

THE HISTORY OF KINGSMEAD SQUARE



Bath & North East Somerset Council

Kingsmead Square is an important gathering space and arrival route at the west of Bath city centre.

The current configuration of vehicle movement creates disconnected circuits where roads meet but don't connect. This is confusing and it fails to realise the potential of Kingsmead Square as part of a series of exciting and connected vibrant public spaces.

The Square is at the heart of the city's entertainment area, and is becoming increasingly important as an arrival point to the city centre. New development at Bath Quays and within the Enterprise Zone will further increase footfall within the Square.

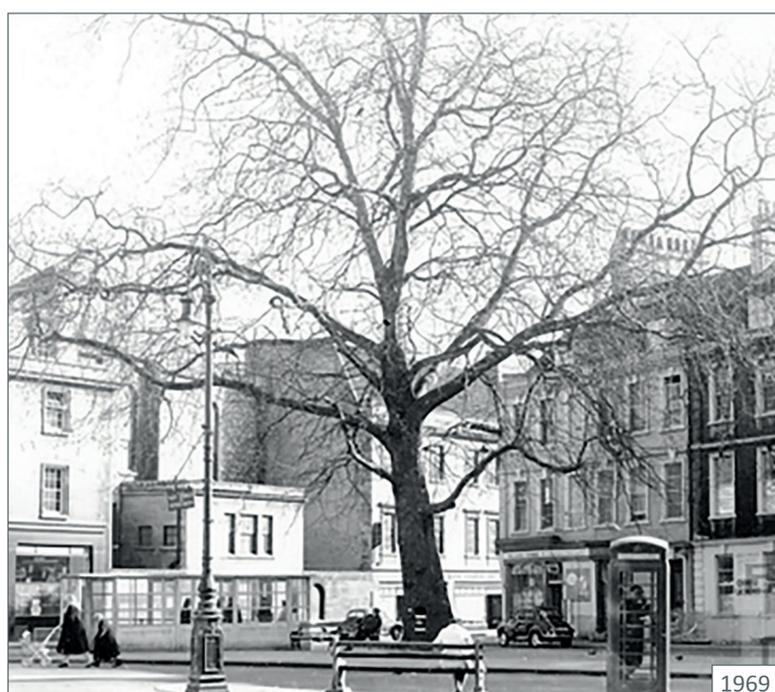
Below: Historic images of Kingsmead square, Bath
© Bath in Time / Snowdon



Location Plan for Kingsmead Square
■ Kingsmead Square and connecting streets
■ Saw Close – 2017/18 public space improvement project

A brief history of Kingsmead Square

- The Square lies at a meeting point of a number of routes which converged on the ancient West Gate into the medieval city.
- Until **18th** century it was pasture outside the city walls.
- In **1727**, John Strahan started the first large scale Georgian expansion outside the west walls on land owned by St John's Hospital.
- A further road junction was created by the demolition of the gate in the **1760s**.
- During the **19th** century some of the containment of the Square was lost as buildings were removed to improve access from Green Park Station to the Theatre Royal.
- The Square was added to the tram system as a loop from Stall Street in **1902**.
- Resulting traffic congestion led to a **1925** street widening scheme that established the modern street lines.
- Post war the Square suffered neglect the area became run down. This was reversed in the mid **1970s** when the South terrace was saved from demolition and fully restored.
- The **1990s** saw investment in the public space and street furniture. This supported the revival of Kingsmead Square and the increase in cafés here.
- **2017** First Christmas Food Market at Kingsmead Square.
- **2018** Kingsmead Square is increasingly important as a destination square and city centre arrival point.



AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECLAIM THE SQUARE FOR PEOPLE



Bath & North East Somerset Council

There is an opportunity for Kingsmead Square to be a destination square, more pedestrian friendly and further supporting café culture and activity on the street.

Since 2012, Kingsmead Square has been identified as one of Bath's priority areas for improvement. There is a chance to rebalance the square in favour of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users in line with the Bath Public Realm and Movement Strategy, the Placemaking Plan and the Getting around Bath Transport Strategy.

Adopting measures which reduce the intrusion of vehicles, particularly in the historic core, helps to promote sustainable transport options and enhance the quality of the environment for businesses, visitors and residents.

Activity

During 2017 and 2018, a number of events and markets have been facilitated in the square involving road closures of varying lengths including: Christmas Food Market (2017), Bedlam Fair (2018) & Forest of Imagination (2018).

The number of cafés and restaurants with outdoor seating has also increased.



Kingsmead Square – opportunity area



1500m² Road surface that can be returned as public space



36 Businesses in and around Kingsmead Square

14 food and drink establishments



2 Street Trader pitches

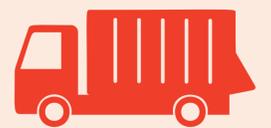


358 vehicle movements by car in the square per day*



138 delivery van vehicle movements in the square per day*

10 refuse vehicles access the square per day*



Cycle contraflow around the square following the highway



Commercial vehicle use of the square is busiest before 11am

14 car parking spaces have limited pay and display use and are often occupied all day*



*Based on Average survey data from 26th & 27th September 2017, between 7am – 7pm undertaken by IMA Transport Planning on behalf of B&NES Council.

THE FUTURE FOR KINGSMEAD SQUARE



Bath & North East Somerset Council

An opportunity has been identified to introduce a vehicle access restriction to Kingsmead Square; this would limit vehicle access (except for attending emergency services) whilst still allowing access to the flats, shops and cafés for essential loading and refuse collection each morning.

The Council's Highways and Design specialists consider that a restriction could be introduced every day, between the hours of 11.00 and 24.00. Monitoring data shows that this timed restriction could accommodate the majority of loading and servicing needs of businesses.

This proposal would increase opportunities for café culture and outdoor tables and chairs, removing all vehicles during the core hours of the day and evening. It would reclaim 1,500m² of road space and improve the atmosphere and environment, giving priority back to pedestrians.

Subject to community support, funding is available to implement a vehicle access restriction trial (known as a 'experimental traffic regulation order'), during 2019-20. The trial would last 6-12 months, and would allow this proposal to be tested and adjusted before a final decision is made on whether to make it permanent.

Below: An opportunity for a vehicle free Kingsmead Square, between 11am and Midnight.

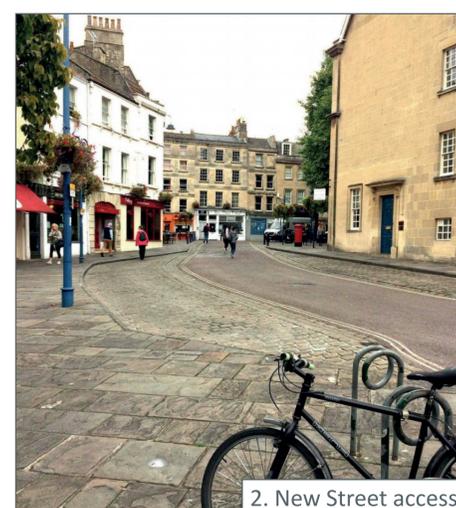


Kingsmead Square Vehicle Access Restriction Proposal

- Project Area covered by potential vehicle access restriction (No vehicle access between 11am and Midnight)
- Physical access restriction on carriageway e.g. removable bollards, minimum 1.2m apart
- Reversed flow for vehicles (Access before 11am only)



1. James Street West access



2. New Street access

The Proposal

- Manually operated removable bollards across the carriageway to prevent vehicle access at either end of Kingsmead Square, and associated signage about vehicle access restriction.
- Minimum 1.2m gaps between bollards, to meet accessibility requirements.
- Full access retained to private parking court and Kingsmead Car Park
- Cycle access to be retained
- 14 'pay and display' car parking spaces would need to be removed, as they would no longer be accessible (alternative forms of provision will be explored)
- 1,500m² of road space returned to the public realm
- Existing curb lines and historic pennant retained
- Road surface remains unaltered in the interim

At this stage only small scale improvements could be included alongside the trial. Additional future improvements would be identified working with Bath BID, local traders and the community.

Improving the look of Kingsmead square

A vehicle access restriction would facilitate future aesthetic improvements to Kingsmead Square, such as different surface treatment on the carriageway, new threshold designs at the entrances to the square, planters/parklets, street furniture, increased cycle parking, lighting schemes and public art.

Rethinking Street Space

There is a global movement where people are reclaiming streets and spaces from cars for people, there are similar projects in New York, Paris, Copenhagen and London.



Outdoor tables & chairs