing to the west of Bath, but this is not proposed due to the level of harm that might be caused to the World Heritage Site. It is included in the Options document to see what people think of this.

The closing date for the consultation response on the Options Document was extended by one week to April 16th. Our response is published on our website.

Views & vistas project

This spring we've recruited over 20 volunteers to assist in recording Bath's favourite views. Volunteers are tasked with completing surveys to identify landscape features in the view, its historic importance and the ways in which the view could be protected and enhanced. If you missed our training session and would like to sign up to take part please email

conservation@bptrust.org.uk

Advocacy and Campaigns

Green Heritage Homes

BPT is delighted to announce Green Heritage Homes, a project led by Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE), in partnership with ourselves, B&NES, the Centre for Sustainable Energy and People Powered Retrofit. The aim is to accelerate the sensitive retrofit of listed buildings. This builds on our past work on energy efficiency.

Later in Spring, we will invite members to a briefing session for householders and professionals on how to recognise the significance of a listed building when selecting retrofit measures and applying for Listed Building Consent. This will feature videos of the growing number of Bath homes with consented measures such as

solar panels, window upgrades and air source heat pumps. We also offer advice for listed building occupiers on how to conserve both energy and historic significance.

Green Heritage Homes will test a range of ways to give advice and facilitate listed building retrofit, so please watch this space. The project is funded by the South West Net Zero Hub through the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator Programme (LEAD).

Please contact conservation@bptrust.org.uk for more details.

Save Combe Down Allotments

We have joined Combe Down allotment plot holders in a local campaign to save their site, which supports local food production, wellbeing, sustainable communities, wildlife and biodiversity. The landowner has given notice to the Council that the long-term lease will not be renewed in 2025, exposing Bath's oldest allotment to the threat of development. The site is full of quirky historical features such as locally quarried stone plot boundary markers, dry stone walls marking old field boundaries and lined alleyways - ancient routes between parishes known as 'drungways', and the surviving stone piers and wrought iron gateways into the site. The

allotment was founded in 1895 to enable local quarry workers to grow their own food and it is the only local council/parish allotment that remains unprotected.

BPT will campaign for the land to be designated as Local Green Space in the upcoming full update of the Local Plan which will review policies for local land use. Save Combe Down Allotments campaign is also building a case for the land to become an 'asset of community value' and is calling on the community to write to B&NES Council to provide evidence of the value and benefit of the allotments. To do this you can email info@banes-allotments.org.uk.

Using the QR code below, you can also sign a petition urging the landowner to reconsider and renew the lease with the Council and for the Council to use all of its powers to protect this local green space.



Public Programme

This year got off to a brilliant start with over 200 people attending our talks at the Museum of Bath Architecture over January and the first week of February. Our programme continues with a monthly talk on the subjects of sustainability, design excellence, housing and landscape and a variety of events focussed on the sustainable city taking place during the Great Big Green Week in early June.

Visit our website

www.bath-preservation-trust.merlintickets.co.uk to find out more.

We've had our say

Public Consultation: Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation Historic England Advice Note. We had hoped for a little bit more 'teeth' in this document; perhaps a more 'can do' or 'go for it' approach. We encouraged more positive language for energy-saving measures and a greater emphasis on the public benefit of climate change mitigation and carbon saving and the advantages of demonstrating this in an application. Following consultation in 2022, just before Christmas the Government published its long-awaited revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Many of the changes were strongly supported by BPT through earlier consultation. The new NPPF gives "significant weight" to the need to support "energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements" through adaptation of buildings. This represents strong in-principle policy support for energy efficiency. Other notable changes include greater support for community led housing, and a relaxation of the need for local authorities with an up to date Local Plan to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply.

Planning applications at a glance

The Rec



Bath Rugby Recreation Ground

Comments on the planning application for the re-development of a new stadium and associated works were submitted in November 2023. Trustees were supportive and encouraged by improvements to the scheme and the response of the design team which has endeavoured to address significant concerns previously expressed.

In principle, a new stadium on the Recreation Ground is supported given the economic, social and wellbeing opportunities for the community associated with re-development. However, we have called for the case for 'public benefit' to be strengthened if it is to outweigh any risk of harm to multiple heritage assets. The stadium design as submitted raised concerns about the visual impact of the West Stand elevation, materials and detailing - particularly of the curtain walling and colonnade, the finish and appearance of the east stand, the appearance of the north west corner and impact on views, and an evident absence of advertising proposals. As proposed these elements would have a harmful impact on the World Heritage Site (WHS), the conservation area, the settings of numerous listed buildings and the character of the Cotswold National Landscape. Our response has called for further work to raise design quality of the riverside public realm and to reduce the adverse impact of the East Stand, the new office building and the night time impact of the West Stand.

Since the submission of comments, ICOMOS, the body that governs World Heritage Site status, have provided their comments on the scheme, which conclude that the design needs to be revised in order not to harm the special qualities of the WHS.

Other consultation responses have also raised concerns and have suggested improvements to elements of the re-development, including comments made by Historic England, the Council's Parks and Greenspaces Team, Conservation (World Heritage Officer), Urban Design Team and Planning Policy Team.

Western Riverside Gasworks site

There are currently two applications for housing development on the Gasworks site under consideration by the Local Planning Authority. This site presents a major opportunity for high quality placemaking and public realm, nature positive design, sustainable development, locally distinctive contemporary architecture and much needed genuinely affordable housing. In September 2023 we responded to submitted changes to the overall heights and designs of the proposed blocks, on the portion of the site being developed by St William/Berkeley Homes.

A bittersweet reduction in height by 3-4m came with a viability report which removed all affordable housing from a total of 611 homes. We have continued to raise concerns about the impact of building heights on the WHS and have raised an in-principle objection to the absence of affordable housing. The second application for this site submitted by B&NES Council is unclear about provisions for affordable housing, and the proposed heights at 8 storeys would result in a degree of harm to the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. We believe that the public benefits arising from the scheme, primarily affordable housing and adapting to climate change could be achieved without harm. Both applications are pending determination.



Western Riverside View

Sulis Down

A number of amendments have been submitted to the planning application for phases 3 and 4 of the proposed housing development across land released from the Green Belt on the South Stoke plateau, a significant entry point to the City of Bath WHS within the green setting. In November 2023 we made a statement to Planning Committee urging them to refuse the application. Besides overdevelopment, with numbers of proposed houses far exceeding the policy provision, there are many other reasons why this development is unacceptable, harmful and has limited public benefit for residents and surrounding communities. The plan removes mature trees, displaces wildlife, increases light pollution and will introduce more than 700 further cars to one of the busiest areas of Bath.

Councillors deferred the decision to allow for the submission of a transport survey, and even more evidence to demonstrate mitigation of harm. With over 400 documents submitted on this case the Council is yet to reach its decision.

The Assembly Rooms

Comments have been submitted in response to the National Trust's listed building consent application to refurbish the Grade I listed building and environmental performance - including upgrading sash windows, installing photo voltaic panels and air source heat pumps and improved access. Ambitions to improve the building's environmental performance and accessibility, to ensure an equitable visitor environment and experience are broadly supported. However, concerns have been raised about the use of applied rather than integral glazing bars in the construction of doubled glazed windows and the need for this design detail to be more carefully considered.

Hartwells, Newbridge Road

An application has been submitted for the re-development of the site to provide residential units, student accommodation and associated works. The current application (23/03955/RES) follows the successful appeal of an outline application from 2019, and seeks approval of design details. We have commented, raising concerns about materials, scale and public realm. The application is pending decision.

Catholic Church of the Good Shepherd, Batheaston

Comments have been submitted on the planning application for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of four dwellings. No objection has been made against the demolition of the twentieth century building to bring forward housing benefit; however, the new buildings should not lead to the over development of the historically open site. Concerns with scale, massing, materials and the proposed balconies should be addressed via revisions, in order that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. The application is pending decision.

Ravenswell Lodge, Charlcombe

Concerns have been submitted in response to an application for various works including partial demolition and replacement extensions. The existing building presents a good opportunity for a sustainable contemporary extension; however, a number of concerns need to be overcome to mitigate harm. This includes the amount of glazing and light-spill, and alterations to a dry-

Architecture, Planning & Place

stone wall which would have harmful impacts on landscape character. The scheme is not supported in its current form. However, there is scope for further revision to achieve suitable redevelopment. The Cotswold Conservation Board have submitted a holding objection calling for the impact on dry stone walls and dark skies to be addressed. The application is pending consideration at Planning Committee.

Smallcombe Chapel, Bathwick Cemetery

A listed building consent application for the

Grade II building includes repair work to its roof and replacement windows. Comments supporting the initial step towards finding a new sustainable long-term use for this building at risk, a fundamental element of the historic cemetery, have been submitted. The application has since been withdrawn without reasons being given.

The Beacon, Richmond Place

Concerns have been raised in response to a planning application for the demolition of a three-storey dwelling to enable the construction of a new three-storey dwelling. Planning

permission for the redevelopment of the existing dwelling was given in June 2023 and the current application presents a significantly different design. Our submission highlights the inappropriate height and position of the dwelling in relation to the northern site boundary, and the loss of the soft woodland edge which would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. The application is pending decision.

Your voice

I am outraged by your objectionable comments against housing at Sulis Down. I am a 46-year-old with a PhD in Engineering and a good CV. Yet I am writing this from a freezing cold central city studio flat that costs nearly £1300 per month in rent. I have no hope of ever owning a home and it is mostly the fault of selfish Boomers and their parents who are spending decades in retirement on the backs of people like me. Most people my age and younger don't earn as much as I do and can't even afford a studio rental. There are millions stuck in house shares well into middle age. Here you are doing your best to make the situation even worse by quashing development. You're pretending that it's the traffic that's the reason for your resistances, but it is crystal clear that you want not only Bath but anywhere nearby to remain a Boomer paradise, not for people like me who need somewhere to live. You could be advocating for better public transportation and then those cars you're anticipating wouldn't need to be on the road. You could be encouraging people to demand that the new developments come with shops and GPs. Nope. You don't want any development at all because you want to keep your own house price high and preserve a life of luxury for Boomer landlords who add nothing to the economy.

Edited letter from Bath resident

Our response

BPT is pro-development and pro-housing but it must be appropriate to its setting and Bath cannot be seen in isolation. In supporting new housing, it is also essential that it is affordable and of good quality for people and in keeping with its location. The list below represents some of the campaigns and lobbying BPT have been delivering for years:

- Addressing developments that do not provide affordable housing on financial viability grounds
- Calling for an uplift in affordable housing provision in new development through planning policy
- Calling for a clearer definition of genuinely affordable housing in planning policy
- Capping the purchase of homes in Bath for Airbnb and party houses
- Limiting second homes or penalising those who own second homes
- Using public money to meet the costs of land purchase, which would mean developers could provide more affordable housing
- Make more of the buildings owned by the Council (which are currently only partially occupied) available for housing
- Compulsorily purchase unoccupied homes
- Force developers who 'land bank' development land to develop it or free it up - many purchase speculatively knowing the increase in price will happen without any action

- Review the out of date information which means we have vacant business units being left empty and which could be converted to housing
- Make brownfield land available for more creative options, such as co-build.
- We are looking at a series of new challenges to policy encouraging the potential of the introduction of rent controls, covenanting Purpose Build Student Accommodation to ensure it is not over-supplied and options to overcome the nationally imposed policy limitation on the number of social housing homes a local authority may own.

The development at Sulis Down is poor quality and high value and 'affordable' housing is not being offered equitably across all housing sizes. There are no onsite community facilities, GPs, wider healthcare or schools, and the development is about as densely packed as the developer can get away with. New houses in Bath, including those at Sulis Down are currently coming onto the market at around 19 times the national UK salary. None of the people who work at BPT can afford these prices. The national picture is a problem. In the last five years, B&NES Council has delivered 171% of its identified housing need (apportioned by population nationally). But in the rest of the UK as a whole, less than 50% of the necessary allocation has been built in the same time. Last year alone, the UK should have built 340,000 new homes, but fewer than 170,000 were built. The national shortage of housing is making

the new homes which are built in Bath more expensive as a result as they are in strong demand. But Bath continues to have large areas of undeveloped and under-developed brownfield land, all of which could host a significant number of more homes.

It is estimated that in the next 10 years, 3.4 million new homes will be needed. But, across the UK, there are 676,304 empty properties, 809,000 second homes, a capacity of 1,232,592 new homes on brownfield land, 279,000 plots in the land-bank held by the UK government, 441,702 plots held as a land-bank by major developers and capacity for 19,500 homes in council owned vacant buildings.

None of these statistics overlap, and if the figures as reported are accurate, this totals 3,478,098 homes. This figure is greater than the current demand, showing there is already sufficient capacity for housing in the UK without touching any Green Belt land. It is a massive and depressing failure of policy that this huge supply of housing is not being realised. Without the national picture changing rapidly, whether Sulis Down is built on or not is not going to make housing in Bath more affordable. That will only happen when the supply meets the demand which is so desperately needed across the country. National policy is not in place to enable the 3,478,098 homes to be built or brought up to standard, which would meet the UK demand. If it was there, it would make Bath a lot more affordable for everyone.



“Amazing Discoveries” planetarium project

For the past two years we have been able to run planetarium shows thanks to the loan of the inflatable dome from the University of Bath. These shows continue to be such a sell-out success we are now ready to extend the project. Thanks to two successful grant applications we have been able to purchase our own planetarium dome and projection system in addition to a new software programme. The new software means we can run presenter-led shows, developing content in reaction to the interests of different audiences. Having our own system will ensure the longevity of this project; the planetarium will now form a key part of our learning programme, and we will continue to use it for family and community events. Keep an eye out for where it is going to pop up next!

School news

With the opening of the Museum of Bath Architecture, we are expanding our learning program to offer workshops and educational activities in the Chapel. Pupils from year 7 of the Royal High School have been helping us as part of their "Problem-Based Learning" project. The girls have been set the task of designing activities that will engage children and young people with the museum. They will be presenting their ideas at the end of term and we can't wait to see what they come up with. We will display some of the work from this project in the museum over the summer holidays and we may even be able to try out their ideas with local families.



No.1 Creators Club

As part of our offering for families we will be running a series of Saturday Art Clubs for children. These will take place once a month and children will work with different artists to create their own work inspired by portraits in the museum. Each session will focus on different artistic skills and mediums including photography, sculpture and collage. We will also have our usual array of activities for families who visit in the school holidays including trails, drop-in craft activities and costumes for everyone to dress up in.



Home education workshops

The numbers of families choosing to educate their children at home has risen sharply in the last few years, a trend which we have met with new museum workshops to support their learning. Our learning team have developed sessions specifically for these families at both No.1 Royal Crescent and the Herschel Museum. Following the success of the first of these in the Spring term we will be continuing to offer different workshops throughout the year, covering themes from the national curriculum in a fun and accessible way.



Children in the Planetarium





Adult learning

Art isn't just for children! Our adult learning programme provides opportunities for everyone to be creative. We have a variety of different workshops running in our museums – check our websites to see what's coming up.

Beckford's Tower

With Beckford's Tower closed the team have ensured learning has not stopped. We have continued to loan out our 'Beckford, Bath and the transatlantic slave trade' loan box to secondary schools in Bath. Our loan boxes allow pupils to connect with history through their senses. Being able to hold artefacts and replicas in their hands brings learning to life.

When Beckford's Tower reopens we will be offering family-friendly resources. Within the Tower we will provide an activity pack to allow families to explore the Tower, encouraging children to undertake standalone activities as they explore the venue with their accompanying adults. We have ensured that the content is meaningful, acknowledging how William Beckford's wealth was achieved, whilst also encouraging families to slow down, explore the collection and make memories.

Outside in the landscape surrounding the Tower, there will be a free downloadable Family Trail that includes quizzes and spotter challenges that families can enjoy as they explore the grounds. During the summer holidays we will be offering free children's activities at Beckford's Tower every Thursday morning from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm - please keep an eye on our website for further information.

No.1 Royal Crescent



Image credit: Netflix 2024

Bridgerton's back – as are we!

Like it or loathe it, Season 3 of Bridgerton has arrived on Netflix. We are delighted that the series has sparked such waves of additional interest in the museum, and are pleased to share that we will be appearing in the series again. So if you're a fan, look out for our famous front door (with a little extra "garnishing").

Groups and private visits

Did you know that you can visit our museum after hours and enjoy exclusive access to our fabulous house for you and your party? We have a number of options for group and private visits, including self-led and guided tours with the option to open our on-site shop. You can also enjoy a glass of prosecco or white wine and canapes whilst you relax in the Servants' Hall after exploring the house.

Our special group and private experiences can be incorporated into an itinerary for any leisure groups seeking the quintessential Bath experience - as well as those who just fancy a date night with a difference! Lasting approximately 60 minutes these tours are perfect as either a standalone activity or for enriching an existing itinerary.

Our position as the first house on the iconic No.1 Royal Crescent provides both interest for architecture and history enthusiasts plus incredible photo opportunities.

Visit our **website** for more information or contact our friendly team directly by emailing **no1royalcrescent@bptrust.org.uk**.

No.1 Royal Crescent

Museum late openings

Our popular museum late openings continue in 2024. These take place on the third Thursday of each month until October and enable visitors to explore the twilit museum and take in the story of the house from a fresh perspective. At the end of the museum route, you can purchase a refreshment to enjoy in our courtyard as the sun goes down. Our courtyard provides a wholly unique view of the Royal Crescent, made all the more enticing with the arrival of sunset.

New Moorcroft vase to delight Austenites

Jane Austen lovers will flock to see this brand new Moorcroft vase, "The Royal Crescent", now on sale in our gift shop.

Artist Paul Hilditch has wrapped the iconic Royal Crescent around the vase, combining a detailed architectural vision with a high society gathering to view one of the region's famous air balloon extravaganzas.



The new vase by Moorcroft, featuring The Royal Crescent

Beckford's Tower and Museum



© Tom Burrows

Beckford's Tower, by Tom Burrows

At the finish line!

After three years of intensive consultation, fundraising, design and redevelopment we are nearly at the point of reopening Beckford's Tower and Landscape to the public. Visitors to the tower will notice a whole host of changes, including a new first-floor walkway, the new Tower Vault space to explore beneath the building, and two redesigned museum rooms featuring contemporary display units, brand new interpretation and state of the art digital technology. As if that's not enough, there are also significant changes in the landscape to enjoy, including the restored Grotto Tunnel, a new entrance and approach through the Lime Avenue, and additional facilities to improve access for all our visitors. Tickets will be on sale via our website from June 2024.

Fit for the future

In 2019 the tower was placed on Historic England's At Risk register due mainly to long-term water penetration causing damage to the Lantern and plaster work in the Belvedere. When Thomas Ford & Partners took over as conservation architects in 2021 they conducted lengthy research to find a solution to this historic issue. In consultation with Historic England, who were part-funding

the Lantern repair, they agreed to use some modern materials which still preserved the tower's appearance and structural integrity. This included the use of Accoya – a modified timber that is both rot-resistant and highly stable. To see the Lantern close up, and appreciate the detailed restoration work that has gone into it, please join one of our specialised all-access Lantern Tours, available twice a day at a small additional cost, by booking on the website.



The Community Advisory Panel tests the new digital interpretation

All-access Lantern Tours

Restoration and repair of the Lantern will include safe, public access to this section at the very top of the tower. We will develop themes for these tours, to encourage audiences to visit more than once and to enable the tours to link in with the wider museum programme. These tours will be offered twice a day for an additional cost for up to 6 people. Initially, a basic "conservation of the building" tour will take place, and then we will offer different versions from 2025.

Key themes to be developed will include:

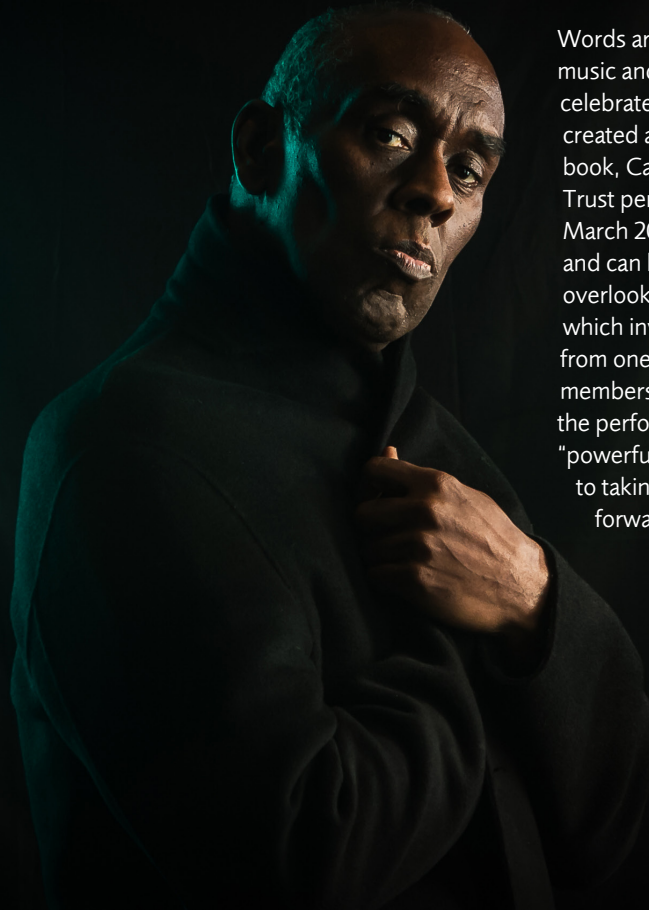
- Conservation and the restoration project recently completed
- Architectural design and build of the tower from a unique perspective
- City views that re-connect the tower with the landscape in which it was originally designed
- Climate emergency, linking the changing landscape and development with its impact on the environment, also exploring our own work to realise carbon zero for the tower

Lantern tours will provide new income, charged at a price over and above museum entry in recognition of the value of this offer. We accept that only a small number of people can access the Lantern at any one time, so regular tours will be available when the museum is open, as well as being available as part of an exclusive museum visit or pre-booked group tour with specialist staff, for which income potential will be maximised.

Access for all

An important part of the Beckford's Tower project is to provide access for all, so that everyone can enjoy the tower and its landscape, and plans are underway to ensure the landscape terrain becomes accessible to all. As part of this aim we have been working with the Centre for Print Research (CFPR) at the University of the West of England. CFPR are designing a set of tactile models for us, providing 3D representations of the tower and landscape, which will help visitors who are blind/visually impaired to appreciate the building and its surroundings. Alongside these models, in the Tower Vault, we will also be providing AR (augmented reality) binoculars to give visitors a realistic experience of the tower and its views without having to climb the steps.

Cane Warriors brought to life



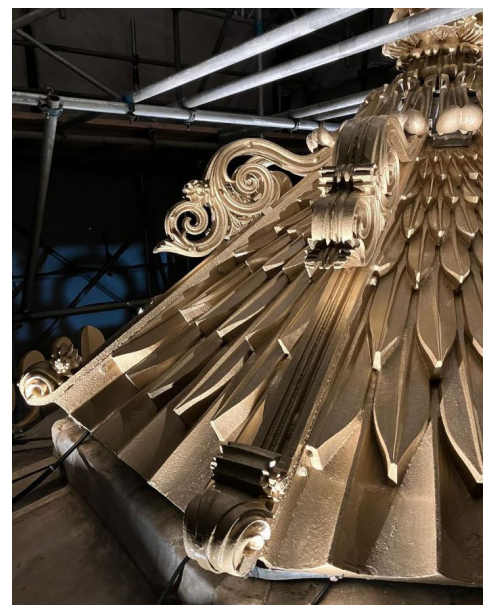
Words are one way to tell Beckford's story, but music and dance are another. We worked with celebrated dance group, State of Trust, who created a performance based on the award-winning book, *Cane Warriors*, by Alex Wheatle. State of Trust performed the dance at Bristol Arnolfini in March 2024. The performance, which was filmed and can be viewed in the museum, told the often overlooked story of Tacky's Rebellion in Jamaica, which involved a number of enslaved Africans from one of Beckford's plantations. Several members of the Beckford's Tower team attended the performance and have described it as being "powerful" and "very emotional". We look forward to taking our relationship with State of Trust forward into the future.

Alex Wheatle, author of *Cane Warriors*

Adding to the collection

We are very grateful and honoured to have received two bequests recently, which will greatly enhance our collection. One was from the Estate of Philip Hewat-Jaboor, who was a long-term supporter of Bath Preservation Trust and will be greatly missed. The bequest includes several printed books that will be on display when the museum reopens, including rare first editions of Beckford's gothic novel *Vathek*. The second bequest was from Beckford Society Treasurer Jane Wainwright, who generously gifted her collection of Beckford books and the research archives of the late Clive Wainwright to the Tower. Clive was one of the first people to extensively research Beckford's collection, tracking down

objects in other museum collections and attributing Beckford objects and furniture. His work led to the 1989 publication of *The Romantic Interior: The British Collector at Home, 1750-1850*, which continues to be one of the most essential works for exploring the interiors and collections of the 19th century. The addition of the Wainwright Archive to the research papers of Dr Bet Mcleod gifted last year, and the aforementioned Philip Hewat-Jaboor Beckford archive, now makes the Tower's archive the most extensive resource for anyone researching William Beckford's collection. We hope to catalogue the archive and make them available for public research over the next year.



Lighting has been installed on the Tower's lantern

Herschel Museum of Astronomy

New exhibition: Herschel Museum of Astronomy Re-imagined

This year's exhibition 'Herschel Museum of Astronomy Re-imagined' looks at the history of the museum and its exciting potential for the future.

A feasibility study was carried out in 2023 to look at how the house and garden can be preserved and maintained for future generations to experience the Herschels' story and legacy. It focused on ideas for use

of the rooms, displays, accessibility around the museum, and building sustainability.

As part of the exhibition we are asking visitors to give their thoughts on the ideas raised in the feasibility study through surveys and polls, which will help inform how the museum can be 're-imagined' and accessed by current and future users.



The new consultation display at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy

A seasonal guide to the night sky

'Caroline's Almanac – Spring Skies' stargazing guide is available to view online from the museum's website and a limited number of printed copies are available to pick up from the museum. Created with the kind collaboration of the Bath Astronomers, the guide gives you advice and ideas on what to view in the sky from March to May.

Shop stock

Look out for 'Comet Chaser', the newest book in the museum's shop. It is a wonderfully written life story of Caroline Herschel by Pamela S. Turner, with beautiful illustrations by Vivien Mildenerger. It's perfect for all ages, and the images make you feel part of her world of discovery.

Herschel Museum of Astronomy

James Short Telescope

The latest object on display at the museum is a Gregorian Reflecting Telescope made by James Short, one of the pre-eminent telescope makers of the mid-18th century. In his career he made at least 1300 telescopes and they were considered the finest of the time. Similar telescopes he made were used to observe the transits of Venus in 1761 and 1769.

Short had no assistant, and when he died in 1768 his method of polishing mirrors was lost. Separately, William Herschel started experimenting with making telescopes in 1773, and he went on to create telescopes of even greater quality than Short. The telescope has been loaned to the museum by Richard N. Blythe of Shropshire.



The James Short telescope

Upcoming events

SUMMER SOLSTICE: SOLAR GAZING WITH THE BATH ASTRONOMERS
Friday 21st June – 10am to 4pm, free with standard admission

Join the Bath Astronomers on the day of the summer solstice to view the sun safely, and to discuss all things astronomy-related with the knowledgeable hosts! It's all taking place from the back garden of the Herschel Museum, where William and Caroline observed the sky, and where William discovered the planet Uranus in 1781.

Museum of Bath Architecture

The Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel



The Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel, The Huntingdon Centre, Building of Bath Museum, the Museum of Bath Architecture – it has been known as many things over the last 40 years but we just call it MoBA.

This wonderful gem of a museum holds a special place in many people's hearts and it is always a source of quiet pride and happiness to find out that so many people know it, love it and want to see it again. We are extremely pleased to be reopening this museum for a further year in its current format. As loved as it is, the museum is looking long past its best and frankly it no longer meets the needs or expectations of modern visitors. We want to change that.

We have an ambitious plan, not only to represent the museum and collection, but to undertake a once in a generation intervention, which will re-engage audiences, 'future-proof' the building and create a new vibrant cultural centre for Bath. The museum sits at the heart of BPT – a place from which our Advocacy and Campaigning is provided but also an accredited museum which tells a vital part of the city's heritage.

Soon after the museum reopens, we will be undertaking consultation with visitors,

members and stakeholders about options for the future of the building. Amongst the questions we shall be asking, will be what activities we should provide, exploring themes for the museum content, what facilities would be of use, how to make the site accessible, what is valued in the museum and building and what should be changed.

The findings of this consultation will be used to inform the design of the new museum and will be used to support funding applications to meet the cost of the changes. We are also keen to explore a variety of options for funding, including donations and sponsorship. As well as establishing a new museum we are also looking to deepen and extend our engagement with the universities to ensure conservation, sustainable development and retrofit are demonstrated in practice as part of students' learning. Both the University of Bath and Bath Spa University are educating the next generation of architects, designers, engineers and built environment innovators using Bath as their inspiration. The Chapel is important to both and we are keen that every architecture student should spend time in the museum as a place for learning and study.

To help us on this journey of change, we have been working with several Bath-based firms

to explore what might be possible. James Grayley Architects and SEED Landscape Architects both lease space from BPT in the former Schoolhouse adjoining the Chapel and have provided some appraisal of options. Buro Happold have investigated opportunities for retrofit and sustainable energy. This preliminary work has shown that this Grade II* listed building has versatile options and the consultation which will take place over the next few months will help us to rationalise those into a fully formed forward plan.

And in doing this preliminary work, we have uncovered a serendipitous coincidence. James Grayley established his Bath based practice having moved here from London where he was Associate Director of Dow Jones Architects. James led the first phase of the redevelopment of the Garden Museum in Lambeth, set in a late medieval church, which won a Civic Trust Award in and was shortlisted for an RIBA Award in 2009. The director of the Garden Museum is Christopher Woodward, whose name may be familiar to some as between 1992 and 1995, he was BPT's Director of the Building of Bath Museum.

It is a small world and although this is entirely coincidental, it somehow feels important.

World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund

Ainslie Ensom

In a break from the norm, the World Heritage Enhancement Fund update will be replaced with a special recognition of the extraordinary achievements of an extraordinary person.

On 31st January 2024, Ainslie Ensom stepped down from her position as the World Heritage Enhancement Fund Administrator – a post she held from when the Fund was started, in 2009. Working for one day per week for most of this time, Ainslie has enabled marvellous things to happen to the historic public realm of Bath as well as for its interpretation and understanding. It has been lovingly and knowledgeably cared for, conserved and improved. The beneficial outcomes and finished projects may look easy to achieve, but anyone who has been involved with conservation of the historic public realm will know the need for research, documentation, consideration of approach and a thorough understanding of the importance and technical skills provided by the craftspeople who undertake the work.

Ainslie not only understands these needs but has a depth of care coupled with a meticulous interest in the process of conservation from start to finish. Perhaps this speaks of her qualifications and commitment to taking on new skills and knowledge. Ainslie holds a Diploma in Art and Design and following a career in Fashion and Textile Design and Botanical Illustration, she gained an MSc in Historic Building Conservation at Bath University.



During the 168 months which elapsed between Ainslie joining BPT and when she left, around 200 projects have been completed with many more in the wings. This is an immense achievement, effectively enabling more than one project to be delivered every month since 2009 – advising applicants, making site visits, commissioning craftspeople, undertaking research, checking on progress, keeping partners informed, obtaining consents, retaining the records, creating publicity materials and taking photographs, and of course attending the many meetings of volunteers and colleagues who were fortunate enough to work with her.

More than £450,000 has been spent and what has been achieved for Bath under Ainslie's watchful eye has added a level of quality and care of the public realm which is remarkable and exceptional. Without her dedication and eye for detail, I don't believe the quality of work would have been possible, nor achievable and I know from speaking to members of the World Heritage Enhancement Fund working group that her enthusiasm and depth of knowledge has been inspirational.

We are also delighted that in leaving her paid role, Ainslie has reassured us she will continue to volunteer as an advisor to BPT's Architecture, Planning and Place Committee.

So although Ainslie continues to be involved with our work, this is a very fitting time for me to share my most profound gratitude to her for being with Bath Preservation Trust to achieve so much for the city and for everything she did within her role.

Alex Sherman, CEO



Private event spaces for hire

For business, leisure or both



The first house in the country's finest Georgian crescent, No.1 Royal Crescent Museum offers heritage, history, talking points - and endless photo opportunities.



A venue of historical, literary and architectural interest, Beckford's Tower offers a unique setting for your event. Before you even arrive, the gold-tipped Tower will beckon you from afar.



Once home to the astronomers and musicians William and Caroline Herschel, the Herschel Museum is a wonderful example of an authentic middle-class Georgian House, packed with character, authentic scientific artefacts, and with multiple spaces to explore.



Spacious and characterful, the Museum of Bath Architecture offers plenty of cultural atmosphere whilst offering the modern technology necessary for business events.

Prices start from £100 per hour. Email events@bptrust.org.uk to plan your next event today.



BATH
PRESERVATION
TRUST

bath-preservation-trust.org.uk
admin@bptrust.org.uk
+44 (0)1225 338 727

We are a membership organisation and a registered charity.
Registered office: The Bath Preservation Trust Limited,
1 Royal Crescent, Bath BA1 2LR
Registered in England no. 294789, Charity no. 203048
Design: www.minutemanbath.co.uk
Print: www.minutemanbath.co.uk



@Bathprestrust
@no1Museum
@MuseumBathArch
@BeckfordsTower
@HerschelMuseum



@bath_preservation_trust
@No1royalcrescent
@batharchitecture
@beckfordstower
@herschelmuseum