

INVESTING IN HERITAGE

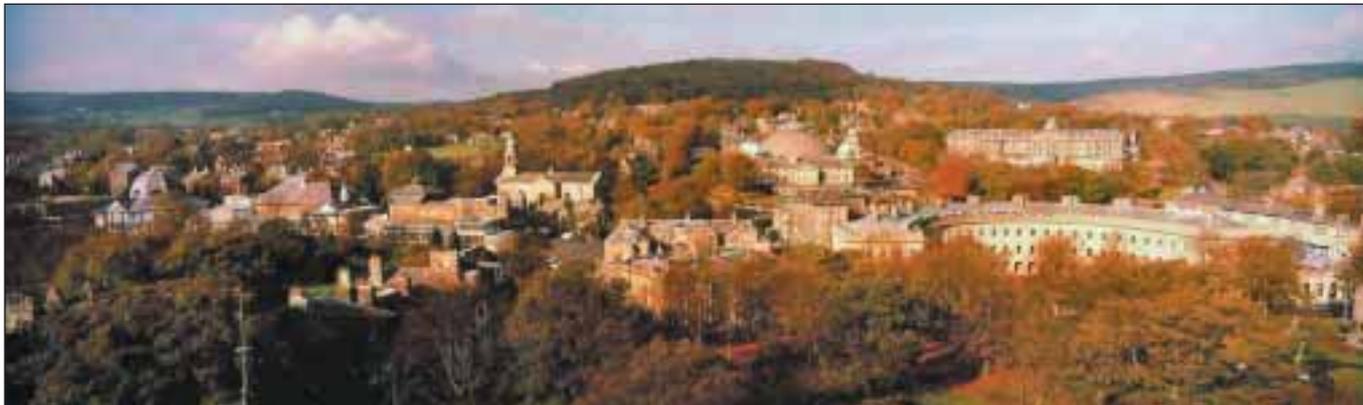
financing small town regeneration



Case Study: **BUXTON**

Outcome from the
'Focus on... regeneration through
public buildings and spaces' seminar

29 June 2004



Foreword

Buxton is an extraordinary town, combining an unusually fine mixture of buildings, parks and public spaces. Following decades of decline, there is now a strong sense that the vision and energy of a wide range of local people and organisations is beginning to transform it into a very attractive place in which to live, work and study. I am delighted to support this English Historic Towns Forum publication, which highlights the way that successful regeneration of historic towns needs to seamlessly encompass landscape, public spaces, and architecture. This can only be achieved by taking a long-term approach. CABE Space is the national champion for improving parks and public spaces, and is supporting local authorities to take this sort of strategic approach to improving the civic realm. The progress that Buxton has made so far, and its exciting plans for the future, demonstrate the power of both strategic thinking about placemaking, and long-term vision.



Julia Thrift
Director, CABE Space

Introduction

For centuries, Buxton has been a spa town popular with visitors from around the world. Renowned for its natural mineral water, summer music festivals and outstanding Peak District setting, it has a huge legacy of fine Georgian and Victorian architecture largely built under the patronage of the Dukes of Devonshire.

The town's popularity declined throughout the 20th century so much so that its local economy became unable to sustain the costs of maintaining its own infrastructure and architectural heritage. This process reached a low point towards the end of the century, by which time most of the former Georgian spa buildings including the Grade I listed Crescent were largely empty or at risk.

Buxton's fortunes have since turned around and it is now being transformed as a result of a heritage-led regeneration programme that is expected to bring a total investment of over £50 million into the town. This includes:

- Plans to revive Buxton Spa with a new state of the art thermal natural mineral water spa alongside the UK's first spa hotel for over a century
- A new campus for the University of Derby College in the former Devonshire Royal Hospital which is nearing completion
- A huge investment in the town's public open spaces including the restoration of the historic Market Place, the pleasure grounds to the Crescent and an Urban Parks Programme funded restoration of the Pavilion Gardens
- The restoration of the Buxton Opera House

Buxton – Investing in Heritage financing small town regeneration is a brief account of the experience of a small town's success in attracting funding and the delivery of projects on the ground. It complements a one-day EHTF conference held on 29 June 2004 entitled '**Buxton – Focus on Regeneration through Public Buildings and Spaces**'.

By outlining the major projects as well as setting them in Buxton's still fragile local economy, this publication aims to draw some useful lessons and points of practice that may have a more general application for those local authorities elsewhere faced with the seemingly insurmountable decline of a small market town.

Cllr Alan Wells
Portfolio Holder for Regeneration
Historic Environment Champion, High Peak Borough Council

Richard Tuffrey
EHTF Executive Committee Member
Conservation Manager, High Peak Borough Council

Context

Buxton is a relatively small town which remains one of the Peak District's main visitor destinations as well as serving its own rural hinterland as a market town. Its past golden ages, first as a Georgian spa town, and secondly as a Victorian inland resort, were followed by a period of stagnation of its growth and a decline in its fortunes throughout the 20th century. This led to some serious issues about its ability to support its own town centre infrastructure.

A summary of the town's history can be found on Page 11 however, the extent of Buxton's decline and the context of the current regeneration needs to be looked at further.

The nature of Buxton's decline

The decline of Buxton as a spa tourist destination has already been touched upon. The principal function of the town has been, and still is, tourism. However, Buxton has also traditionally functioned as a labour market for the surrounding quarrying industry, it has acted as a local service centre for an economy largely based on hill farming and has developed a limited amount of indigenous manufacturing employment. Because historically the majority of its economic base has been low wage, Buxton has suffered from a permanent fragility. More recently this has become particularly apparent with the decline of hill farming and the mechanisation of the quarrying industry.

The consequence of this on Buxton has been:

- Its built heritage becoming "at risk"
- An under-utilisation of its infrastructure

The need for a regeneration strategy

In response to this decline, a strategic approach to the regeneration has been adopted, which has centred on bringing *sustainable* investment and

business activity to the town. This approach has had three themes:

- To "grow" the town
- To develop its tourism role
- To make it a more attractive place to visit

Growing Buxton

In terms of its population, the last 50 years have seen a very small rise to just over 21,000.

Although there is pressure for housing development throughout the High Peak, this has been realised elsewhere within the Borough, where sites are closer and better linked to Greater Manchester.

High Peak Borough Council, through its development policies within the *High Peak Local Plan* adopted in 1995 and revised in 2003, has promoted a strategy of growth through its housing and employment allocations.

Tourism role

Buxton has recently been marketed as a base to explore the whole of the Peak District for which it has 64% of the bedspaces. This is a departure from past practice which has focused on just the High Peak area. A number of partnerships have therefore been developed in order to co-operate with adjoining local authorities to market the "Peak District" as a brand. Considerable investment has also gone into the Peak District website: www.visitpeakdistrict.com.

Making Buxton a more attractive place to visit

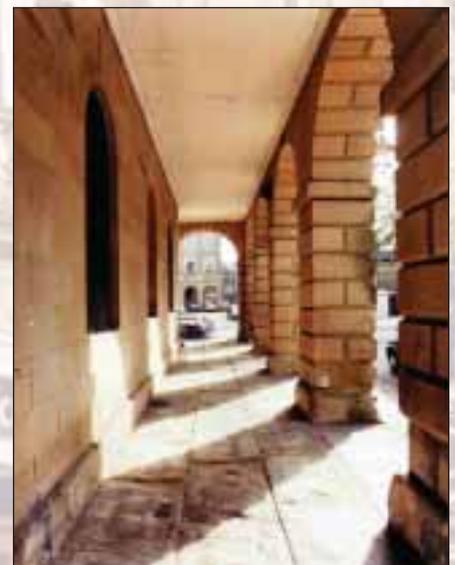
The strategy adopted in the last 25 years has been to invest in *conservation-led regeneration* and to promote the improvement of Buxton's *public realm*. Buxton is fortunate in having a rich architectural heritage not only in terms of its buildings but also its parks. Both of the two main parks in the town centre - the Pavilion Gardens and the Slopes - are included on the English Heritage maintained

Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest.

For reasons largely related to the decline of Buxton's traditional spa role, nearly all of the key spa buildings have become vacant in recent years. In addition a rationalisation of local healthcare provision led to the closure of the Devonshire Royal Hospital. Although a potential disaster for the town, the availability of these buildings has coincided with two recent opportunities that could not have been foreseen from the outset:

- The extent of growth of interest in healthier lifestyles, alternative therapies and the leisure potential of spa water treatment
- The University of Derby's dramatic expansion of facilities in Buxton.

There is an attractive synergy between these two developments in that the University's stated ambitions for the Buxton site are to develop it as a centre of excellence for the tourism and hospitality sectors. Further, they are creating an improved base for their spa management course – the only such course in Europe.



For a brief history of Buxton see page 11.

Investing in heritage

Like all historic towns, Buxton's unique character is defined by its built heritage and the spaces in between. Yet, by the end of the last century, much of the built heritage was in need of repair and many of the town's key historic buildings were "at risk" in that they were either vacant or under threat of vacancy. Once fine 19th century gardens and landscaped pleasure grounds had suffered from years of municipal cutbacks such that they were in danger of losing their special character. The town's historic market place had become a bland sea of tarmac. A strategy that sought to make the town more attractive and to enhance its visitor numbers would have to concentrate on reversing its apparent neglect and start to focus on preserving and enhancing those elements that defined its local distinctiveness.

A strategy of conservation led regeneration was pursued involving:

- Grant schemes to assist with the repair and restoration of buildings
- Additional planning controls to protect surviving historical details such as sash windows, historic doors, walls and railings
- A programme of investment in the open spaces
- Finding solutions to bring the key buildings back into use.

Conservation area grant schemes

The first grant scheme started in 1980 with the **Buxton Town Scheme** - a partnership between High Peak Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council and English Heritage. This offered grants to owners of the ornate, but high maintenance, Georgian and Victorian properties.

The scheme continued until 1996 when it was followed by the **Buxton Conservation Area Partnership**. This, in turn, was wound up in 1999 since when the **Higher Buxton Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme** has focused on the particular problems of the Market Place area. As the table shows, by the end of the 2004-2005 financial year, it is anticipated that about 260 properties will have been conserved and over £2.6 million of repairs and restoration works promoted.

Scheme	Partners	Total Investment (inc private) (£)	No of properties Grant aided
Buxton Town Scheme (1980 – 1996)	English Heritage High Peak Borough Council Derbyshire County Council	1,769,000	155
Buxton Conservation Area Partnership (1996 – 1999)	English Heritage High Peak Borough Council Derbyshire County Council	397,000	55
Higher Buxton Heritage Economic Regeneration (HER) Scheme (1999 – 2005)	English Heritage High Peak Borough Council	463,000*	50*
Totals		2,629,000	260

* Anticipated total by the end of 2004/05.

All of this has been achieved with relatively modest annual budgets. The grants budget for the Buxton Town Scheme and the Conservation Area Partnership was £48,000 pa split equally between English Heritage and the two Councils. The Higher Buxton HER Scheme has an annual budget of £40,000, again split between English Heritage and High Peak Borough Council. Most of this budget has been allocated towards buildings grants, although the Scheme also commissioned a feasibility study for the Market Place Enhancement Project¹ as well as contributing towards the cost of the works.



¹ Buxton Market Place Study, The Conservation Studio 2002

Capital schemes

The main thrust of Buxton's regeneration has centred on the large number of major capital projects that have been put together over the last decade. These have concentrated on both major buildings and the public realm. The following summarises the major heritage led capital schemes in Buxton over the 1994-2005 period:

Project (Major funders)	Works	Date	Cost (£ million)
The Slopes (High Peak Borough Council, English Heritage, European Commission)	Restoration of historic landscape, restoration of Turner's Memorial, stone repaving	1994 – 1995	0.6
The Crescent (English Heritage, National Heritage Memorial Fund)	Urgent repairs to the building	1994 – 1996	1.7
Pavilion Gardens Grounds Restoration Scheme (Heritage Lottery Fund, High Peak Borough Council)	Restoration of historic landscape and upgrading park facilities (Urban Parks Programme)	1997 – 2004	4.7
Buxton Opera House (Heritage Lottery Fund, High Peak Theatre Trust, High Peak Borough Council, English Heritage, Derbyshire County Council)	Repairs to exterior, redecoration of auditorium, improvements to facilities, paving of forecourt	1999 – 2003	2.1
Buxton Crescent and Spa Project (Private Sector, Heritage Lottery Fund, East Midland Development Agency*, Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership, Landfill Tax Credits)	Refurbishment of buildings to create new hotel, thermal spa, visitor centre, retail units and restaurant	2005 – 2007	23.0
University of Derby College, Buxton (University of Derby, Heritage Lottery Fund, Regional Development Agency, Further Educational Funding Council, Higher Educational Funding Council, English Heritage)	Refurbishment of buildings to form new campus	2002 – 2004	15.0
Buxton Market Place (Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, English Heritage, East Midlands Development Agency, Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership, High Peak Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council)	Enhancement of historic Market Place and traffic calming measures	2004	0.5
Total (£ million)			47.6

* Subject to the outcome of bids



What can be learnt from the experience of Buxton?

Making things happen

Buxton has had a fair share of good fortune without which some of the projects would not have happened. The revival in interest in spa therapy, which lies at the heart of the Buxton Crescent & Spa Project, could not have been foreseen ten years ago when there was no prospect in sight of an end use for the Crescent and spa buildings. Five years ago, the announcement by the University of Derby of its plans to expand on to a new town centre campus virtually coincided with the looming closure of the Devonshire Royal Hospital by the NHS. However, there are some lessons that can be drawn from Buxton's experience that could have a more general application:

- **Consult, consult and.....consult**

Nothing could have happened in Buxton without the support of the community and so all of the capital schemes have been the subject of extensive consultation

Also, a single organisation is unlikely to achieve much so that the establishment of partnerships between the public sector, private business, amenity groups and the general public is essential. Buxton has a number of very active and well organised partnerships chaired by members of the community. The Buxton Partnership is an umbrella organisation and has representatives from most of the other special interest groups in the town as well as its own Business Plan. A partnership such as this acts as a very useful forum for consultation. Other partnerships exist such as the Buxton Business Forum, the Peak District Rural Action Zone Partnership and the Peak District Sustainable Tourism Forum.

- **Invest in feasibility studies**

Nearly all of the main capital schemes led by High Peak Borough Council have started off with a feasibility study. Sometimes this has, itself, received external funding whereas, in other projects, the Council has brought in carefully selected specialist consultants to put together the study. The feasibility study is increasingly a fundamental requirement of

any funding bid. It also enables a bid to be put together quickly should funding become available at short notice. If properly prepared, the study should allow the sponsoring authority and the external funders to pick out the most essential parts of any scheme and so tailor the scheme to the resources available.

- **Put together funding partnerships**

Throughout the last ten years during which the regeneration of Buxton has taken place, High Peak Borough Council has had very limited capital resources. Therefore, it has been essential to create partnerships with external funders.

The principal funding partners have been the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, the East Midlands Development Agency and the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership (a Sub-regional Strategic Partnership). Without the assistance of these organisations, nothing of the scale achieved in Buxton would have happened. Casting the net further, other funders have included the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, Landfill Tax Credit Trusts, the European Union and the private sector. The funding packages can often become alarmingly complex, as each funder will probably approach the project from a different angle. However, it is worth working through bidding processes if the results are to be achieved.

- **Strong leadership**

High Peak Borough Council has been able to offer full support, both at senior officer level and from its Members, for the projects in Buxton. This has grown from a clear vision about what the Council has aimed to achieve for the town.

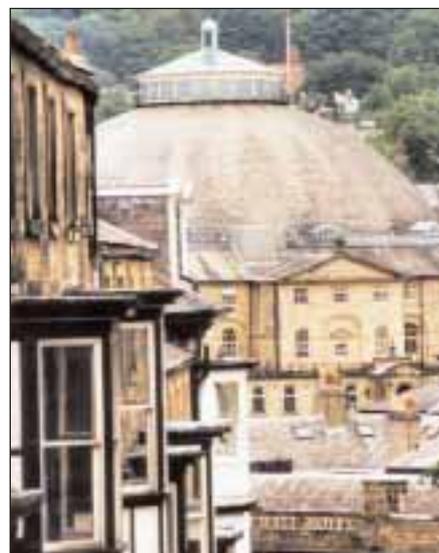
- **Think long term**

Many of the projects have been realised over a long period largely due to the resources available at any one time. This can be frustrating, less efficient contractually and more disruptive to the public, but sometimes it is the only way of finding the necessary partnership funding.

Conservation area grant schemes

Some further general points that need to be made about these:

- Conservation area grant schemes are popular in that they are aimed at a large number of modest properties
- Reversing past, unsympathetic alterations is possible with a willing public. However, grant schemes offer a much more effective way of enhancing conservation areas by offsetting the additional cost of replacing historic detailing
- They are long term. Partnerships with English Heritage tend to be made on a 3-year cycle. Only a limited impact can be achieved in such a short period of time. View the schemes as a long term tool. A modest annual budget can achieve cumulative results over time
- Grant schemes promote a culture of conserve and repair. With the possibility of financial help on hand, property owners are far more likely to contact the local authority and consult on proposals. Even if a grant is not ultimately possible, the opportunity to intervene and secure a more sympathetic result is far greater
- As part of the grant scheme, consider Article 4 Directions to enhance planning controls and remove permitted development rights*. The offer of a grant to offset the cost of repair when accompanying the refusal of planning permission for alterations is more often received as reasonable by the property owner.



* A blanket Direction under Article 4 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) was introduced in 1996. Although covering approximately 1500 properties, it removed permitted development rights relating to buildings in domestic use only

Case Study: Buxton Crescent and Spa Project

Reviving spa culture in the UK

With a world-wide revival in spa culture and fresh interest in the benefits of thermal water bathing and holistic therapies, the time is right for Buxton's natural thermal resource to act as a catalyst once again in the regeneration of the town. The Buxton Crescent and Spa Project involves the Crescent, Natural Baths and the Pump Room and aims to ensure the long term viability of these fine buildings, while re-establishing Buxton at the forefront of the European spa movement.

By creating a European style Thermal Spa Hotel - where spa facilities are directly accessible both from the hotel's bedrooms, and by day visitors, the project responds to best European practice and the expectations of international visitors. While remaining sensitive to the unique heritage and architecture it will create a cutting-edge spa, offering a range of traditional and contemporary treatments and therapies, including Buxton's signature 'Moor Bath'.

The spa will be complemented by a unique four star hotel offering the opportunity to stay in the elegance of one of Britain's finest 18th century buildings. A visitor centre will also be provided giving access to some of the best interiors in the complex including the Assembly Rooms.

Shops will once again enliven the colonnade, while the Victorian Pump Room will provide the opportunity to 'take the waters' as well as housing a tearoom.

Background to the buildings

The Crescent (Listed Grade I) was the centrepiece of the 5th Duke of Devonshire's scheme to create a fashionable spa in the North of England. It was designed by John Carr of York and constructed 1780-89 to provide an assembly room, two hotels (some of the first purpose built hotels in the country) and 6 lodging houses. One of the hotels closed in the early part of the last century. It became County Council offices and the town's library in 1970 before

Project Details

Project clients:	High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council
Developer:	Trevor Osborne Property Group Ltd/CP Holdings Ltd
Spa and hotel operator:	Danubius Hotels and spa r.t.
Main elements of the project:	High quality spa hotel Natural thermal spa Visitor centre Re-located Tourist Information Centre Retail Units (8) Tearoom
Estimated gross cost:	Private sector Heritage Lottery Fund Regional Development Agency/Sub-regional Strategic Partnership* Landfill tax credits trusts
Key Dates:	Anticipated start on site – 2005 Anticipated opening date – 2007

* Subject to the outcome of bids

becoming vacant in 1992. The other hotel closed in 1989 and has remained empty.

The Natural Baths (Listed Grade II) evolved over many centuries and occupy the site of the Roman baths situated over the main spring. The current building was constructed in 1853 to the design of Henry Currey but later altered in the 1920s. It was partly refurbished as a Tourist Information Centre but the majority of the building has been empty since 1972. The Pump Room (Listed Grade II) was built for the 7th Duke of Devonshire by Henry Currey in 1894. It was last used to "take the waters" in the 1970s.

Preserving heritage and regenerating Buxton

The two Councils (High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council) will retain the freehold of the buildings and grant a long lease to a Building Preservation Trust, whose sole purpose will be to conserve the Crescent and spa buildings for the future. The Trust will grant a long lease to the developer who, in turn, will grant sub-leases to the operators. The scheme provides access to the buildings' fine interiors as well as enabling visitors to learn about Buxton's spa heritage. The project also envisages the creation of about 115 (full-time equivalent) jobs.

Training links between the scheme and the University of Derby are being explored in order to make Buxton a UK centre of excellence for spa and hospitality management.



Case Study: University of Derby College, Buxton – Devonshire Campus

Project Details

Project clients:	University of Derby College, Buxton
Estimated gross cost:	£15 million
Main elements of the project:	Conversion of former hospital into campus with teaching facilities for 2500 students including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training kitchens - student-run fine dining restaurant - cafeteria - resources centre - lecture rooms - seminar rooms - supporting administration - fully equipped training spa
Main Funders:	University of Derby Heritage Lottery Fund Regional Development Agency Higher Education Council Further Education Funding Council English Heritage
Key Dates:	Start on site – March 2003 Anticipated opening date - 2005

dome was one of the largest unsupported domes in the world for well over 100 years. Two other buildings on the site are listed (Grade II).

It was the largest hospital in the country to offer hydrotherapy and was also one of the last when it closed in 2000. Its closure was due to a rationalisation of the facilities operated by the Stockport Health Trust - its largest end user. The hospital's closure was a huge loss to the community. It also placed a major heritage building at risk.

Preserving heritage and regenerating Buxton

The Devonshire Royal Hospital was on the English Heritage *Buildings at Risk Register*. However, its conversion into a university campus has provided an ideal opportunity, using Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage monies to reverse some of the more recent alterations carried out by the NHS. This has included the restoration of windows to the original design throughout the main block and the restoration of the decorative corner towers and the central lantern crowning the central dome. The final scheme will enable full public access into the dome area – an awe-inspiring experience.

For the University, the density of buildings has provided excellent accommodation for the variety of courses planned. Plans include the refurbishment of the former hospital's hydrotherapy block into a fully equipped training spa.

The University will act as an economic catalyst for Buxton. As well as an additional 1,000 students (bringing the total to 2,500) and direct employment of well over 500 people, the new site is expected to substantially boost the local economy once fully operational. In addition, it brings:

- Increased demand for rented residential accommodation during the academic year
- An increased supply of summer accommodation for summer tourist trade with halls of residence for some 300 students becoming available
- An increased number of visitors to Buxton
- An increased take up of empty retail space and an increased demand for bars and cafes
- Increased use of sports and leisure facilities
- Demand for and improved provision of public transport
- Corporate investment in the town centre

A centre of excellence

The former High Peak College at Harpur Hill, just outside Buxton, became part of the University of Derby in 1998. The University announced its intention to expand its presence in Buxton in 1999 just at the time that the Stockport NHS Trust was planning to vacate the Devonshire Royal Hospital. The site presented an opportunity for the University to create a new campus with state of the art teaching facilities in a highly original building with a strong image for about 2,500 students.

Building on the high reputation of the existing facility in the town, the new University of Derby College, Buxton

intends to become a centre of excellence for the spa and hospitality sectors. Students will be given first-hand experience in the preparation and serving of high quality cuisine within the fine dining restaurant on the site which will also be open to the public. It will also be home to one of Europe's first spa management courses, again with a fully fitted training spa available to the public on campus. There are plans under development for training links between Danubius, the hotel and spa operators for the Buxton Crescent and Spa Project, and the University of Derby. This will make Buxton a UK centre of excellence for the spa and hospitality management.

The University of Derby has championed a responsive and flexible approach to vocational training whereby it can work with employers to tailor courses around their specific needs. The aim has been to develop Buxton as a hub, to service out-centres throughout the district. In this way it can offer education at all levels to the people of High Peak and beyond, not least via its UDO online facilities www.derby.ac.uk/udo and www.buxton.derby.ac.uk.

Background to the buildings

The main block of the Devonshire Royal Hospital (Listed Grade II*) was originally built (1780-89) as the Great Stables - part of the 5th Duke of Devonshire's plans to create a Georgian spa town. It was later converted (1880s) into a hospital specialising in hydrotherapy at which point the huge dome was added. The



Case Study: Pavilion Gardens Grounds Development and Restoration Scheme

Creating a park for the 21st century

The grounds restoration scheme was funded under the Heritage Lottery Fund's Urban Parks Programme. It aimed to restore the gardens as much as possible to Milner's and Adams' original designs, whilst recognising that it must satisfy contemporary needs and have attractions and facilities commensurate with the standards expected today.

The scheme:-

- Relined and reconstructed the upper boating lake including a new boating pavilion which combined a refreshment kiosk and wc's
- Extended the lake back to Milner's original design (reversing a later truncation of the lake)
- Constructed a new bandstand
- Introduced a new deck to the car park and landscaped the existing surface car park
- Reinstated a number of planting features including the raised rose mound and semicircular lime avenue
- Reinstated railings around the outside of the park
- Repaired and re-surfaced the paths using a resin bound surface dressing, introduced seating, lighting, etc
- Repaired Milner's (Listed Grade II) footbridge and repaired or replaced a number of other bridges
- Introduced new facilities including a new railway, re-sited crazy golf and children's play areas
- Restored the Promenade with new ornamental gates at either end.

The scheme arose out of a feasibility study commissioned and funded by High Peak Borough Council and English Heritage which looked into ways of restoring Milner's original landscaping. The study, undertaken by the Parklands Consortium¹, also looked at ways of incorporating modern park facilities such as the play areas, car park, miniature railway, etc into an historic environment.

The study was well timed as its publication coincided with the announcement of the Urban Parks Programme by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The eligibility requirements were perfect for a scheme at the Pavilion Gardens which became one of the first schemes to be supported under the Programme in 1996. Due to the scale of costs and the need for the Council to find matched funding, the works have been carried out over a six-phase programme spanning seven years. The works have created a unique asset

Project Details

Project clients:	High Peak Borough Council
Estimated gross cost:	£4.6 million
Main elements to the project:	Reconstruction of upper (boating) lake Reconstruction of boating pavilion Reinstatement of lower lake to original design Construction of new bandstand Restoration of Milner's landscaping features and reinstatement of the "Gardenesque" ethos to its design Repair of bridges Resurfacing of all paths Reinstatement to boundary railings and ornamental gates to the Promenade Introduction of new deck to car park and landscaping of car park
Major Funders:	Heritage Lottery Fund High Peak Borough Council Foundation for Sports and the Arts (the bandstand) Arts Council Lottery Fund (the bandstand)
Key Dates:	Start date 1997. Work carried out in six phases, as far as possible off-season. Final phase completed 2004.

both for the local community and visitors to the town. It has set the context for the refurbishment and restoration of the Pavilion itself – the next challenge.

Background to the park

The Pavilion Gardens is Grade II* registered. Designed in a "Gardenesque" style by Edward Milner and laid out in 1871, it complemented his iron and glass Pavilion aping the more famous Crystal Palace and Chatsworth's Great Stove. Milner had worked alongside Joseph Paxton whose influence can clearly be seen. In fact, the park design retained some earlier Paxton landscaping alongside the River Wye. The work was commissioned by the Buxton Improvements Company, a local initiative encouraged by the 7th Duke of Devonshire who had donated the land to the town on condition that it was developed and managed outside the patronage of the Cavendish family.

Unlike the Slopes opposite the Crescent (designed by Sir Jeffry Wyattville in 1818), the Pavilion Gardens were intended to encourage more active pursuits – boating, croquette and tennis. This is still the case today, although a children's play area and crazy golf have replaced some of the earlier activities.

The gardens suffered from a lack of investment throughout the latter part of the last century and various attempts to modernise or rationalise it merely served to dilute the overall interest of the historic landscape. Much of the subtleties of the landscaping and the accompanying structures were lost over this period.



¹ Pavilion Gardens Grounds Development Plan, Parklands Consortium, 1996

Case Study: Buxton Market Place

Project Details

Project clients:	High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council
Estimated gross cost:	£500,000 (Phase 1)
Main elements of the project:	<p>Quality of the historic space enhanced by rationalised layout.</p> <p>Width of carriageways reduced and pedestrian space increased</p> <p>New paved area in front of Town Hall</p> <p>Improved location and setting for Market Cross</p> <p>Transport movements concentrated along A515</p> <p>High quality materials used wherever possible, and</p> <p>Use of co-ordinated street furniture and general street clutter reduced</p>
Main Funders:	<p>Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund</p> <p>English Heritage</p> <p>Derbyshire County Council</p> <p>High Peak Borough Council</p> <p>East Midlands Development Agency</p> <p>Derby & Derbyshire Economic Partnership</p>
Key Dates:	<p>Phase 1: January – August 2004</p> <p>Phase 2: Subject to funding</p>

Heritage funds, resulted in the larger part of the scheme being undertaken.

Funds were still limited, so a strategic approach was taken to use the funding for high quality detailing wherever possible but use tarmac as a modern equivalent to the loose aggregate surfaces that would have been used historically.

The scheme has aimed to:

- promote pride within the area,
- secure an attractive environment and
- break the cycle of deterioration.

A major issue was the Market Place's role as one of Buxton's bus route termination points. It was necessary to provide bus turning routes as buses congested the minor roads around the perimeter of the Market Place. A major improvement has been made by concentrating all transport facilities as much as possible along the main A515 which runs through the site. The scheme has also reinstated the historic Market Cross to a position close to its historic location. The Cross is set in a new paved area that also provides a suitable setting to the Town Hall, one of the dominant buildings overlooking the Market Place.

Conserving a historic Market Place

The Higher Buxton Heritage Economic Regeneration (HER) Scheme had been established as a partnership between High Peak Borough Council

and English Heritage to look at the regeneration of Higher Buxton.

As well as promoting the repair and restoration of the historic buildings in the area, it commissioned a feasibility study of the Market Place by The Conservation Studio*. From this study, an outline scheme emerged which aimed to:

- enhance the quality of the historic space
- reduce the dominance of roads
- increase pedestrian space
- recognise historic precedent while catering for modern functional requirements
- re-introduce high quality materials wherever possible, and
- reduce street clutter.

Following consultation, the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, administered by English Heritage, became available. This, together with existing local authority, SRB and English

Background and issues

Higher Buxton, an area within Buxton's town centre had become run-down. Historically, it is one of the oldest parts of Buxton and has been included within the Central Buxton Conservation Area since 1968. Unlike the main commercial area in Lower Buxton (along Spring Gardens), the Market Place and High Street is largely made up of small local traders.

The Market Place itself is potentially a very attractive funnel shaped open space with the surrounding closely-knit buildings lending a sense of enclosure, focusing on the Town Hall at its southern end. However, it has lacked any comprehensive care and attention in the recent past such that it became a poor quality space serving as a functional car park and bus turning area made up from a large expanse of tarmac.



*Buxton Market Place Study, The Conservation Studio, 2002

Buxton – a town built on water

Aquae Arnemetiae

Buxton lies in a mountainous bowl, 1000 feet above sea level, making it the highest town in England. It is home to one of only two thermal mineral water springs in Britain from which thousands of litres of water rise every day at a constant 27.7°C.

When Stone Age man settled in the Peak District around 5300 BC, it is likely that these warm springs encouraged tribes to gather here. By the Iron Age, the Celts had established a settlement by the spring that bubbled up on the banks of the River Wye, surrounded by a grove of trees. Here they worshipped the Goddess Arnemetia. So important were the springs to the local people that, as in Bath (*Aquae Sulis*), the Romans adopted the Celtic goddess in the name of the town they established here. *Aquae Arnemetiae* ("The waters of the sacred grove of the goddess Arnemetia") became known for its warm mineral waters and what is believed to have been an extensive Roman bathing establishment.

The Duke's vision

Following the departure of the Romans, Buxton remained a place of pilgrimage. In the late 16th century, George Talbot, 6th Earl of Shrewsbury, built the Hall (today's Old Hall Hotel) where Mary Queen of Scots stayed as a prisoner of Queen Elizabeth I. On her many visits between 1573 and 1584 she took the waters to ease her rheumatism and aid her digestion. Her patronage established Buxton as a fashionable and health giving place favoured by the Elizabethan nobility. However, it was the next stage in the town's history that placed Buxton on the Georgian social map.

The 5th Duke of Devonshire embarked on a plan to create a fashionable spa and, as part of this vision, John Carr of York was commissioned to design two of the first purpose built hotels in the country, an assembly room and 6 lodging houses

together with suitable stabling. This resulted in the Crescent (1780-89) and the Great Stables (1785-89) – the latter accommodating 120 horses, the largest and most lavish stabling in Europe. Carr also improved the adjacent baths and the St Ann's Well.

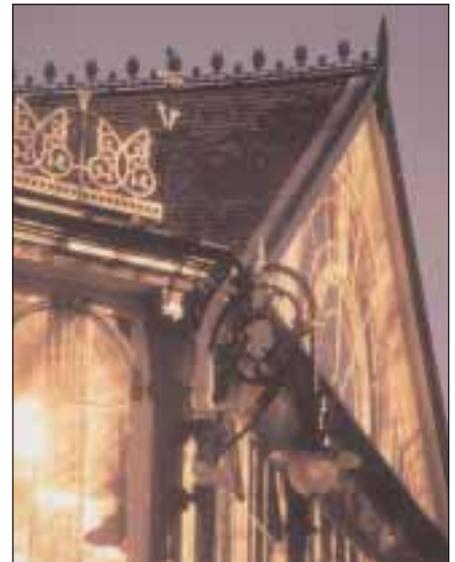
The Mountain Spa

The Duke of Devonshire's spa was a success although, in scale, it never threatened the fashionable spas in the south of England. Buxton lies deep within the Peak District which, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was a wilderness.

It was the arrival of the railways in 1863 that opened the town up to the surrounding growing industrial areas in the Northwest, Yorkshire, East Midlands and the Potteries. Buxton grew rapidly as lodging houses, guesthouses and other hotels opened to cater for the new mass market. The Dukes of Devonshire, by this time, had encouraged Buxton to take control of its own development and encouraged the creation of a Buxton Improvements Company. The Company expanded the town's facilities with the opening of a pavilion and gardens by Edward Milner. Architecturally, Milner's Pavilion of 1871 is reminiscent of the Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace. This is a consequence of their close working relationship. Frank Matcham was later commissioned to design the Opera House that opened in 1903. Meanwhile, the Great Stables were no longer needed for their original purpose and had been converted into a hospital providing hydrotherapy treatment and convalescence for cotton workers. Local architect, Robert Rippon Duke, had designed a huge dome to cover the former exercise yard of the stables, a structure that was one of the largest unsupported domes in the world at the time.

20th century decline

The opening of the Opera house in 1903 proved to be the final flourish in the creation of a late Victorian and Edwardian inland resort. Some later projects including the town's largest hotel, the Empire, were destined to become white elephants from their conception as the town slipped into a gentle decline. Post war modern Britain was less interested in an old fashioned spa reminiscent of an outdated mode of living. Consequently, despite attempts to update the town's baths, parks and Pavilion, they also fell into decline. The plight of the town's attractions also had an impact on the larger hotels. The Crescent Hotel occupying the east end of the Crescent closed in the early part of the 20th century. It later became an annex to the Devonshire Royal Hospital before being bought by Derbyshire County Council in 1970 to be converted into local authority offices and the town's library. The other hotel, the St Ann's Hotel, finally closed in 1989, leaving a legacy of neglect demonstrated by the poor condition of the building.



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