

Dear Editor

29/05/13

Enhancing Bath's beautiful Public Realm

We have an opportunity in the next few months to take a really important step towards the enhancement of the streets and public spaces in Bath.

The first phase of the works to the High Street and Northumberland Place is almost complete. The High Street contains two of Bath's grandest buildings, the Guildhall and the Abbey and has been badly served by their immediate setting, with large expanses of tar macadam, traffic islands and ugly railings. The spaces between our wonderful buildings must also be wonderful.

Care has been now taken with choice of natural stone paving, its setting out and laying and the attention to detail. This mirrors the care and attention taken in Georgian times over the treatment of key features such as the detailing of the curbs, and the rainwater channels. Public spaces were designed deliberately to pass through or linger, and to enhance the urban experience. In the 18th Century, these details were specified in pattern books and local legislation.

The Council's Public Realm and Movement Programme group has now produced a draft Pattern Book,. We now need to apply this to give a consistent look and feel to our public spaces, so that the World Heritage Site continues to be world-class.

This is not some minority interest. The heritage in Bath is the goose that lays the golden eggs, and it's vital to maintain and enhance it for future generations. Shoppers and entrepreneurs come to Bath because it is a really special place. Students apply to the universities and visitors come in their millions because there is nowhere else like Bath. Since Bath is the economic driver for the surrounding district, the whole of B&NES benefits.

The Council now needs to issue the pattern book for comment and then officially adopt it.

Your sincerely
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