

Better Bristol

The Bristol Civic Society magazine - Issue 10 Spring 2017



Bristol's New Bridge Unveiled

- Dummy's Guide to the MetroBus
- Tightening the Green Belt
- 21 Years of the Architecture Centre
- Bristol Though Maps

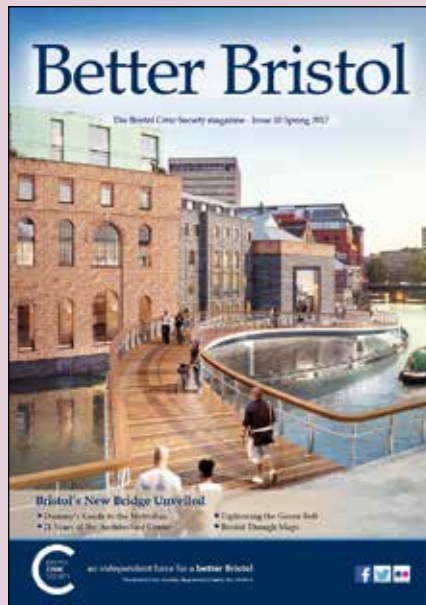


BRISTOL
CIVIC
SOCIETY

an independent force for a **better Bristol**

The Bristol Civic Society, Registered Charity No. 244414





Front Cover:
Finzels Reach bridge – Bristol’s latest pedestrian Bridge. See pages 14-15

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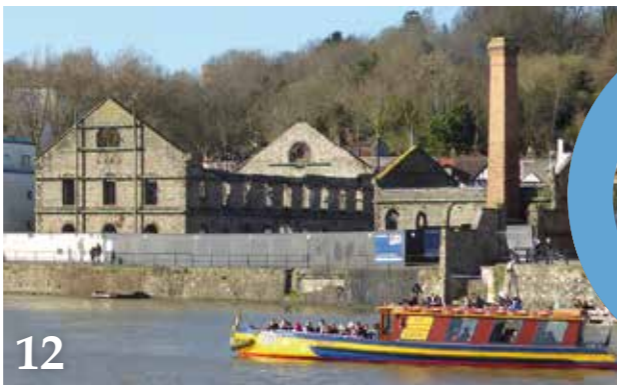
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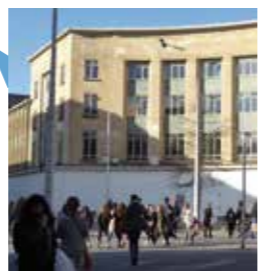
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Chairman's piece Campaigning is the DNA of the Society



In the previous issue, I talked about "shouting with a louder voice" and drawing wider attention to important campaigns. I gave the example of St Michael's on the Mount. I also described the Society's work in developing the Bristol Heritage Forum and in raising the profile of our own Design Awards.

The Society can boast an impressive range of initiatives, which may appear somewhat disparate and indeed random. At its last meeting, the Executive grappled with this problem, emerging with a framework which gives clarity and direction to everything we do.

Campaigning
We would like to do more campaigning. After all this is in the DNA of the Society – just look at our history! Campaigning provides

evidence of what the Society stands for. We will persevere with helping to save and to find a solution for St Michael's; we are looking at how best to assist Ashton Court Mansion; and we are involved with Jacobs Well Baths. What else might we do? Ideas please!

Influencing
We are very good at influencing and have an excellent and professional set up. This work includes our response to pre-application proposals and to planning applications, as well as responses to draft planning, transport and public realm proposals and policies.

Celebrating
Great fun and increasingly popular and high profile, we took over Blue Plaques from the City Council and already have a fascinating portfolio of new plaques. Our Design Awards continue to be well regarded and attract a wide variety of nominations. We also support and contribute to the successful Doors Open Day.

Communicating
Communicating with our members and with the wider public is essential. Better Bristol is an important part of this together with e bulletins, website, programme of talks, walks and cycle rides.

Organising
The boring bit! The often-unsung tasks of running the Society – governance, finances, membership.

We found this framework useful but what do you think? Should the Society be doing more (or even less) in certain areas? And of course, we are constrained by the availability of resources so anything new usually requires new people, or we stop doing something else.

Simon Birch

Email: chair@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk

Better Bristol has a new editor

Mike Manson has been a member of the Bristol Civic Society for over twenty-five years and during that time has contributed to a number of working groups. He has a passionate belief in the value of people understanding their surroundings. He is the author of four books on Bristol. His most recent publication, Vice and Virtue (Bristol Books), co-authored with Dr Edson Burton, is a study of Old Market. His novel Where's My Money? (Tangent Books) featured recently in the BBC TV series, The Books that Made Britain.



Not already a member? Why not join TODAY!
See page 27 for more details...

Bristol's MetroBus. Where's it going?

Better Bristol's guide to everything you ever wanted to know about the interminable road works that have plagued Bristol in recent times. That'll be MetroBus then, as Eugene Byrne explains.

Have you seen the state of the bloody roads in Bristol lately? Roadworks and fenced-off bits everywhere, usually with no-one working on them.

Contractors are getting everything ready for the new MetroBus system, due to begin operating later this year.

Ah yes, the return of the trams! My gran used to love the trams.

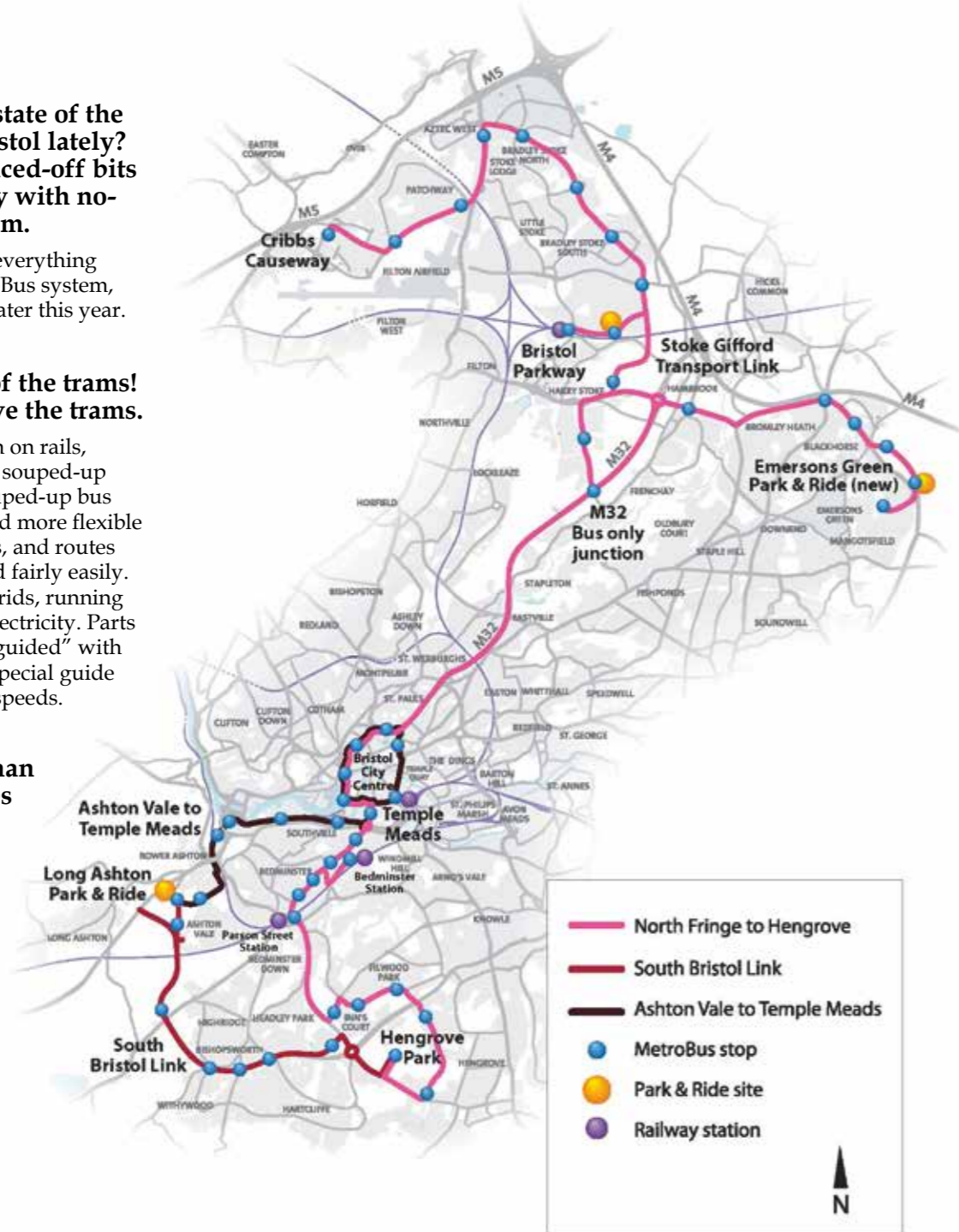
It's not trams. Trams run on rails, whereas this is basically souped-up buses running along souped-up bus lanes. This is cheaper and more flexible than installing tram rails, and routes can be added or changed fairly easily. The vehicles will be hybrids, running on a mix of diesel and electricity. Parts of some routes will be "guided" with the vehicles steered by special guide wheels, allowing faster speeds.

And this is better than existing bus services how?

How could it possibly be worse? It'll be faster thanks to dedicated lanes, junction priority (in MetroBus land the lights are always green) and people buying tickets in advance. A MetroBus journey would be very roughly 25% quicker than doing the same route by current bus services.

Who is building it?

The four local councils – Bristol, N. Somerset, S. Glos and Bath & NES. It's important to add that MetroBus is just part of a wider West of England



FIND OUT MORE

Web: travelwest.info/metrobus

FB: www.facebook.com/MetroBusBristol



transport strategy that also involves more and better footpaths and cycle schemes, reopening rail lines and increasing local rail services and loads more.

Who pays? And how much?

The money mostly comes from central government, but so what? Either way the answer is that you're paying. Currently price £216m and rising. In 2015 it was budgeted at £203m but unforeseen costs increased the bill. For instance, there were unexpected gas mains in Bradley Stoke and then there was the bill for lawyers and rentacops needed to peel a bunch of tree-huggers off some trees.

Where will I be able to go on it?

The system, when complete, will comprise one main route and two smaller ones. The big one runs from Cribbs Causeway to Aztec West and down the M32, through the Centre and on to South Bristol and Hengrove; there are also spurs off this one, to Parkway station and to Emersons Green.

Another goes from Long Ashton Park & Ride through Southville to Temple Meads and the Centre. The third runs from Long Ashton along the South Bristol link road to Hengrove Park.

Nowhere near leafy Clifton, Henleaze, Westbury, Southmead and all them points west and north-west, I see. Why the discrimination?

Those bits are already reasonably well-served with roads and public transport. The priority goes to areas with poorer links and to joining park & rides to try and deter all those commuters from Yate or Weston parking outside your house. It also favours commuters and economic powerhouse destinations including Emersons Green, the Mall, Patchway/Filton, Temple Quarter and UWE.

Pack us a picnic, Trevor! We're off on an adventure! How much are the tickets?

The partnership has stipulated that whoever ends up operating the system can charge a maximum adult fare of

Above, work on the Ashton Avenue Swing Bridge.

£1.50 for up to three miles and £3.50 for over six miles; kids half-price. You'll have to buy your ticket before the journey, using ticket machines at the stops, or from local shops, or using your phone and/or whatever other snazzy new tech comes along.

(continued on page 6) ▶

METROBUS IN NUMBERS

- 50km total length of the MetroBus system in Bristol alone
- 94 new bus stops
- 282 new cycle stands
- 7km+ of new cycle routes
- 6km+ of new road space
- 3 new bridges across the railway
- 8 new road bridges across roads and streams (plus 2 replaced, 1 refurbished)
- 6 mammal underpasses along the South Bristol Link route.



Above, CGI impression of Bristol's new City Centre.

WHAT THEY'RE BUILDING

Just some of the works involved in getting MetroBus up and running:

Ashton Avenue Swing Bridge

The historic bridge over the New Cut has had a £3.2m refurb to take the MetroBus and for improved walking/cycling.

City Centre

Massive changes afoot here. The big ticket item is a new road link from Baldwin Street across to St Augustines Parade. The new layout, and new traffic routes, due to be completed later in 2017 should make it safer for pedestrians.

A new bridge at Bathurst Basin

To run alongside the old one, which becomes one-way towards Bedminster.

The M32

The bus lane is being extended and a new bridge over the motorway has been built to speed up journeys between UWE, Bradley Stoke and the City Centre.

Ashton Vale

A new 350m-long bridge is going over the railway line near Winterstoke Road so MetroBus services can avoid Winterstoke Road/Cumberland Basin where traffic is always heavy at commuter time.

Hartcliffe Way

With traffic restrictions for much of 2017, is being widened and remodelled.

(continued from page 5)

Will it be worth it?

Should be. The entire scheme, including MetroBus and more ways to walk, cycle, take the train or bus, will give everyone more travel options. The city centre should be a more attractive place to wander around and you get reduced pollution and greater social inclusion in deprived areas, particularly south of the river. According to MetroBus PR material, it will boost the local economy by £418m and create almost 20,000 new jobs. This may be overstating the case, so here is a pinch of salt. All the same, it's not likely to do any actual harm, assuming it works.

So who could possibly object?

There have been complaints without number regarding parts of the route, with concerns over the effect on various neighbourhoods, the use of green land, no end of moaning about

all the road works everywhere ever. If you want to bone up on them, search the local media websites or follow @RethinkMetrobus on Twitter.

I expect car drivers are up in arms, too.

The dream is that one day we'll be like That London, where many people don't bother owning cars at all. But the scheme will see some roads being widened where possible to make room for the bus lanes, so life will supposedly be better for cars, too.

Cool! So I can chug around town at a law-abiding 20mph in my gas-guzzling 4X4 with fewer other road-hogs in my way!

Kindly leave the room.

Below, work on the new stretch of road to link the end of Baldwin Street with St Augustines Parade.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We'd love to hear your views. Email: mageditor@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk

Planning Applications: John Payne reports

The Planning Applications Group has considered well over 100 planning applications on behalf of the Civic Society since the autumn edition. This article highlights the submission made in response to Bristol Zoo's application to continue using land off Ladies Mile as an overflow car park for another three years.

There are also updates on the proposal to develop land at Wesley College, the application to build a bridge over Bridge Valley Road and the Council's decision to grant permission for the redevelopment of the Seven Ways Service Station in St Pauls. There have also been some encouraging refusals of permission for digital advertising screens.



Proposal to extend the use of the Zoo's overflow car park at Ladies Mile for another three years.

Bristol Zoo has submitted a planning application seeking an extension for another three years of its planning permission to use land off Ladies Mile as an overflow car park. The Zoo has permission to use this land for 45 days at present but would reduce that by 5 days a year to 30 days in 2019.

The Society has consistently opposed the use of the Ladies Mile site as an overflow car park. It is inconsistent with Council planning policies particularly those protecting open spaces and conserving the historic environment. Temporary planning permissions for this use have been granted to the Zoo since 1998. The Downs Committee permitted the use from the late 1960's. We are concerned that the renewals of temporary planning permission are becoming a permanent feature. This view is

reinforced by the statement on the Zoo's website that for the last decade, they *have thoroughly investigated all other possible parking solutions and there are no practical alternatives.*

The proposed reduction in the number of days for which the Zoo is seeking to use the Downs is an

We are concerned that the renewals of temporary planning permission are becoming a permanent feature.

improvement but it still means that thirty days use of this area will be lost to other recreational uses. These are likely to be public and school holidays and other fine summer days when the Downs are most used for informal recreation. If there is no practical parking alternative to the Downs, as the Zoo's website states, how far can the number of days when Ladies Mile is used be reduced?

The proposed extension of the use of this site as an overflow car park would continue to have a number of harmful impacts. Even though the Zoo's Vegetation Survey states that the site could recover from damage caused by the car park, there is indisputable short term wear and tear on the grass in the area used by the car park (See photographs). The presence of 600 cars on the site spoils the open nature of the Downs and views across them. The cars and the taped boundary surrounding the site are impediments to free roaming and remove the area from recreational use. The taped off area discourages use of the site even when it is not in use for parking.

The daily influx of cars to the Zoo, particularly in the summer, is too much for the road network to absorb without congestion and, therefore, additional air pollution. This spreads into Ladies Mile when that car park is being used. The extension of the time limit for roadside parking on the Downs means that

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Get off our land! The taped area discourages the use of the site.

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the roads on the Downs can also be used to accommodate visitors to the Zoo. Whilst this may have enabled the Zoo to reduce the number of days that it wishes to use the site, it means that there are fewer spaces available for those who wish to park on the Downs for recreational purposes. This impact is most likely to be felt on public holidays and fine summer days.

The Society feels, therefore, that use of this land for car parking is not solving the problems caused by car trips to the Zoo. It is just spreading them around and deferring a proper solution. We consider that the overflow parking facility must cease to be available before alternative solutions will be attractive. As long as visitors perceive that parking is available close to the Zoo, they will not be readily attracted to alternative means of transport. The Society fully recognises that the Zoo is a very popular visitor attraction and renowned centre for animal conservation but it wants the Zoo to flourish without the adverse effects of using the site of Ladies Mile as an overflow car park.



Siteplans of the proposed development of land to the east of Wesley College.



Residential development on land to the east of Wesley College.

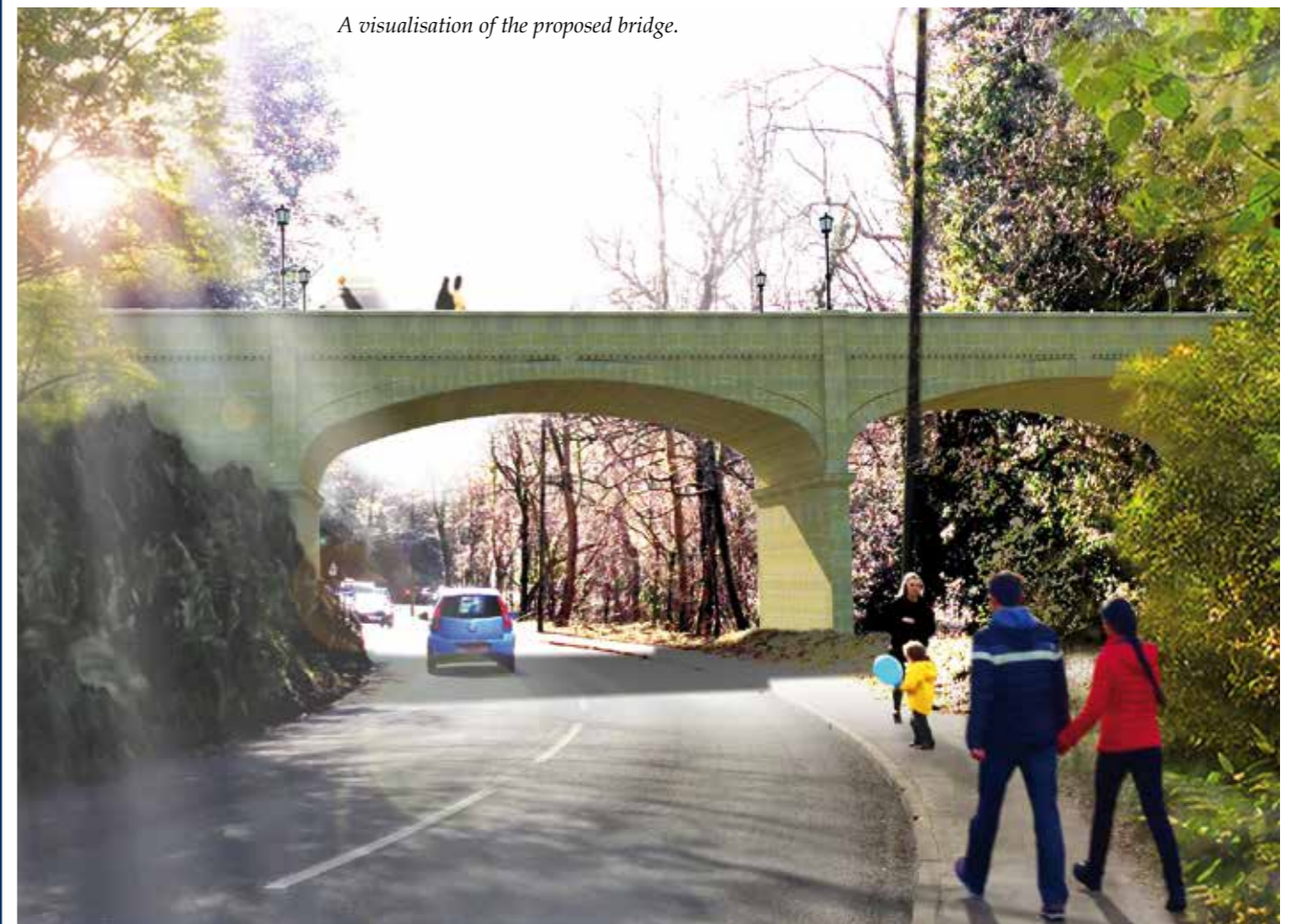
Bristol Civic Society strongly supports the decision of Bristol City Council to refuse this application. It is very similar to an earlier application refused by the Council, a decision upheld when the applicants appealed. The Society commented on the latest application and made representations when it was considered by the Development Control Committee.

This open space is important locally to provide a break between areas of residential development and to provide a setting for the Wesley College building. The open and undeveloped character of this land is important to the character of the Conservation Area in which it is located. The proposed development of this land would reduce the mass of open space there and harm the character of the Conservation Area. The Society considers that this area of open space also has strategic

importance in the longer term bearing in mind the large scale residential development at and near the former Filton Airfield. There is an opportunity to create a corridor of open space linking Filton Airfield with the Blaise Castle and Coombe Dingle.

An appeal against the Council's decision has been made by the applicants. The Society has submitted a statement urging the Inspector to dismiss the appeal.

A visualisation of the proposed bridge.



Proposal to construct a bridge over Bridge Valley Road.

This proposal has been refused. PAG considered that the impact of the bridge on the woodland character of Bridge Valley Road would be harmful although a lighter, less intrusive design could have worked. There was also concern that the approach to the bridge

from Clifton Down would have a harmful impact on the open space there.

When the application was considered at Committee, Councillors overturned a recommendation for refusal but only if an agreement were reached with officers for the replacement of trees. That agreement was not reached and so the application has now been refused.

Seven Ways Service Station, St Pauls.

Planning permission has been granted for a residential development on the site of the Seven Ways Filling Station (Michael's) at St Pauls. A number of inappropriate proposals had been put forward which the Society and

others considered to be an over development of the site and over-bearing on neighbouring properties. Although the Society had a few remaining reservations, the approved development is more suitable for the site in terms of its scale and the number of dwellings to be built.

Digital Advertising Screens.

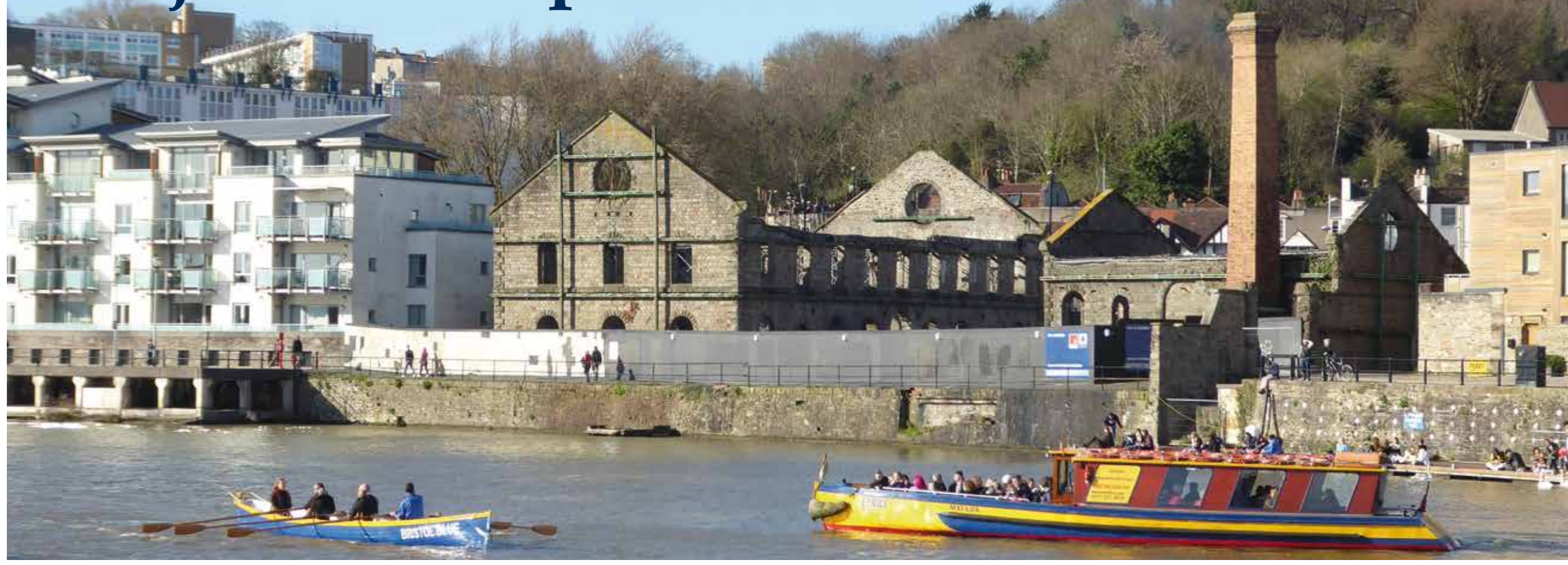
The Society continues to campaign against this intrusive form of intensively illuminated advertising. Most recently, PAG has objected to proposals for large screens opposite the exit from Temple Meads approach road, at Stapleton Road alongside the M32 and on the A4 at the busy cross roads close to St Brendan's College. It was particularly gratifying that Council Members refused permission for the screen near Temple Meads even though officers had recommended approval. Members were very concerned at the implications of the screen for road safety at this complex and busy junction. The screen near St Brendan's was also refused permission as was one of the two screens at Stapleton Road.



WEST ELEVATION TO SUSSEX PLACE

Major Developments in Bristol

Left, West Purifier House - an important industrial building.



The MSG meets every six weeks. The Group welcomes any member who wishes to join, please contact johnfrenkel5@gmail.com. It is critical for the Society to meet developers of large projects early in the design process. MSG tends to concentrate on city centre developments, which affect the greatest number of residents and where local representation is weakest. The Society supports development and modern architecture.

John Frenkel (convener)



Engine Shed Two

What we think

The West Purifier House Anchor Road

The Society strongly supports the long-delayed development of this important derelict site. Linden Homes have carefully restored and redeveloped the East Purifier House. The two purifier sites and Gas Ferry Lane are a major industrial heritage asset, which relieve the bland Harbourside development. Unfortunately, the Society cannot support the current design because the new building to the east is too big. The effect would be to make the Grade II listed Purifier House subsidiary to the new building. The mass of the new building would harm the setting of the whole group.

Engine Shed 2

The Council will soon begin work to replace the Temple Meads gyratory with a simple light-controlled junction at the Temple Way and Victoria Street cross-roads. The Station Approach's architectural setting leaves a poor



Plans to develop a blighted area.

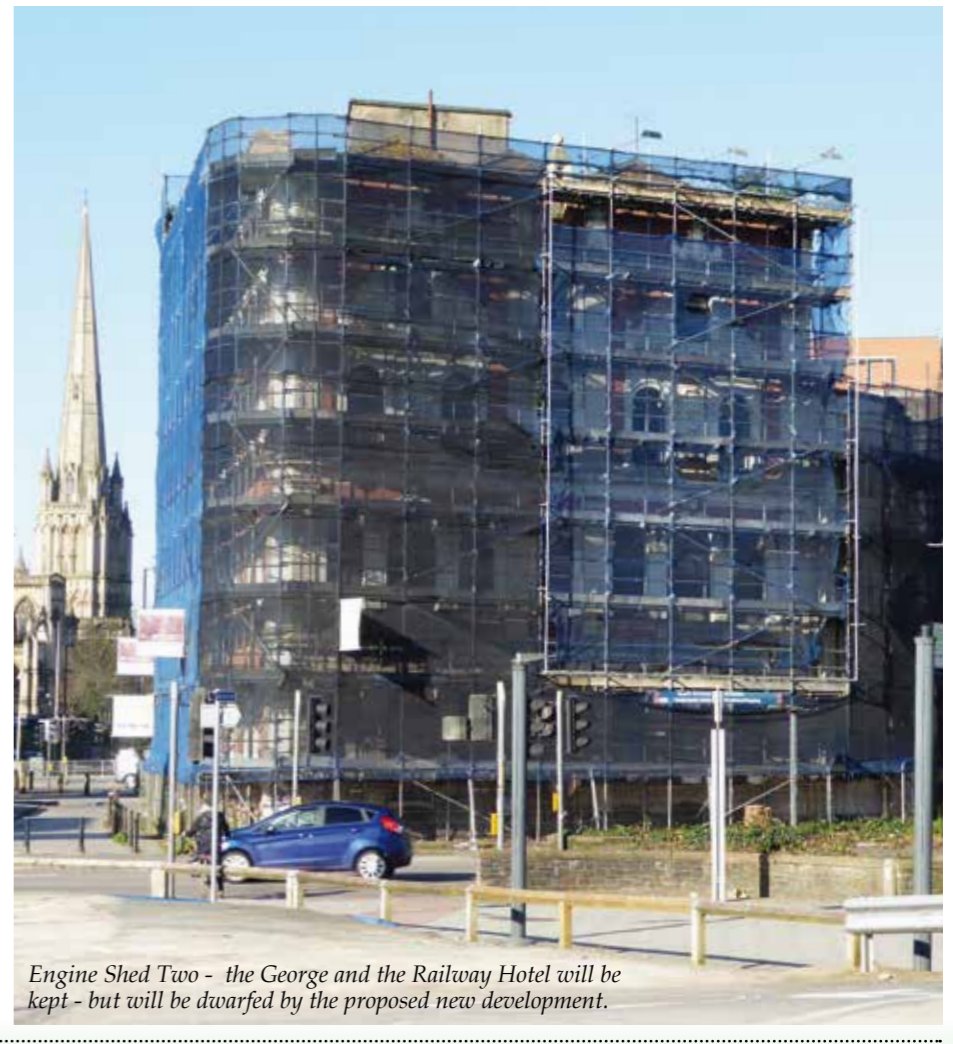
impression. Skanska have applied to redevelop the derelict Island Site next to the George and Railway Hotel. The Society strongly supports the plan to improve a blighted area and but cannot support the height and mass of Engine Shed 2. The retained Grade II listed Hotel would be a nominal gesture to conservation; an afterthought next to the mass of the new building. The relationship between Engine Shed 2

and the Grade I listed Old Station, a nationally important group of buildings, would be out of scale. The design of the glass cube attracted compliments.

Temple Circus Blocks B & C

Skanska has applied for permission to develop the remainder of the site. Next door to Engine Shed 2 are Temple Circus Blocks B and C - offices, retail units, car parks and landscape.

This is an outstanding development opportunity. The Society cannot support a scheme whose height and mass conflicts devastatingly with a local plan for the Temple Quarter, adopted by the Council as recently as October 2016. The local plan balances the reuse of heritage assets with new building to create a distinctive quarter with a blend of old and new. The scheme would demolish the Grosvenor Hotel, a locally listed 'landmark' building that creates local identity. In place of monolithic, 'headquarters' buildings the Society suggests a closer grain lower rise work quarter to make the Brunel Mile and Victoria Street more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists and produce a commercially viable scheme. A human scale is the precondition of a successful public place. The land assigned as a large new park overlooked by large, uniform blocks should be reallocated to several 'pocket parks' between the new buildings.



Engine Shed Two - the George and the Railway Hotel will be kept - but will be dwarfed by the proposed new development.

A better Broadmead

- John Frenkel - convener Major Sites Group



Broadmead: a comprehensive mixed use development is proposed.

This is the most significant central area redevelopment since the post-war establishment of the Broadmead shopping area in the 1950s, more significant than Cabot Circus, which was largely built on long-derelict land. Bristol is in a serious competition with the out-of-town shopping centre at Cribbs Causeway.

The original concept of the city architect J Nelson Meredith for the new Broadmead visualised largely traffic-free streets. The retailers who occupied the new units rejected continuous canopies along the shop frontages. Today, traffic has priority in the Horsefair and Penn Street. Pedestrians are overwhelmed by traffic and traffic fumes. The retail experience is poor. The Society welcomes the proposals from the Bristol Alliance (the Alliance) but has some

reservations about aspects of what is proposed. The Alliance is a partnership of Hammerson and Axa Real Estate Investors who are landlords of most of the area. The Alliance plans a further substantial investment to support the Bristol Shopping Quarter's economy. The extent of this outline planning application is difficult to comprehend.

The Alliance proposes a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment. The Society welcomes and supports the scheme, which offers Bristol more than a defensive response to the proposed extension of the Cribbs retail park. The Society's reception is qualified by some reservations about what is being planned. These are the headlines.



Site location plan of the proposed Broadmead redevelopment.

Demolition

The Alliance proposes to demolish virtually all the standing buildings east of Merchant Street, and south of Bond Street as far as Philadelphia Street. It is remarkable that there is nothing left on the site that pre-dates the 1950s redevelopments, which even swept away much of the historic street pattern. The 2008 restoration of the nationally listed group of buildings around the Philadelphia Street/Quakers Friars retail developments was of exceptional quality. The Heritage Assessment carefully considers how the scheme could enhance the link with this area. The scheme will also retain the locally listed Podium Circus, the most recognisable landmark in the original Meredith design, will remain a feature.

New uses

The Alliance has yet to decide how to distribute the space between retail, commercial, leisure and hospitality floorspace, up to 150 flats, car parking, access, landscaping, public realm works. It is important to integrate other buildings of architectural merit to create a continuous shopping/entertainment area. To benefit and enhance the whole Shopping Quarter it is critical for new development to relate to and not overbear the traditional department stores occupied by Marks and Spencer, Primark and Debenhams in the Horsefair and the Rotunda.

Buses and motor traffic

The Horsefair and Penn Street would be redesigned to offer a more pleasant environment for pedestrians with buses and cars re-routed to make be easier walking routes. Currently, buses turn left out of Nelson Street and then right into the Horsefair and Penn Street. In the future, buses would turn right out of Nelson Street, up Union Street, left into Newgate and pick up in Broadweir. Access to the basement services bays would be from a new entrance in Bond Street. The result would be that buses would circulate outside of the Shopping Quarter to create traffic free space for pedestrians and cyclists in the Horsefair and Penn Street apart from emergency and service vehicles. The Council is assessing the impact of new bus routes on the local road network.

Public realm

The redeveloped streets would have a mix of covered and open shopping areas, designed to make Broadmead an appealing place to shop, whatever the weather. There is disquiet about the private management of the roads that the development would absorb.

The retail experience can be poor.



There is an opportunity to reduce the street clutter. Numerous pop-up structures, bollards, telephone boxes and redundant bollards would disappear. The new design must avoid the blank walls on Temple Way and Bond Street that give Cabot Circus a fortified exterior.

New homes

The Alliance proposes a 12-floor block of flats on the Bond Street boundary. The proposed tower is 75m high, which compares with One Redcliffe Street. The Society has an open mind about a tower in this location. There would be a tall buildings assessment of a tower's impact on the cityscape and the local effect of its shadow on heritage assets and conservation area views such as Brunswick Square.

A new city centre, 1,000 bay, short-stay car park

The Society's major concern is about a new multi-storey car park. National and local planning policy aims to reduce traffic in towns to decrease congestion and improve air quality. Additional traffic lights at the Bond Street car park entrance would interrupt bus and Metrobus traffic and cause a serious operational problem. To compete with Cribbs the Alliance must offer convenient car parking space. If the Council is satisfied that the Alliance cannot support the volume of retail and leisure expansion without more car parking the Society suggests expansion of the existing multi-storey car parks, which are rarely full. The Alliance could build more homes if the car park is left out of the development.

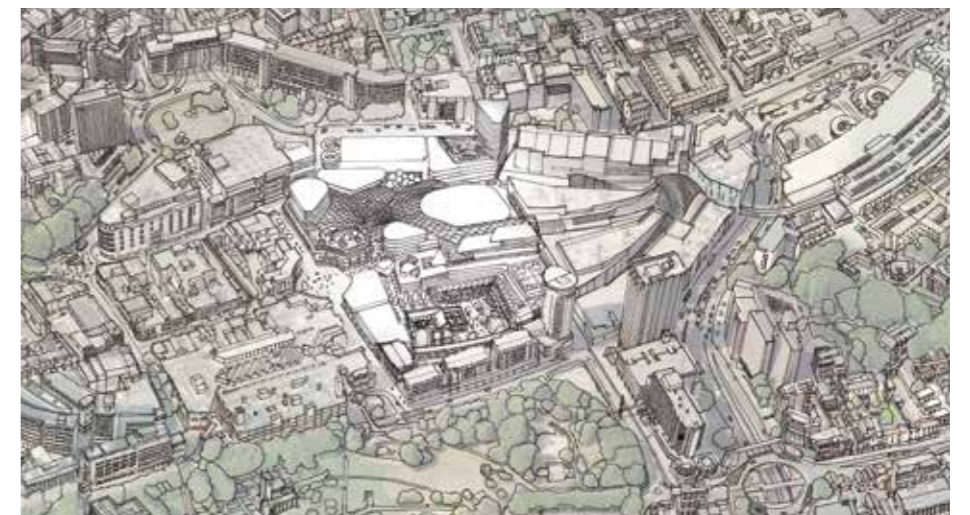


Illustration of the proposed Broadmead redevelopment.

Finzels Reach bridge opens up the city centre

Cubex's Gavin Bridge tells how it was built

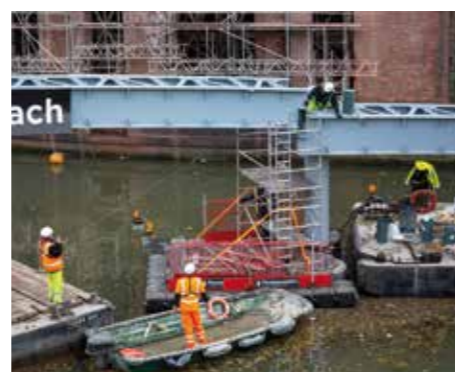
Bristol's newest bridge between Finzels Reach and Castle Park is due to open in April. This eye-catching, curving construction has created a much needed link to the city centre for pedestrians and cyclists. The footbridge is remarkable for its elegant simplicity, however the challenges that had to overcome were far from straightforward.

When Bristol-based Cubex, the lead developers for Finzels Reach, first purchased the site, they inherited a proposal for a construction incorporating a lift and stairs to negotiate the high level of Castle Park. Gavin Bridge, director, felt this could be problematic and working with



The installation of Finzels bridge.

his architects, The Bush Consultancy, developed a new S-shaped more elegant design without the need for lifts or stair. "The sinuous shape of the bridge came about for a number of reasons," said Martin Kendall, Director of The Bush Consultancy. "It enabled us to maximise the width between the bridge piers for passing watercraft. It also made the



A technically challenging project.

structure longer, creating an acceptable gradient from one end to the other." This latter point was important to make it accessible and inclusive for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users.

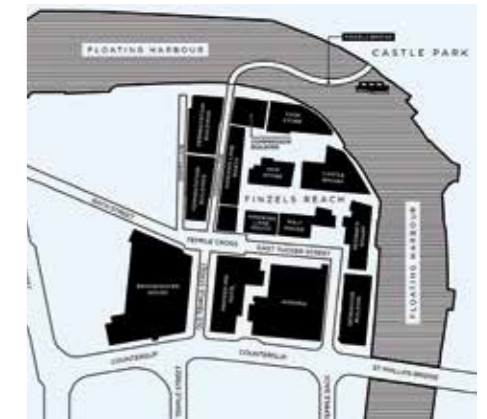
The design of the bridge was the first of our many challenges. Not least among these was the logistics of erecting the bridge, bearing in mind archaeological

sensitivities in Castle Park and the limited space on the surrounding land. Cubex's lead contractor, Andrew Scott Construction, came up with a plan to transport all materials on barges from an offsite delivery yard near Temple Meads on the Old Post Sorting office site recently acquired by The University of Bristol. They also erected cranes on jack-up barges (with legs that sat on the harbour bed) so all the heavy lifting could be done from the water. Even this was far from simple, with a specialist team of divers needed to check the harbour bed for unexploded ordinance.

"Without a shadow of doubt this was the most logistically and technically challenging project we've been involved in," said Bill Pugh, Contracts Manager of Andrew Scott Construction. "But we've enjoyed the challenge and are delighted to be involved in this important new pedestrian and cycle link in Bristol."

The finished footbridge was kept deliberately simple to let the sweeping, curved shape speak for itself. It has been enhanced with illumination that included navigational lights for boats passing underneath, concealed safety lights to illuminate the decking and down lighters on the columns. All these had to be carefully arranged not to interfere with a protected bat corridor on the Castle Park side of the waterway.

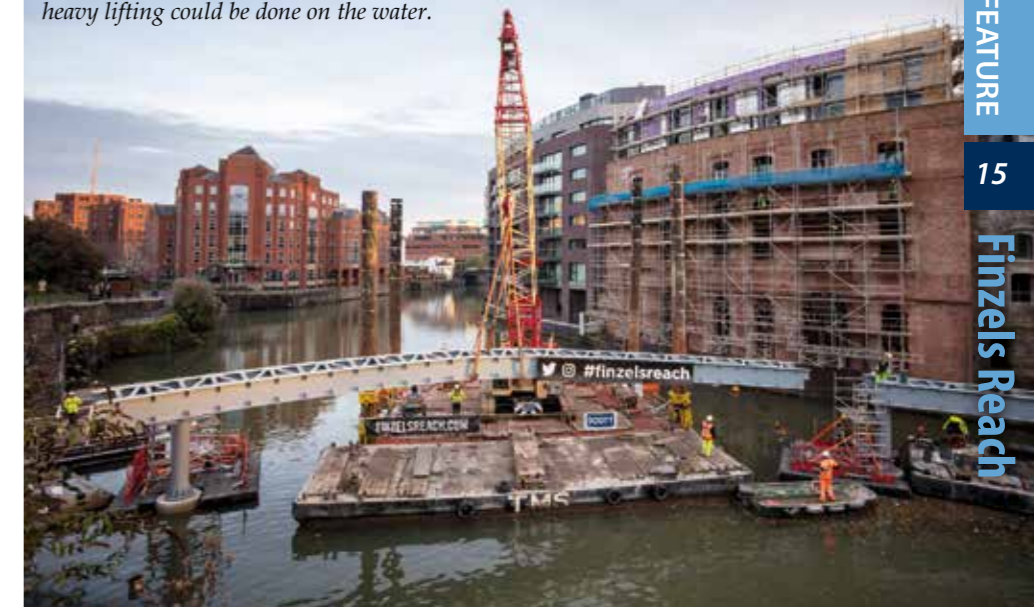
A bridge at Finzels Reach is one of the primary pedestrian routes set out by the City Council as part of their wider assessment of access to the city centre. It completes an attractive walkway from Temple Meads to Castle Park and the retail areas of Cabot Circus. It has also improved access to the popular ferry services on the north of the Floating Harbour for pedestrians coming from the south.



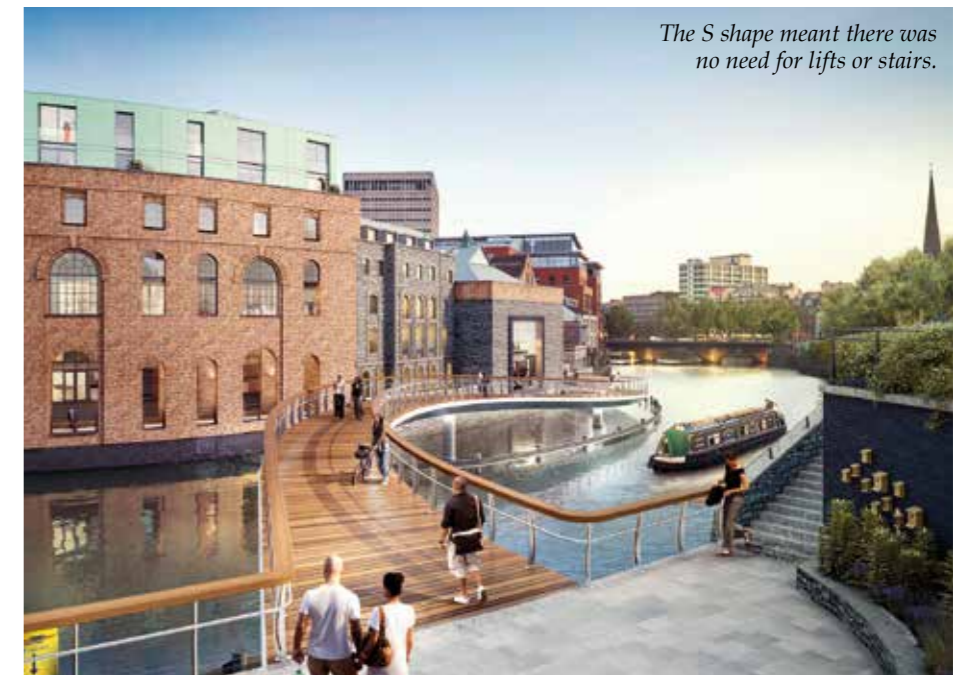
The eye-catching structure will be a lasting legacy of the Finzels Reach development. Cubex are proud to have created a footbridge that will be enjoyed by so many users for years to come.

What do you think?
We'd love to hear your views.
Email: mageditor@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk

Cranes were erected on jack-up barges so heavy lifting could be done on the water.



The S shape meant there was no need for lifts or stairs.



Keep pavements clear for walking!



Why is that people put obstructions on pavements? Pavements take up a small proportion of the total road width, but suffer a disproportionate degree of obstruction. This is discrimination against people who walk and deters more people from walking, and we should do something about it! It is a nationwide problem, says *Alan Morris*.

It is annoying for the individual walker, but for some it is more than annoyance. Think about those using wheelchairs, mobility scooters or buggies, whose path is completely blocked because an obstruction leaves insufficient pavement width for them to pass. Imagine the danger to life if they are forced on to the road. Think about visually-impaired people.

The RNIB has a campaign called "Who put that there?" It reports that 95 per cent of blind and partially-sighted people have collided with an obstacle in their local neighbourhood over a three-month period. Nearly a third of those were injured. The most common obstacles collided with are: cars parked on pavements (70 per cent of those asked), bins of all kinds (64 per cent), permanent and temporary street furniture (59 per cent and 55 per cent), and advertising boards (49 per cent).

Pavement parking is a problem for 73% of the population aged 65 and over (Living Streets/YouGov poll 2014). It seems to be almost the default in some residential streets to park on the pavement, even where the road width makes it unnecessary. Sometimes the problem comes from commuters, particularly close to a Residents' Parking Zone, or visitors to a nearby popular facility like shops or a hospital. But sometimes it is the street's own residents. Drivers often mistakenly think they are doing the right thing by keeping the road clear, but fail to realise the consequences



Above, Belvoir Road parking obstructions.



Above, pavement parking, Stoke Lane, Westbury on Trym.



Builders' second van Belmont Road.

of their vehicles blocking the footpath. Parking on street corners, dropped kerbs, and at junctions puts pedestrians at risk when crossing the road.

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) is running a campaign on pavement parking, working at several levels. Nationally, BWA is lobbying to change the law to make enforcement simpler and easier. Currently, no effective policy or regulatory framework is available. At a city level, BWA is encouraging the council and the police to enforce the laws against pavement parking. At a neighbourhood level, BWA is encouraging and facilitating community action.



Belmont Road pavement parking.

As examples of neighbourhood action:

- Greater Bedminster Community Partnership has been tackling pavement parking and bins left out on the pavement. A pilot letter to residents of one street had some impact, particularly on moving bins off the pavement, but a second letter was needed because the pavement parking remained poor.
- In the Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill Neighbourhood Partnership area, where residents have provided evidence of persistent obstruction, the police have increased patrols and ticketing on particular streets.
- In Westbury-on-Trym, where residents are experiencing persistent pavement obstruction by a local estate agent's vehicles, the council's parking enforcement team has been asked to resolve the matter.

If you would like to share your experience, suggest what works and what does not, or get involved in the campaign, send an email to pavementparking@bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk

Immortalised in blue

As Civic Society members, you'll all appreciate our streetscape and the small details which adorn buildings. Thus you'll be aware that 'blue plaque' is not a nasty discolouration dealt with by dental hygienists – it is a commemorative scheme linking deserving people with places.



Descendants and distinguished guests celebrate a plaque on a pub - cheers!



Left, Unveiling in Portland Square of plaque to Batook Pandya, founder of Sari (Stand Against Racism and Inequality).

Right, For Ffestiniog - Getting all steamed up in at Tyndalls Park Road/Woodland Road junction.



'Lived here' are emotive words – the person being honoured actually had this building as his or her home. It is a much stronger connection than a free-standing statue can convey. They slept here, and did things that we ordinary mortals do, like drop blobs of marmalade on the kitchen tiles at breakfast time. A blank façade is enriched by a plaque; it can evoke a feeling of a life lived behind it.

Being commemorated by a blue plaque is a very special distinction, and one that holders don't know they have:

you must be dead to qualify for one. In London, there is a twenty-years-after-death rule. Our Panel deliberated and settled on five years. We consider this to be sufficient time for a period of calm to descend. Distance from death to commemoration is important, emotions need to settle – remember the national mood in 1997: our swollen-eyed hysteria about Princess Diana . . . ?

We have yet to decline an application. All of them have been of merit, and submitted by applicants who submit ▶



A plaque that looks good enough to eat...

(Continued from page 17)

persuasive evidence to justify their claim. But we do need to press for firm evidence of residency dates because cast aluminium doesn't take kindly to revisions.

18

We do not get involved with fundraising. It is for the applicant to demonstrate commitment to their candidate by arranging finance. And we leave the applicant to decide on the level of celebration at unveiling ceremonies. The Lord Mayor in attendance and a buffet lunch or just a small gathering on the pavement. But all unveilings are celebratory, not morbid – more like weddings than funerals.



Deep in discussion at the Arnolfini: the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Jeff Lovell, and great-great-grandchildren of iron founder Acraman who is honoured on the plaque.

There's room on the Panel for a couple more members so that we can extend our spread of views a bit. Wording is critical and discussion about how best we capture the spirit and accomplishments of the person does exercise us. After all, we don't want just a CV on a wall. Qualifications? Well, you need to feel the pulse of our city, be fond of our townscape's facades and like cake! Some unveilings feature a heavily-iced replica of the plaque...

Gordon Young
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Promoting Greater Understanding and Enjoyment of Architecture

Celebrating 21 years at the Harbourside, the Architecture Centre takes stock and looks ahead with a fresh new look.



Narrow Quay in the 1960s. The Architecture Centre occupies what was once a sail loft – third building from the left.

This month the Architecture Centre reveals a brand new look and launches its new website - architecturecentre.org.uk. With such a wealth of archives to sift through this moment is a great opportunity to look at all they've achieved over the last twenty years and gear up for the next twenty. Newly appointed Head of Programme **Pippa Goldfinger** talks to the Bristol Civic Society about what to expect.

Last year the Architecture Centre celebrated its 20th anniversary. Based at the Harbourside in the heart of Bristol this unique organisation is at the forefront of promoting great buildings and places.

Founded by the architectural community in 1996, the Centre was the first purpose-built architecture centre in the country. It was born out of the belief that Bristol needed an independent organisation to promote a greater understanding and enjoyment of architecture. This sentiment, remembered by then Chair David Mellor, had much to do with the closure of the Bristol University's well respected Department of Architecture a decade earlier in 1984.

Since its opening the mission of the organisation has been to disseminate the benefits of great design to the citizens



Activities encompass exhibitions, talks, debates, symposia, urban walks and the annual Bristol Doors Open Days festival



of Bristol and beyond. It has grown to encompass such varied design topics as sustainability, health and inclusion.

Our approach has developed too, moving from advocacy (still an important part of our work) to engagement and participation with all sectors of society. Our Head of Learning and Participation, Amy Harrison, has led on nationally recognised programmes including work with young people that has been genuinely transformative.

Our activities now encompass exhibitions, talks, debates, symposia, urban walks, the annual Bristol Doors Open Days festival and the design review initiative Bristol Urban Design Forum. We work with organisations as varied as Bristol City Council, UWE, Bath University, Bristol Festival of Ideas and

many more. Wherever possible we look to harness the talent, professionalism and creativity of the people of Bristol in a way that extends the reach and message of our organisation.

Our nationally recognised programmes including work with young people have been genuinely transformative.

Looking to the future we have a programme of exhibitions that draws on different aspects of the built environment and place-making; ranging from drawings of South Bristol by milkman Garth England (a homely snapshot of 20th century life) to the pioneering work of female urbanists (think Jane Jacobs and Ruth Glass) via inspirational sporting structures. The exhibitions

form the backdrop to a rich and varied programme of events that aims to engage people of all ages and backgrounds.

With twenty years work achieved and twenty still to come, what have we learnt? Of all art forms, architecture has the most profound and tangible impact on everyone's lives. Undoubtedly the Architecture Centre has witnessed the passion individuals and communities have for their neighbourhoods and their environment. In the words of the great Jane Jacobs: "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."

With a new look and website coming soon, visit us and find out more about our exciting future.

www.architecturecentre.org.uk

Building within the Green Belt

Peter Floyd puts forward a long term plan and asks why is it so difficult to talk about the Green Belt without starting a fight.

I am delighted to live in the green belt with a great many other people, since there are villages and towns and even suburbs. It is not all green fields and not all the land is premium agriculture or of landscape value. When you realise that half of the entire land area of the West of England is green belt (much of the rest being urban) it's a very big area to exclude from all possibility of development. It is throttling city, town and village. It is an area we really must consider objectively - even by those of us who live there.

The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) and the Joint Transport Strategy (JTS) are addressing the future planning of the whole area, but why has it become so difficult to even talk about the green belt without starting a fight?

A country cottage has been an aspiration for many since the nineteenth century. While this attitude is rapidly changing as we make our cities more attractive, it is still there, especially amongst those who are "lucky enough" to live in the green belt. And with its increased property values it is fiercely defended.

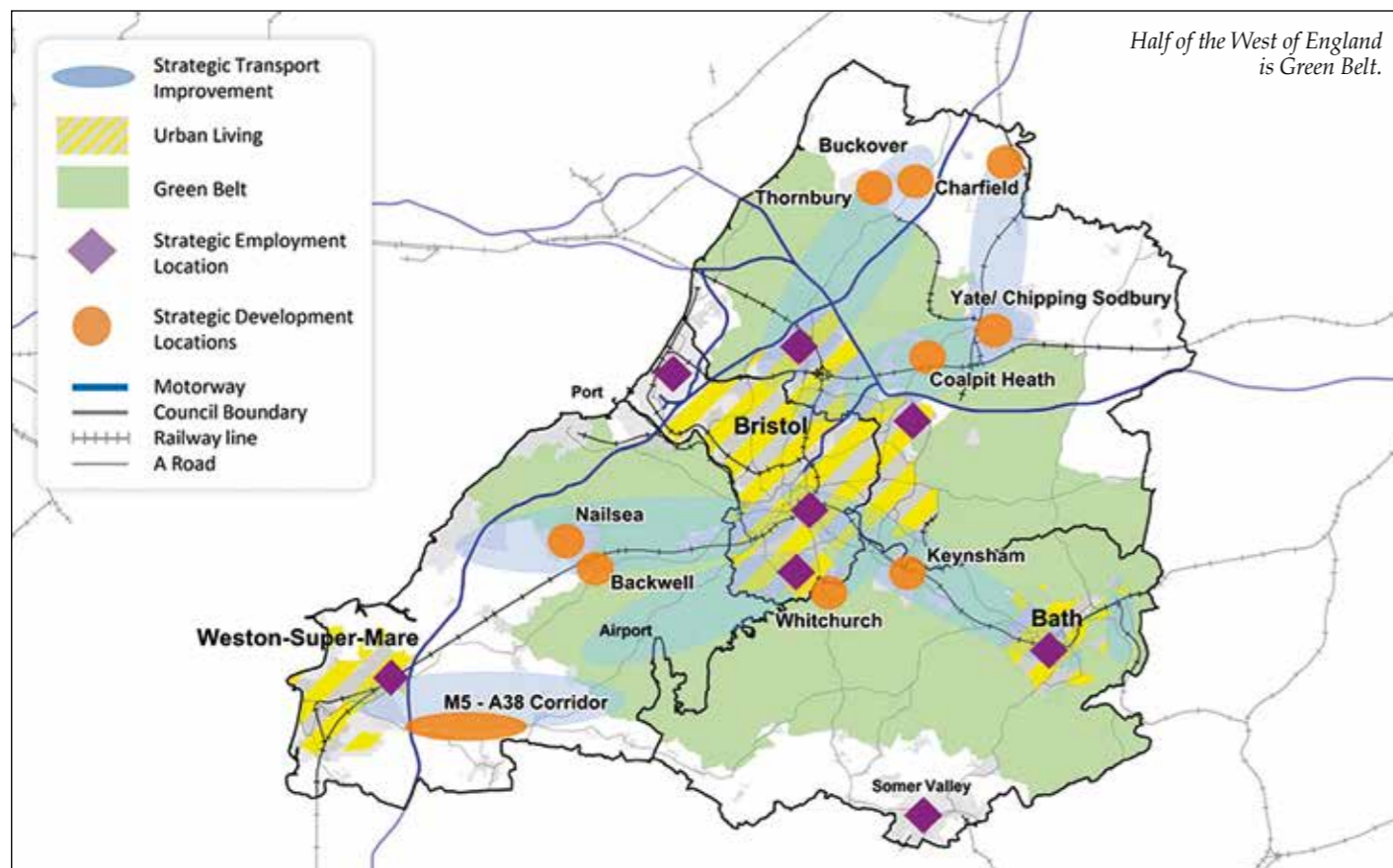
A few new country cottages would be welcome, especially if they meet the desperate needs of local communities. But 100 will swamp local services and change communities beyond recognition. This generally happens because it is extremely difficult to obtain planning permission to build in the green belt. It is as easy to build 100 as a

few, and it suits the planners who have housing targets to meet. So developers, usually of national size, will build a large number of houses: all at once; of their standard patterns. However well presented, a large suburban housing estate results, with the usual shortcomings of services and transport.

What are the alternatives? After the Second World War New Towns were built around London. Development Corporations ensured they were properly planned and designed.

Around Bristol, green belt land had already been declared and existing towns beyond the green belt such as Thornbury, Yate, Keynsham, and Nailsea were expanded by private house builders, often without schools, doctors and other public services, to the huge disadvantage of both existing and new residents.

Local jobs failed to appear, so residents were forced to commute by car to the



A country cottage is an aspiration for many, says Peter Floyd.

city along the 10 miles or so of existing roads from the expanded towns across the green belt, since there was no realistic public transport, a situation that is still true now.

Government policy has long been that the market will provide, within a tough planning system. The Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) and Joint Transport Study (JTS) are being pursued in parallel, but not apparently together. The green belt is still sacrosanct and the planned number of houses are to be provided mostly by enlarging the extended towns. The JTS offers not enough roads or public transport to serve them.

Much time will be spent by all sides on this new plan, arguing about housing numbers, when the market will actually decide. Transport on the other hand will continue to depend on the Treasury's financial priorities, unless the present intention to devolve power via a West of England authority and a Metro

Mayor actually happens. In which case the new authority will have control of housing and transport over the area of the existing four local unitary authorities. Local people may at last be in a position to make key planning and transport decisions for themselves.

If that were so, then the main public

A few new country cottages would be welcome, especially if they meet the desperate needs of local communities.

transport routes of whatever mode, could be built first, with housing and jobs built around them. The new residents and workers would have a sensible alternative to the car before they had moved in. Only then would public transport have a real chance of success.

Public transport routes, even when planned, are unlikely to be completed

for many years. But if development took place, starting from the city's edge, with a community around each stop, it would be possible to build only the section of line or route as far as that community, with the transport being extended and other communities following as they were needed, each with its own facilities. If they were of only a few thousand it would be possible to build them wide apart and within our very extensive green belt and these routes, if suitably chosen, could end at the originally extended towns, which already need their public transport systems improved.

Much further work is needed. If a strong lead on long term planning strategy is taken and public transport is developed that truly serves small self-contained communities we could have a City Region that continues to enjoy the best of the green belt.

Peter Floyd is a retired architect and town planner.



Leigh Woods, ripe for development 1864.

Bristol Through Maps: Ways of Seeing a City

What does your neighbourhood look like when you close your eyes and imagine it? Or take pencil and paper and sketch your route to the shops or local park? Would you include the pub, the church? Would you remember the oak tree where crows have built a nest, the busy road that impedes your progress?

In his latest book, *Bristol Through Maps: Ways of Seeing a City*, Jeff Bishop describes our ages-old desire not only to belong to a place but also to capture its features on paper. But which features and why? As Jeff says maps do not necessarily tell the truth – more a type of truth that suits the maker. Take Robert

Ricart's 1480 'map' of the city, one of the very first maps of any town in England and, therefore, priceless. Ricart's map shows the High Cross surrounded by walls, four city gates and prosperous-looking buildings. It's not so much a map as a celebration of civic pride – one

Maps do not necessarily tell the truth – more a type of truth that suits the maker.

that erases the Ghetto beyond the city walls and also, oddly, Bristol Castle. Not a map to help you round, but one bursting with commercial possibilities for a wily merchant.

Jeff is an architect and planner and not, he says, a historian. But his lively and enquiring mind is a brilliant accompaniment to 24 maps and 500 years of the city story. Braun's 1568 map is a secular map, the Reformation

having swept away 11 monasteries; now 'there is no dunghill in the city', with 'Redcliffe Street having a form of open sewer draining into the river'. Millerd's 1673 map of a now mighty maritime city shows dogs (or are they seals?) pulling ships to the quay side; the castle's gone, destroyed by Cromwell's forces but the city is 'sublime, spacious, faithful, pleasant and glorious...' Put that on your wall!

Later maps show the city expanding. Some deceive: a beautifully-coloured plan of Leigh Woods in 1864 splits the ancient woodland into a handful of spacious building plots but, according to the *Bristol Record*, reserved for '800 tenements'. It's a fascinating story of (successful) community resistance.

And just when you get to modern, accurate maps with political and strategic value: tramways, war damage, the floating harbour; the dreaded 1966



Westbury Park: the resident's map.

plan to gut the city and drive four-lane highways through its heart – up pops the topographical impossibility of the Pubstops of Bristol. Or how about Lane and Rogers' 2015 map of places, people and events? A map that includes the tomb of Mr Blanket, supposed inventor of the blanket.

Maps of any era can be gloriously individual and none so more than the 'Memory Maps' Jeff will be making with Bristol communities to celebrate the launch of the book – maps created by you that tell the story of your community and, though not always geographically accurate, like most maps they are irresistible, beautiful and very often imaginary.

Stephen Morris

See back page for details of a talk by Jeff Bishop.

Bristol Through Maps: Ways of Seeing a City

Jeff Bishop

Published by Redcliffe Press, October 2016

176 pages, 24 maps, colour

ISBN 978-1-908326-99-7 £20

www.redcliffepress.co.uk

0117 973 7207



One of the oldest surviving city maps anywhere in the world: Ricart's 1480 map of Bristol.

Sir Donald Insall

CBE FRIBA RWA

Simon Birch talks to the influential conservation architect

At the end of January I was privileged to meet up with Sir Donald when he gave a talk on "line drawing" at the RWA. He had agreed to a short interview for Better Bristol and on being introduced he gave me a copy of an article he had written over 60 years ago, (in the Bristol & Somerset Society of Architects Vol.3 No. 25 September 1954) entitled "Bristol: City of Churches".

This article presaged his subsequent reputation as "one of the leading conservation architects of his generation" (Queen's Birthday Honours List 2010) and examined the options for the future of five City Centre churches destroyed or severely damaged in the Blitz. Temple Church should be retained as of national importance, the tower of Mary le Port was worth retaining, St Peter's was a memorial to the civilian dead and should be cared for by the City Council, St Nicholas and St Augustine were both considered to be too far gone to retain!

I have been aware of Sir Donald throughout my career, having read his seminal work "The Conservation Game: Chester" (1968) when I was



Insall's study of Chester led to the recognition of the Conservation Officer.



Orleans House Gallery, Octagon Room.

training to be a town planner in the 1970s. However, I hadn't realised that he was very much a Bristolian, born in Clifton, educated at BGS and trained at the School of Architecture in Great George Street. He worked briefly in Park Street before moving to London.

Conservation is now mainstream and an integral part of normal planning

His family came to Bristol in the early 1800s and developed a successful business as "trunk and portmanteau manufacturers" located just off The Centre. Sir Donald was knighted by the Queen at Windsor Castle following his contribution to the restoration work after the disastrous fire.

With nearly 70 years' work experience and 50 years since the publication of

the Chester Report, Sir Donald has an unrivalled perspective on the impact of the conservation movement in this country. He told me that the most positive aspect is that conservation is now mainstream and an integral part of normal planning, no longer the sole preserve of the specialist. Conservation is so much more positive than preservation, dealing as it does with the "assets of place". I was encouraged to read his book "Living Buildings" which contains all his accumulated wisdom, something which I'm still looking forward to.

In Sir Donald's view his study of Chester was instrumental in the creation of a new breed of local government officer - the conservation officer - seen as a positive link man between the planning authority, property owners and the public, providing advice, encouraging conservation schemes and pulling together funding and newly created "conservation funds". The first conservation officer in the country was appointed in Chester as a direct outcome of the study. The Chester study was one of four commissioned by the Government (the others were for Bath, Chichester and York) and I asked the motivation for such innovative initiatives. Surprisingly Sir Donald considered that the Government should be credited with being far sighted (why should I be surprised, isn't Government always far sighted?).



The King's Observatory, Kew.

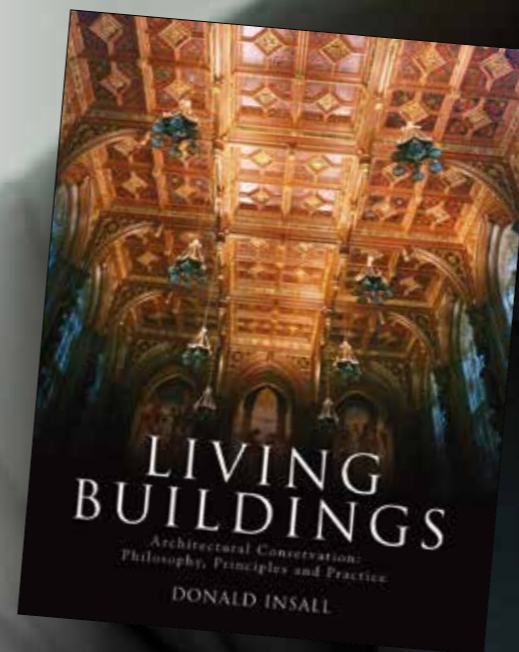
The King's Observatory, Kew.

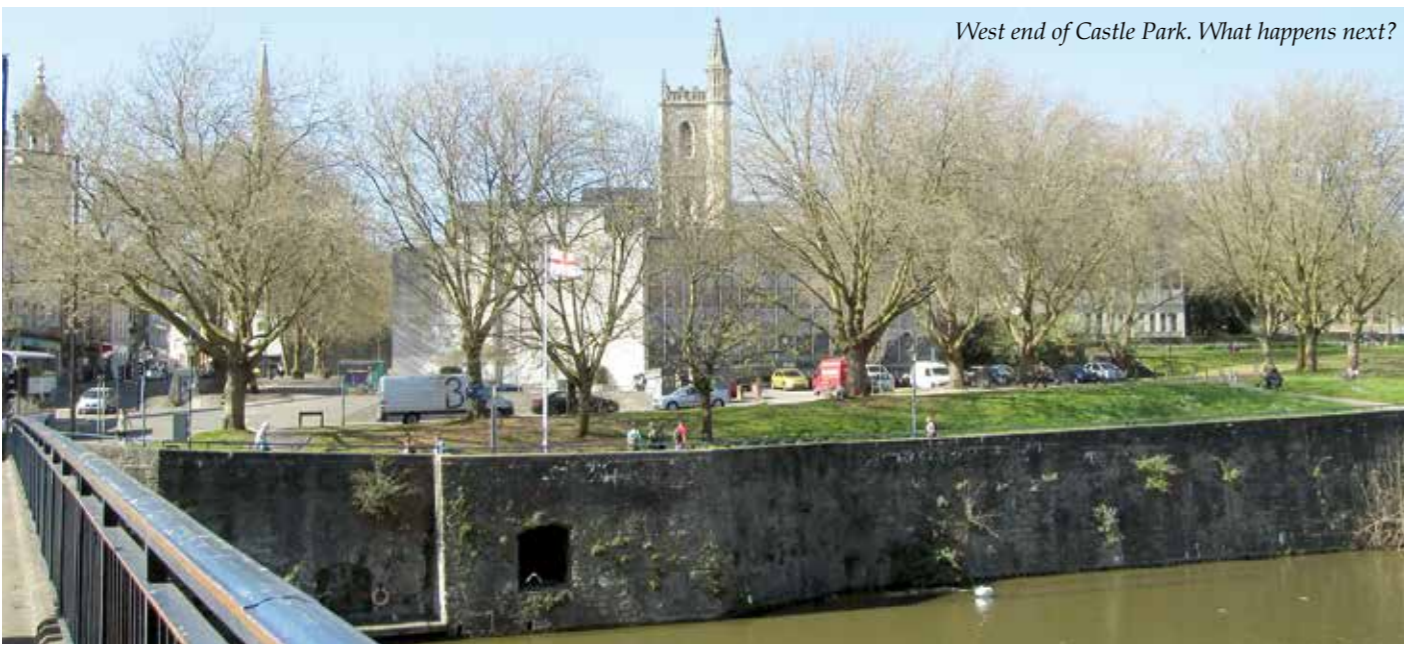
In Chester Sir Donald and his team spent 2 years surveying over 400 historic buildings and proposing costed structural works with clear responsibilities for action. When they started work many parts of Chester city centre were in a parlous physical state with a great number of derelict and underused properties - I clearly recall the air of dereliction when waiting for the school bus in Lower Bridge Street! They produced innovative "character assessments" of sub areas, identifying special individual features and analysing how these combined together to create the character of place.

I came away from my brief encounter with Sir Donald with great admiration for such a proud Bristolian, a conservation architect who had made such a striking impression on his profession and on so many historic places through his championing of conservation as a positive force, a legacy which clearly guides so much ongoing work in Bristol to-day.

Simon Birch

Below, Sir Donald's book, *Living Buildings*.





West end of Castle Park. What happens next?

St Mary Le Port and Castle Park - The Debate Continues...

Better Bristol has featured the future of the St Mary Le Port area and Castle Park twice recently. Roger Mortimer presents his own view.

The Spring 2014 issue of Better Bristol suggested the building of a continuous line of apartment blocks on the edge of the park all the way from Wine St round to Old Market - tongue presumably in cheek.

18 months later, a short time in the life of this saga, another master plan was offered by Willie Harbison of ESHA Architects. This scheme recognises such realities as land interests and basic planning criteria and has many interesting features, including creation of a new covered food market.

The issue of vehicle traffic between the Bristol Bridge junction and Union St/ Broadweir etc. bedevils all schemes. In Harbison's suggestion it is dealt with by driving a new road diagonally across Castle Park. This would cut a swathe through and reduce the amount green space in an already well used park, where use will increase further due to nearby residential and commercial

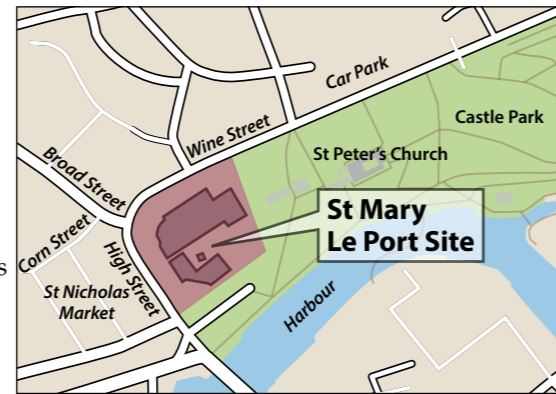
developments, not least Finzels Wharf. The new road would cut through the raised East-West footpath in the park that runs on the line of a Saxon route that became Mary Le Port Street. It would also wipe out some 15-20 established trees. The well used and attractive diagonal footpath up the Cherry Avenue would be damaged by having two-way traffic running alongside.

It is surely feasible for general traffic to be banned from High Street and Wine Street, with service traffic controlled /time limited, and for at least some buses to be rerouted. Such measures would allow these streets to be 'shared surface' routes.

That is, provided these streets are not 'narrowed' as the promoters of the nostalgia theory of planning propose. This would amongst other things result in the felling of street trees, with the loss of the environmental and place-making potential these bring to streets. Here the trees can help redevelopment to create a very attractive and commercially

successful street scene, an extension to Old City and a link to Castle Park, Bristol Shopping Quarter and beyond to Old Market.

See www.stmaryleport.wordpress.com for development of this approach.



Roger Mortimer studied at the RWA School of Architecture, Bristol. He worked in private practice before joining JT Design Build as Company Architect in 1965, retiring as Deputy Chairman of JT Group in 1992.

Bristol Civic Society Membership

Your Civic Society needs YOU!

Bristol Civic Society is more than 100 years old. It is a non-party-political body which campaigns for what is best for our city. Joining the Society is inexpensive and it is open to all. The bigger and more diverse our membership, the stronger we can be.

As a Society member you're also on the invitation list to a range of events and benefits, from serious campaigning through to expert talks and social evenings and outings.

Bristol Civic Society is:

- * Saving the best of Bristol's past
- * A powerful voice in Bristol's future
- * Campaigning on issues that affect us all - and the generations to come
- * A great way to make new friends (and maybe re-connect with old ones!)

Find out more about the Society and its work at www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk



Joining is easy

There are three ways to apply. You can do it via the website: bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/get-involved/join-the-society where you can join using PayPal, or download an application form, or fill out, cut out or photocopy, and return the form below.

Have you considered leaving something to Bristol Civic Society in your will?

Membership application to join Bristol Civic Society

Membership (Annual)	Rate	✓
Individual	£20	
Joint living at the same address	£30	
Student	£10	

Please return to: Alex Dunn, Membership Secretary, BCS, 47 Abbey Road, Bristol BS9 3QN.
Cheques, if not paying by standing order, made payable to Bristol Civic Society.
Enquiries: Tel: 0117 962 2475
Email: membership@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk

Title..... Forename Surname.....
 Email.....@.....
 Address.....
 Phone(s).....

Standing order mandate

To: (name of your bank).....
 Account Number..... Sort Code
 Please pay annually from 1st of (1) 20 (2)
 the sum of £..... (3) (..... (4) pounds)
 to CAF Bank Ltd (sort code 40-52-40) for the account of Bristol Civic Society (account no. 00087355)
 reference no. (for completion by BCS)
 Name.....
 Date Signature

giftaid it By completing this Gift Aid Declaration, Bristol Civic Society can increase the value of your subscription at no extra cost to you by claiming a tax refund.
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Please tick
 YES NO

Signature..... Date

Events

Spring 2017

This year we are arranging a series of visits to new developments. Numbers will be limited and booking will be essential to events@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk. There will be a charge for each event. Further details will be available nearer the date on bristolcivicsociety.org.uk and though the BCS ebulletin.

APRIL Wednesday 19 April at 2.30 pm

Visit to **Suez Energy Recovery Centre**, Hallen

The new £244m centre is now in production treating household waste from West London and exporting electricity to power the equivalent of 50,000 homes.

MAY Thursday 11 May at 10.00 am

Visit to the **Avon & Somerset Police Black Rock Specialist Training Centre**, Valley Road, Portishead, Bristol BS20 8JY. A fascinating opportunity for a guided tour of this state of the art training facility with award winning design.

Walk Fest 1 - 31 May

Simon Birch, Jeff Bishop and Ed Hall will all be leading walks during the Festival - see **Walk Fest** publicity for full details.

Thursday 11 May, 7.00-8.30pm

Bristol Walking Alliance: 'A Walk in the park?'

Three short talks - with opportunity for you to contribute your ideas and comments. Speakers include: Dr Suzanne Audrey, Senior Research Fellow in Public Health, and Claire Lowman, Public Health Principal, Bristol City Council.

Topics include:

- Evidence for the health benefits of walking
- Led walks and measured routes around Bristol's parks
- Shared use routes for pedestrians and cyclists: the example of Victoria Park, Bedminster

Watershed. Free event.
Booking via Eventbrite.

Wednesday 24 May at 7.30 pm

Annual General Meeting

Bristol Civic Society warmly welcomes its members to its AGM which will take place at 7.30pm on Wednesday 24 May at Redland Parish Church Hall.

The Agenda will include:

- Chairman's Report;
- Accounts;
- Election of officers - Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer and Hon Membership and Subscriptions Secretary;
- Election of executive members;
- Review of Civic Society's activities.

Nominations for officers and executive members must be sent to the Hon Secretary by 17 May 2017.

JUNE June

Bristol Civic Society Design Awards - Presentation

Date and venue being finalised. Guest host.

Wednesday 21 June 2017

Salisbury Visit

Trip to Salisbury as guests of Salisbury Civic Society.

SCS will provide a guided tour before lunch. Afternoon options include climbing the cathedral tower, viewing the Magna Carta, seeing Arundells, the former home of Sir Edward Heath and visiting nearby museums.

See enclosed form or website for details and booking. £15.00 members/£20.00 non members.

JULY Thursday 6 July at 7.30 pm

(venue to be confirmed)

Talk by Jeff Bishop

Jeff's 'Bristol Through Maps' book is probably unique. It does not just talk about old maps of our city; there are some about today and even tomorrow (see pages 22-23). Jeff's talk will pick out just a few of the maps in the book, focusing on the great range of maps.

Wednesday 12 July at 2.30 pm

Visit to **Bristol Port**

The Bristol Port Company operates the Royal Portbury and Avonmouth docks. At Portbury there are terminals for forest products, cars, animal feeds and jet fuel. At Avonmouth the terminals, foreshores and wild life environment plus wind turbines will be viewed.

Wednesday 26 July

(timing and other arrangements in planning)

Study visit to **Avonmouth Village** led by David Martyn, architect and the City's Senior Conservation Officer. This walking tour of Avonmouth will cover its foundation, and early development as a new "city". Discover the people and dreams behind the development of

the docks and the "village" and explore the area through its architecture.

AUG Wednesday 16 August at 2.30 pm

Visit to **Aerospace Bristol**, is the new heritage museum being developed in Filton. This £19m museum will tell the story of Bristol's world class aerospace industry past, present and future. The show-stopping centrepiece will be Concorde 216 housed in her new purpose built hangar.

SEPT September - date and venue being organised

Talk by **Cotswold Archaeology** about recent archaeological investigations in Bristol.

*Springtime in Bedminster.
(Photo, Jeff Lucas)*

