



BTT Members,

The BTT Board hope you will find this newsletter useful and informative.

If you wish to comment or include something in the publication, please contact the Chair on
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Or the Secretary on
gayerynsardbtt@gmail.com

The Board values your feedback and contributions.



Chair's Comments

Newsletter No 7

Dear Friends and Members

News From Lockdown - April 2021

So here we are again, a year on and at least we're coming out of lockdown rather than going into one! Fingers crossed we'll all be safe and we can, as hoped, start to get some semblance of normality back into our lives.

Some of us have, of course, carried on regardless during the pandemic and the works have been progressing on 11 High Baxter Street, and thanks must go to, in particular, Seamans the builders, Ed Thuell the architect at Whitworths and our own Paul Rynsard who has been managing the project for

us. Despite everything they've kept the project going. Paul explains below where we are now and where we hope to get to so I won't spoil his news by saying more here.

John Popham has, as ever, been as active as ever. He provides updates on his activities on our behalf too including news on the Railway Station, the former Post Office and The West Suffolk College.

One of my fellow board members suggested I write a little about listed buildings and what is and isn't protected by such designation. So, one of the common misconceptions is that the grading of listed buildings affects what is protected. Some seem to believe that with the most common Grade 2 only the exterior of buildings is 'listed' that is not true. All of the 'special interest' of all listed buildings is protected, whether it be inside or out. When advising clients, I often used to tell people who would ask 'which bits of a building are listed', that everything from the top of the highest chimney to the bottom of the basement floor is all listed. And, the elements which help constitute the special interest of the building are all expected to be preserved - that is what the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 says. So even Grade 2 gives complete protection.

The 'special interest' of a listed building can be all sorts of things, not just elements but form and plan of a building or elements which might have been related to an individual or an event in history. If you're in doubt

about what might be 'special' in your listed building and what isn't, it is best to engage a specialist to advise. Don't rely on the listing description, they are not infallible and most houses at least have been listed with only an external inspection, particularly early ones from the 1950s.

The grades are more about degrees of specialness, if you like. You may be interested to know that the reasons we have Grade 1 (about 2.5% of listed buildings), Grade 2* (about 6%) and Grade 2 is because the designation categories were thought up by graduates so they based the nomenclature on degree grades - First, Upper Second and Lower Second - there was for a while a Grade 3 but no longer.

If a building is in a conservation area and is believed to make a positive contribution to that CA, then that contribution is protected by the conservation area status and that is why we are putting together the heritage assets' gazetteer. It should guide folks about what adds to the character of the Town Centre Conservation Area.

Situations Vacant

We're sorry to say we again need to find a membership secretary and still have two other posts on the board to fill. Having spent the best part of a year doing sterling work Marian Shaw has stepped aside. I would like to say how grateful we are for all she did in helping us sort out our membership records and get things on a steady footing.

If you think you could help us out with this, or the other posts previously advertised please do get in touch.

Update on 11 High Baxter Street

Easter has come and gone on the 11 High Baxter Street site even under difficult circumstances there has been significant progress.

Thanks go to Seamans, the contractor, the architect and structural engineer who have all assisted in ensuring Covid 19 guidelines and regulations have been adhered to.

The first stage of the project is nearing completion with the external repairs completed (*see picture below*) and the new lime render on the walls and windows being decorated.

A major undertaking has been the demolition and rebuilding of the north elevation chimney and this will be completed shortly, with bricks salvaged from the old stack and a kind donation from Martin Lightfoot who had some Tudor bricks in his cellar.

We have now commenced on Stage 2 which will see the construction of the extension and some clearing out of internal walls and adding back some floors. This work will take us until July at which point we hope to place the property on the market for a purchaser to complete the fit out of the project (kitchen, bathrooms, decorations etc)



We are advised that given the potential of the house for some different configurations these items are best left for others. If this turns out not to be the case, we will review and progress ourselves.

Hopefully, when C-19 restrictions reduce we shall be able to open the house for tours for BTT members. We will announce any plans asap.

Paul Rynsard
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Bury St Edmunds Railway Station

In the last issue we reported that the work on the new northern entrance to the Rail Station had been approved.

This will provide direct access from the new north side car park to the existing entrance hall which will be remodelled to include two retail units and automatic barriers.

In addition to the interior work, repairs are due to be undertaken on the eastern end of the exterior of the northern side of the station which is currently in poor condition. Funding having been confirmed, the work is now programmed to be completed by April 2022.



North Wall – Railway Station

In the meantime, we await the long-delayed out-turn of the William’s Rail Review on which the Government has now promised a White Paper. This may announce changes to the way in which station fabric is managed in future.

John Popham



Education

The **BTT/ West Suffolk College BTEC, Level 3 course, Construction and Conservation in the Built Environment**, the first permanent course of its type in England to have a mandatory conservation element, has

to date been relying on virtual teaching for this academic year.

We are pleased to report that this is due to change at the end of April when the students will commence their practical programme with a town tour and practical experience of hot lime repair pointing of the Abbey stone and flintwork.

John Popham



Post Office project

Disappointment! It had been hoped that, following the demolition of the former Post Office buildings, an investigation by Britannia Archaeology would reveal the town’s medieval boundary ditch. It was thought to run along the western elevation of the property, aligned with St Andrew’s Street South, where there was a noticeable depression.

Sadly, this turned out not to be the case. But a view south, along St Andrew’s Street South from the temporary scaffold tower currently across the road revealed a noticeable depression line running south along the highway itself. Could this be the boundary ditch? We shall have to wait until future road works cross this alignment to see if this proves to be the case.

Don’t forget to watch the traffic and not the space next time you cross the road!

John Popham

High Street opens

Anxious retailers will have opened on 12 April after a very difficult past five months, where for the majority of time doors were firmly closed and tills remained silent.



Retail demand in Bury St Edmunds

On an optimistic note, there has been some reasonable demand for retail space within the local towns, particularly Bury St Edmunds, in anticipation of a strong return of shoppers. There is also a rise in investor demand seeking opportunities to invest in retail property, particularly with an eye on vacant upper floors for conversion to residential.

Retail rents had already been readjusting prior to Covid in response to the effect of e-commerce and the high occupational costs of trading from bricks and mortar. It will be interesting to see how rents fair in the coming 12 months and whether the return to the retail high street will lead to a new wave of innovative and interesting occupiers.

This market sector has certainly been under extreme pressure in recent years but at Hazells we consider there could be a noticeable resurgence from both tenants and buyers.

Jonathan Lloyd MRICS

A final plea

We have been two or three board members short for some time now and this is affecting what we are able to achieve.

We have advertised these roles and would encourage anyone with the time and energy to help the Trust by becoming a board member (or persuading someone you know who has these qualities to volunteer!).

As well as a membership secretary the two particular skills we need are someone with a legal background and someone who has had involvement with practical building conservation. If you think either you, or someone you know, would like to find out more about these posts please do let me know.

Best wishes to you all,

Peter Riddington

Chair Bury Town Trust

