
Leeds Civic Trust Annual Review 2023



Planning and Development

Our approach to development in the city

The Annual Review aims to reflect the work of the Trust and to put this in the context of wider developments in the city. We hope that what we do is relevant, authentic, and authoritative. Inevitably, there is always a sense in which we may be “marking our own homework” – the work we do and the views we express are an expression of the expertise and interests of our members and volunteers. Where we can make a difference, this is a validation of the positions we take.

Planning and development have always been an integral part of the Trust’s work.

Our Planning Committee sifts through hundreds of schemes each year, we receive presentations from developers and where appropriate we express a view. We pride ourselves in being forward looking and positive – we are often dubbed a “heritage organisation” but this only tells a small part of our story. We welcome modern and exciting design and are frustrated when the schemes we see do not measure up.

We are not preservationists – we know that heritage buildings must have purpose, and this may mean taking difficult decisions about how they can be adapted to give them a new life. Above all, we are pragmatic – as a critical friend we seek to influence improvements in design but are aware of the conflicting pressures faced by developers, architects and planners that may result in schemes which are not as good as we would like. All we can do is to continue to argue for the very best designs in our city and hope that the work we do is ultimately a force for good.

01 A back stage view of the Leeds Architecture Awards taking place in the splendid Howard Assembly Room



02 The Sir William Henry Bragg Building: winner of the award for new buildings with a construction cost of over £10 million



The Leeds Architecture Awards

It was in this context that we were delighted to be involved in a new partnership that saw the return of the Leeds Architecture Awards in 2023. Working with Leeds City Council, the Leeds Society of Architects and RIBA, we saw the opportunity to re-imagine that competition after a gap of four years. We streamlined that judging process and for the first time ensured that the big decisions were made by experts who were not part of the city’s architectural scene.

The unavailability of the Town Hall gave us the opportunity to refresh the ceremony itself – adding a degree of informality to proceedings whilst still giving the awards the status they deserve.

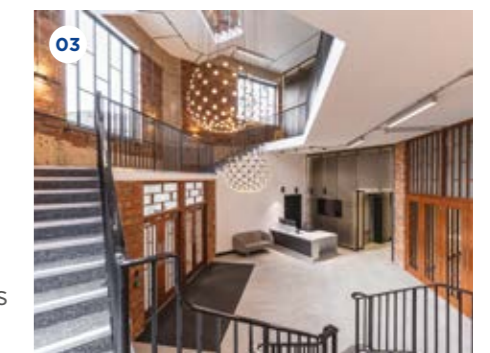
03 The original staircase inside Draper’s Yard next to Temple Works won a commendation in the Leeds Architecture Awards. A great reuse of a 20th century building

For example, when the judges visited the William Henry Bragg Building at the University of Leeds, they were sufficiently impressed to declare it the winner of the “buildings with a construction value above £10 million” category. They said: “This is a very successful combination of new and old, uniting pre-existing post-war structures with a substantial contemporary insertion. There was a confidence, rigour and even muscularity to the development as a whole. Clever design decisions mean that the bulk of the new build is largely disguised.”

Leeds Civic Trust first looked at the proposals in May 2017. Our comments show general support with some concerns about the design detail. We said: “The Leeds Civic Trust Planning Committee has considered the above planning applications and wishes to support the scheme. The use of projecting columns on the roof extension to the original building with glazing set behind suits the existing style of the building and will complement it and give it a better scale in relation to its setting.”

Andrew Edwards, journalist and former Leeds Civic Trust trustee expertly presented the awards as he has done for many years, just ahead of his departure from BBC Radio Leeds after a long and successful career. It was perhaps appropriate that the venue was the Howard Assembly Room – part of the “Opera Works” submission that won the overall prize for adapted buildings which was also the location for one of a number of visits organised by our Events Committee during the course of the year.

Most schemes on the shortlist of 15 were analysed at some point by our planning committee, and the outcome of the awards process was an opportunity to test the views we expressed about schemes that were still on the drawing board against the considered view of expert judges looking at the finished article.



- 01 The famous “Countdown” clock in the Channel 4 HQ in the Majestic – one of the shortlisted schemes in the adapted buildings category
- 02 The judging panel in conversation (l-r Andrew Edwards, Robert Evans, Natalia Maximova and Charles Campion)

We did however have some concerns about the detailed design of the rooftop extension and in particular were unconvinced that the rooftop plant would be concealed, in spite of assurances. In the event, our concerns are borne out. The building is undoubtedly a successful conversion, but the very visible plant and equipment detracts from the design. Another scheme that was considered by the judges was Draper’s Yard. This post-war building next to Temple Works used to be the warehouse for Kay’s catalogue. This was promoted from the long list to the shortlist by the judges who were impressed with the conversion, resulting it being awarded a commendation. They said:

“The owners, architects and occupiers deserve credit for having the imagination to reuse this mid-century warehouse building. A very sensitive restoration of the façade and retention of remaining original features (most notably the grand staircase on entry) were particular positives. The extensive rooftop gardens take advantage of the significant space available.” We expressed similarly supportive views in our comments on the scheme in October 2020: “The Trust wishes to support this development, promising as it does to bring an empty building back into active use while respecting its nature and character and the environs. We particularly welcome the high-quality landscaping at ground and roof levels.”

There are clearly differences in what the Trust and the judges were looking at. We were looking at a planning application (which may have been subject to further modifications before approval), whereas the judges were looking at a building which had to be completed by the closing date for entries. Nonetheless, the awards process offers an interesting test of the quality and validity of what we say when an application is presented to us for consideration.



- 03 Maggie’s Yorkshire: winner in the buildings with a construction value of below £10 million and overall winner of project of the year
- 04 Overall Leeds Architecture Award winners Maggie’s Yorkshire are awarded a cheque for £1000

Leeds Architecture Awards 2023: Overall winners

New Buildings up to £10 million in value and project of the year:
Maggie’s Yorkshire St James University Hospital (Heatherwick Studio)

New Buildings more than £10 million in value:
Sir William Henry Bragg Building, University of Leeds (ADP Architecture)

Adapted Buildings:
Opera North Music Works (Enjoy Design)

Cultural Projects:
Leeds Playhouse (Page\Park)

Public Realm and Landscape:
Moortown Park (re-form Landscape Architecture with the Friends of Moortown Park)

Sustainability:
11 & 12 Wellington Place (TP Bennett)

Brutalist Britain

If Draper's Yard represents traditional mid-20th century design, our event in the Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery at the University of Leeds focused on later architecture in the brutalist tradition. Renowned architectural historian Elain Harwood gave a fascinating talk about brutalist architecture as featured in her book "Brutalist Britain".

Whatever your views about this style of architecture, Elain's engaging presentational style never failed to leave the audience enthralled.

We were fortunate that the talk coincided with an exhibition of brutalist architecture in the university context. Using images and drawings from the Arup archive, the exhibition, curated by photographer Simon Phipps (who addressed the Trust on the subject a couple of years ago), provided the perfect backdrop for Elain's talk.

Before the event, Elain Harwood accompanied Leeds Civic Trust Trustee Clifford Stead on a tour of some of the more interesting 20th century buildings in the city centre.

01 The late Elain Harwood outside the listed Bank House, recently purchased by Trust corporate member Rushbond PLC

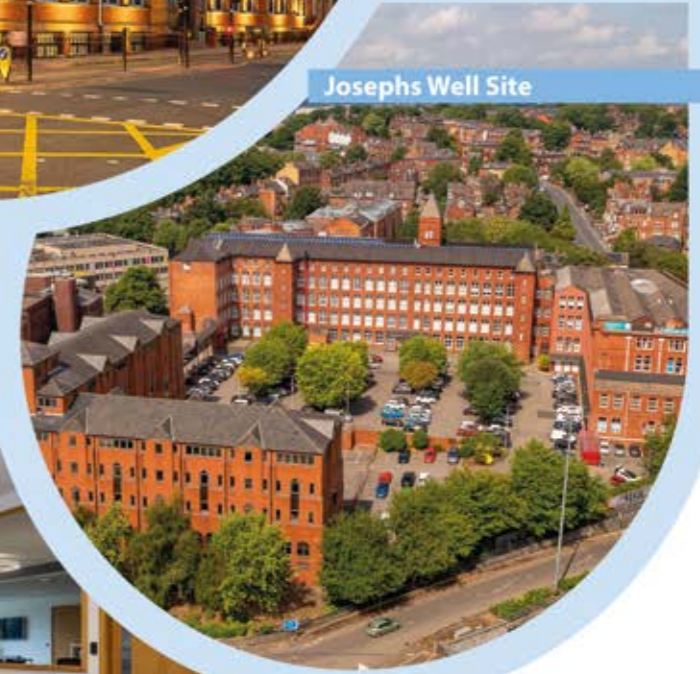
Elain was for many years responsible for listing some of the most iconic 20th century buildings in the United Kingdom, and she offered the view that the Magistrates' Court might one day be a candidate for listing. The report is tinged with sadness, since a few short months later Elain sadly passed away. It was an honour for the Trust to hear from such a passionate advocate for 20th century architecture.



Leeds Civic Trust



Apsley House



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Holbeck grows apace

The Trust has long advocated sustainable development in Holbeck. This vast swathe of post-industrial land to the south of the railway station stretching into the traditional residential settlement of Holbeck and Beeston Hill has long been the subject of discussion and planning but relatively little development on the ground.

There have been some sensitive restorations over the years – the Round Foundry being a notable example of blending old with new, but significant development has been slow to take hold. This has changed significantly, with the last 12 months seeing a raft of completions.

The Iron Works and Mustard Wharf, the latter a well-regarded entry to the architecture awards, are both examples of sensitive new build schemes which fit well in their surroundings. Globe Point – another Leeds Architecture Awards shortlisted scheme – provides high quality office space on the junction of Water Lane and Globe Road and sets the tone for further development by CEG on their significant land-holding in the area.

Less successful is the Tower Works scheme. We objected to the scheme at the time – which has now been completed – on the grounds that it completely dominated the listed Italianate towers, particularly when viewed from the canal. Sadly, our concerns were justified.

A much more positive scheme is what is known as “The Junction” – five residential towers which address the disused Monkbridge Viaduct. The architects for the scheme, Leeds Civic Trust Corporate members CJCT, took a group of Trust members on a walk around the scheme which is now nearing completion.

- 01 An aerial shot of Holbeck, with Leeds Architecture Award entry Mustard Wharf in the foreground
- 02 A fantastic mural by Zoe Power on the gable end of one of the new residential blocks. Nonetheless, the feeling persists that the historic Italianate towers at tower works are dominated by the new build elements

- 03 A Leeds Civic Trust visit to “The Junction” led by CJCT Partner Antony Hall, whose company was responsible for the scheme. The planted viaduct in full bloom

The residential blocks themselves are privately rented apartments. They cater for a clientele that wish to have facilities “on tap.” There are private dining rooms available to book, communal areas, and even “podcast” booths. These developments come at a price, but one which people are clearly willing to pay! What sets this development apart from many others is the creation of a new public park on top of the viaduct. This linear walkway – taking its cue from the High Line in New York and the Promenade Plantée in Paris, is effectively a new park for the city. This well-designed space features an atrium, lifts and stairs, and proposes new uses for the disused railway arches below. It provides an important focal point and magnet for visitors and residents alike.

There were further enhancements to greenspace along the waterfront with the creation of Whitehall Pocket park – this sliver of land sandwiched between the canal and river has been converted into a walkable route with benches and planting, turning an inaccessible space into something that provides much needed amenity space for dog walkers, joggers, pedestrians and cyclists. The elephant in the room of course is Temple Works. We have written extensively about this Grade 1 listed monument to industrial success over the years. The developers CEG are to be congratulated in taking on this building.

As the British Library celebrated its 50th anniversary (and the completion of some important buildings at its Boston Spa site) we remain hopeful that their plan to use this building to host the “British Library North” will finally be given the green light.



David Oluwale's legacy at Bridge End

Along the Aire, the David Oluwale Bridge was formally opened. This footbridge opens up a route from Sovereign Square through Bridge End and a newly created green space at Meadow Lane and into the new Aire Park.

It was gratifying to see that this long-standing ambition of the Trust was finally realised. It was timely that this year's Kevin Grady lecture series included a talk on the history of this much neglected but now revitalised part of the city centre.

Our last annual review covered the tragic story of David Oluwale, the Trust's installation of a plaque to remember his legacy, followed by its theft. The David Oluwale Memorial Association are to be congratulated in keeping his memory and legacy alive. Leeds Civic Trust was delighted to provide cash support towards the creation of a maquette for a new sculpture called "Hibiscus Rising." This floral structure, created by renowned British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare, was formally unveiled in November 2023 taking pride of place in the middle of the Meadow Lane green space at the entrance to the emerging Aire Park. This ten-metre structure, taking inspiration from the African hibiscus flower, provides a powerful but positive entrance to the city just south of Leeds Bridge.

- 01 The stolen blue plaque for David Oluwale is re-installed on Leeds Bridge
- 02 Hibiscus Rising by Yinka Shonibare takes pride of place in the middle of the Meadow Lane greenspace

We anticipate the completion of the "Ribbons" sculpture that will be unveiled on Quarry Hill in 2024, which seeks to rectify the dearth of sculpture and statues representing women in our city. Many people lament the failure of the city to follow through on proposals from Anthony Gormley for the "Brick Man" sculpture some 30 years ago, which would have provided a significant landmark in Holbeck, but it might be argued that these two new works are more reflective of the diversity of a city where the male form is hardly under-represented.



W

Wellington Place

Leeds

MEPC

Bringing Leeds heritage to life.

A new mini museum is set to open on the ground floor of Wellington Place's Grade II listed wagon lifting hoist – one of the last remaining parts of the original Leeds Central Station.

The museum will celebrate Leeds' rich industrial history and will include special artefacts spanning the station's more than a century long history including photos and memories of the working station.

The wagon lifting hoist was made a Grade II listed building and received a Leeds Civic Trust blue plaque in July 2011.

Scheduled to open its doors in early 2024 the museum will be free to access by the public during the day.

MEPC are calling for people to share their cherished memories of Leeds Central Station and any related memorabilia to be displayed in a new mini museum soon to be opening at Wellington Place. People can get in touch by emailing: sophie@wellington-place.com

Scan to find out more:

Leeds 2023

A Year of Culture!

2023 marked a year-long celebration of culture in Leeds, a festival in development since the city's bid for European Capital of Culture hit the buffers due to Brexit.

The festival promised that culture 'could make our city the best it can be'. The Trust launched our involvement by inviting guest speakers to our 2022 Annual General Meeting to participate in a panel discussion. The meeting took place at Aspire, the former Yorkshire Penny Bank, on Infirmary Street. It was a joyous occasion; after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, members appreciated the opportunity to attend their AGM in person rather than via Zoom.

For our panel discussion, we posed the question: "Leeds 2023 – a cultural legacy for our city?" The guest speakers who made up the panel were Kully Thiarai - CEO of Leeds 2023; Georgia Taylor Aguilar, Exhibitions and Artist Development Curator at The Tetley; and Wieke Eringa, Associate Director of the Cultural Institute, University of Leeds. Journalist and presenter Peg Alexander chaired the discussion. Peg Alexander did a fantastic job leading the discussion; many questions were asked, such as how the "culture" of Leeds Year of Culture 2023 squared with Richard Hoggart's study of mass culture? Hoggart, surely a potential subject for a blue plaque, used his seminal 1957 study "The Uses of Literacy" to criticise the loss of working class popular culture and its replacement by mass culture.

It is for others to decide whether Leeds 2023 has successfully addressed this critique. Certainly, Leeds 2023 aimed not only to present culture to the city but to construct creative experiences for everyone, including communities that might generally feel excluded, and to unearth hidden cultures and histories in the city. As far as the Trust was concerned, we already had many ongoing projects we knew could be part of the festival; we partnered with Leeds 2023 to develop these projects as part of their calendar of events.

01 A panel discussion about what Leeds 2023 has in store. Pictured (l-r) Kully Thiarai, Georgia Taylor Aguilar, Wieke Eringa and chair Peg Alexander

02 Artist Megan Dobbin at Leeds Left Bank, whose artwork tells the story of the history of this important cultural venue in Leeds 6



Heritage Open Days:

Supporting our hidden histories

Heritage Open Days (HODs) is England's largest festival of history and culture. Every September, our dedicated HODs committee comes together to organise and coordinate HODs events throughout the Leeds Metropolitan District.

Each year the HODs team in London generates a theme for the festival, and for 2023 the stars must have been aligned as the theme was 'Creativity Unwrapped' which was perfect to tie in with the city's year of culture. This year's festival was one of our busiest, with over 150 events. When our HODs committee met with Leeds 2023 Heritage Producer, Harry Jelley, we discovered a common cause: how do we reach communities that had not previously participated in HODs and how do we celebrate and highlight their heritage and culture? We discovered that some districts were unaware of the festival and did not have the funds to produce events whilst still remaining free to the participants. We decided for HODs 2023 to reform our popular micro-grants scheme by introducing two new grants.

Support grants provided up to £150 towards equipment for an event. We also introduced a new grant scheme, offering funding of up to £500 towards an imaginative or 'themed' event that provided financial support for a creative practitioner, freelancer, historian or facilitator. It is problematic to expect people in the creative/freelance industry to support HODs without covering their costs. This grant, supplemented by funding from Leeds 2023, allowed us to support these creative freelancers in producing an event and working with communities to tell their stories as part of Heritage Open Days 2023, whilst ensuring that the events themselves remain free for participants. Our HODs committee headed out to these communities and worked energetically to engage with people we had not worked with before to encourage them to be part of this year's festival. They supported the grant applications and HODs registration processes.

Supported by our grants, we saw events from The Assembly House Leeds, which produced an interactive art project to celebrate their local community. Artists based at the local studio Assembly House created a large mural-style artwork – Leeds must now surely be the mural capital of the UK - to celebrate our most beloved local landmarks and community champions; it was showcased at this year's Armley Festival, which took place during Heritage Open Days. Left Bank Leeds opened its doors and allowed the audience a window into the history of its fascinating building.

They produced a photography exhibition that showcased areas of the building that were not usually accessible and invited creative guest speakers from the community to speak about how the Left Bank has provided an accessible space and has produced an innovative cultural programme that supports networking within the community and sustains their careers and work. With the grant, they also funded local artist Megan Dobbin to produce an artwork that celebrated the Left Bank's history. The finished illustration was printed on vinyl and wrapped around the telecom box outside the Left Bank to tell its history and celebrate its heritage. The telecom box is still on display today, creating a continuing legacy.

Overall, we supported 19 new events for the HODs festival through our funding programme, 80% of these had never participated in Heritage Open Days before and all have said they would like to continue to participate in the festival in the future. With such amazing feedback, we hope to continue to offer these grants for future Heritage Open Days festivals.



Heritage Open Days: Supporting our hidden histories

Our industrial heritage - launching Heritage Open Days

For the launch of Heritage Open Days, we headed to Leeds Industrial Museum, reviving an event postponed from 2022 due to the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth. After so much hard work from our HODs committee, especially from launch leader Jane Collins and the tremendous support from Leeds Industrial Museum, we thought it only fitting to return in 2023.

For the launch we joined forces with Leeds 2023 to learn more about their Hidden Stories project, a fresh perspective on the stories of Leeds that have previously been overlooked and under-celebrated. We also saw the launch of Gill Crawshaw's curated exhibition 'Any Work That Wanted Doing', which was on display at Leeds Industrial Museum during Heritage Open Days.

The show brought disabled people's voices together, past and present, took a closer look at the hidden histories of disabled textile workers, and featured eight artworks by contemporary disabled artists.

In the evening, we were joined by Kully Thiarai - CEO of Leeds 2023, Lord Mayor Al Garthwaite, music from Archipelago, and a talk from Rachael Unsworth, Director of Leeds City Walking Tours.

Leeds Corn Exchange: A hub for heritage

Thanks to the financial and logistical support of Leeds 2023, the Corn Exchange was transformed into a heritage hub for the duration of HODs 2023. The hub, staffed by Leeds 2023 staff and volunteers, highlighted events and was a space for pop-up workshops, exhibitions, and talks.

Early in the festival, we held a panel discussion on 'Heritage high streets, retail and conservation' - this provided a launch pad for two new guides produced by our Heritage Watch Group. These guides, covering conservation areas and heritage shop fronts, provide property owners with advice on how to renovate their properties in sympathy with their historical context. They are available in hard copy or digitally from the Trust.

The event was chaired by Leeds Civic Trust Trustee Jenna Strover and featured Steven Mason - Head of Markets at Leeds City Council; Jane Williams - Member at the Headingley Development Trust responsible for their retail activities; Liam Riley - Regeneration Officer (Morley Heritage Investment Fund); and Martin Hughes, Chair of Horsforth Civic Society.

01 We were treated to music from Archipelago, who told the story of Betty Beecroft who ran the Kirkstall Forge



02 The winners of our Art Competition pictured in front of their entries at the Leeds 2023 shop in Leeds Trinity

Celebrating the city through art

The Heritage Hub was also home for the week for our art exhibition, 'Pride in Place'. Thirteen artworks had previously been displayed in June as part of our Civic Day celebrations at the Leeds 2023 shop in The Trinity where it was launched on Civic Day. The show was the result of our city-wide art competition where we invited people of any age, using any medium, to create a piece of artwork that encapsulated 'Pride in Place' in Leeds.

We were amazed by the talent and the number of entries we received; it was fantastic to see what the artists appreciated about Leeds through their favourite places and spaces. Our judges had a hard time reducing the 50 entries down to the 13 winners, each of whom received a cash prize funded via our Leeds 2023 grant. The winning entries are now immortalised in our Leeds Civic Trust 2024 calendar.



Blue Plaques for Heritage Open Days

With nearly 200 blue plaques unveiled since the scheme's inception 35 years ago, our attention increasingly turns to the 20th century and to telling stories about buildings, events, people and places that reflect the diverse history of our city today.

Bramley Baths

During Heritage Open Days, we unveiled two blue plaques, one for Bramley Baths and another for Pablo Fanque. On the first Saturday of the festival, we celebrated Bramley Baths, the last remaining Edwardian bath house in Leeds. Since its opening in 1904 generations have washed, learned to swim, danced, and used the Russian steam baths within this vital community building. The blue plaque highlights the cultural value of the building and the continuing role of Bramley Baths within the community. 2023 was also the tenth anniversary of its conversion from a Council run facility into a community enterprise.

The plaque was jointly unveiled by Deputy Lieutenant Kevin Sharp and one of the Bath's young swimmers, Marley Parker – representing the generations of children who have learned to swim there. On the day of the unveiling, we were joined by local MP Rachel Reeves and former MP Sir John Battle, who were both instrumental in ensuring that the baths had a future as a community enterprise. After the unveiling, guests could join a guided tour of Bramley Baths funded by the Heritage Open Day Events Grant. They also offered heritage workshops for local schools. The workbook they created included a heritage trail looking for clues around the Baths as a fun learning experience.



01 A sunny September day for our unveiling of a blue plaque for Bramley Baths. Pictured (l-r) Leeds Civic Trust Chair Jane Taylor, Marley Parker, Leeds West MP Rachel Reeves, Deputy Lieutenant Kevin Sharp, Leader of the Council James Lewis and Trust Director Martin Hamilton

02 Chris Barltrop as “Mr Astley” performing at City Varieties

03 June Hancock’s daughter Kimberley and son Russell at the Blue Plaque unveiling in Armley

Pablo Fanque

Our second plaque was one of the highlights of the Heritage Open Days festival. It was unveiled on the second Saturday in the festival for Pablo Fanque who was the first black circus owner in Britain. Fanque began his circus in 1842 and frequently visited Leeds. The plaque celebrates Pablo Fanque’s popularity and underlines the city’s long association with the circus, stretching back to 1773. For the unveiling, with financial support from Leeds 2023 HODs event grants, we produced a host of events that celebrated the life of Pablo Fanque and the history of the circus in Leeds. The events started on the Friday of the festival with Dr Steve Ward. Gathered on the Grand Theatre steps Steve took attendees on an informative guided circus walk, visiting all twelve sites in the centre of Leeds that were used for circus during the nineteenth century. For the unveiling, we were joined by Leeds Circus, a registered charity passionate about the circus, creating workshops that bring people together to have fun. Our participants certainly did have fun, having a go at plate spinning, diablo and hula hooping. It was a great setting to begin our afternoon of celebrations. Later in the afternoon, the plaque was unveiled by the circus ringmaster and actor Chris Barltrop.

Following the unveiling, the audience was invited to join us at Leeds City Varieties for an act from Chris about the ‘father of the modern circus’, Philip Astley. After the performance, there was a talk and Q&A session on the history of this famous music hall. Although the plaque was a celebration of Pablo Fanque, the story of Pablo Fanque is tainted with heartbreak. In March 1848, his circus located at King Charles’ Croft in Leeds collapsed, and Pablo Fanque’s wife was killed in the accident. She was buried a few days later in Woodhouse Cemetery (now known as St George’s Fields), and thousands of people lined the streets of Leeds to witness the procession. When Fanque later died in 1871, he left instructions that his body be returned to Leeds to lie alongside his wife.

June Hancock

Earlier in the year, we unveiled another plaque for a Leeds pioneer whose life was also marked by tragedy. On June 9th 2023, we gathered at Salisbury View, Armley, for an emotional morning unveiling a blue plaque for June Hancock. Joined by June’s family, friends, Councillors and current and previous MP (Rachel Reeves and Sir John Battle who supported June when she was his constituent) and the solicitors who acted for her - Irwin Mitchell, we reflected on the important contribution this Leeds resident made to our city. June Hancock was born in Leeds and grew up near Armley’s JW Roberts asbestos factory. The factory produced harmful dust which resembled snow.

June and other children would play with it as a child. This innocent activity would cause June and many others in later life to be diagnosed with mesothelioma, a terminal cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. After losing her mother to the same disease, June could not let her devastating diagnosis go unchallenged.

In October 1993, June started her journey to bring justice for the countless Armley residents and workers who died from exposure to asbestos from the former JW Roberts Factory and for those living with asbestos-related disease. June’s case was the first asbestos case to be brought to court by someone who had not worked with asbestos. After a long battle, Irwin Mitchell successfully argued the factory owner should be held accountable for the exposure of the Armley residents to asbestos. In 1995, June won her court case, bringing about a landmark judgement that helped bring justice for many other people, including many hundreds in Armley, who were environmentally exposed to asbestos.

Sadly, June lost her battle with cancer aged 61 on July 19 1997. Her memory lives on through the Mesothelioma Research Fund (JHMRF) which was established in her memory in November 1997. Her battle for justice for countless victims of asbestos exposure is a vital part of the city’s history and is a story that deserves to be told.



Leeds best kept secret

The Chambers
30 Park Place, Leeds LS1 2SP and
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The Community Heritage Fund: Reaching out to the community

In 2021 we created the Leeds Civic Trust Community Heritage Fund. Working in partnership with the Leeds Community Foundation, we hoped to reach out to communities and groups we had not previously worked with.

The Community Heritage Fund was a two-year grant for between £10K and £20k to help support communities explore, share, and celebrate their stories. We wanted the grants to support histories and heritage that might be considered 'hidden' or not widely known.

Eight projects were selected to receive funding throughout the two years.

During 2023 Leeds Civic Trust staff and Trustees visited the projects.

- Ahlulbayt Cultural Centre
- Advonet
- Balbir Singh Dance Company
- Leeds Music Trust
- Jamaica Society Leeds
- St Lukes Cares
- South Asian Arts-UK
- Little London Arts

Sadly, we do not have space to do all eight projects justice, but two examples include:

Advonet, Little London & Woodhouse:

'Leeds, Learning Disabilities and Autism: From Yesterday to Tomorrow' seeks to amplify the voices and stories of people with learning and neuro-differences. They worked with a historian and established access to local archives, photos and other resources relating to Meanwood Hospital. From this they created an animated short film written by a reference group member from their research. The animation featured a "time traveller" highlighting positive experiences and celebration, giving people with learning disabilities and/or neuro-diversities a platform to speak for themselves and share their stories.

Out of Many Festival:

Our funding provided support to parts of this major festival celebrating the city's Jamaican diaspora, marking the 60th anniversary of Jamaican independence. In particular, we supported two exhibitions. King Country and Home told the stories of the ex-service men and women who served in the armed forces, whereas the Rebellion to Romance exhibition focused on the cultural and social life of second-generation West Indians in Leeds.

We are looking forward to commissioning a raft of new projects which will cover the theme "a celebration of place" and will start in 2024.

01 Dancers from the Balbir Singh Dance Company - one of the grant recipients, entertain the audience at the celebration event in Holy Trinity, Boar Lane



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TEMPLE

CEG have had a busy year in Temple...



CEG have concluded crucial repairs to the Counting House, part of the Grade I Listed Temple Works site in Leeds City Centre with support from Historic England. In January 24, CEG will launch its new Forging Futures Innovation Campus from the Counting House, welcoming future cohorts of the Forging Futures employability and skills course as well as undertaking programmes in sustainability, coding and heritage skills. Forging Futures is CEG's flagship social value programme, building on the success of its Kirkstall Forge construction campus which provides training opportunities for the city's future construction professionals.

Work is also underway on repairing and reinstating the Grade II* Gate Lodge thanks to partnership funding from Historic England. As well as being a prototype for the masonry repairs needed at the Mill's east elevation, it is hoped the repairs will see the Gate Lodge as the first part of the Temple Works site to be removed from the Heritage At Risk Register in 2024.



Restoration work has recently completed to the historically significant 1849 Grade II Listed Holbeck pedestrian bridge. The bridge was originally built to transport people and materials between mill buildings either side of the beck. Works to the bridge comprised careful stripping back of the existing materials and paintwork, structural repairs to bring the bridge up to modern adoptable standards, replacement of degraded and unsafe railings and paintwork refinishing in one of the original paint schemes.

Globe Point, the first of CEG's office developments to complete within the Temple District of Leeds, has proven to be a huge success with 80% of the space now occupied by a diverse mix of occupiers. Well located less than a 5 minute walk to the southern entrance of Leeds Train Station, it has fast become a thriving business community with a ground floor café/restaurant open to all, adding to the vibrancy of the area. We look forward to bringing One Globe Square forward in 2024.

Temple's fantastic resident theatre company, Slung Low have hosted several successful outdoor events and workshops for the local community since they launched in Temple at the start of 2023. They have welcomed incredible partnerships ranging from The British Library to local primary schools and we look forward to their programme for 2024.



www.ceg.co.uk

We're still investing. Still developing. And still growing

Transport and placemaking

The Trust's longstanding interest in enhancing public amenities across the city means we have continued to lobby for a better transport system and the transformative opportunities it provides for improving the public realm.

The Trust has supported exciting community engagement work on the eastern fringes of Leeds City Centre known as 'Leeds Eastside'. What's more, our Transport and Liveable Leeds Group has continued to lobby for better public transport - focusing on better bus and rail services, the future possibilities for mass transit and a shift to more sustainable modes, whilst offering our views on proposals for an array of local transport and highways schemes.

A collective vision for Leeds Eastside

Since 2019, the Leeds Civic Trust has worked alongside the public and key organisations to re-imagine the 'Eastside' of Leeds City Centre - an area highly dominated by traffic and largely considered to have a disconnected sense of place. A plethora of opportunities for the Eastside to be a more liveable part of the city has emerged through the Trust's attempts to engage with its communities, particularly important given the growing climate emergency.

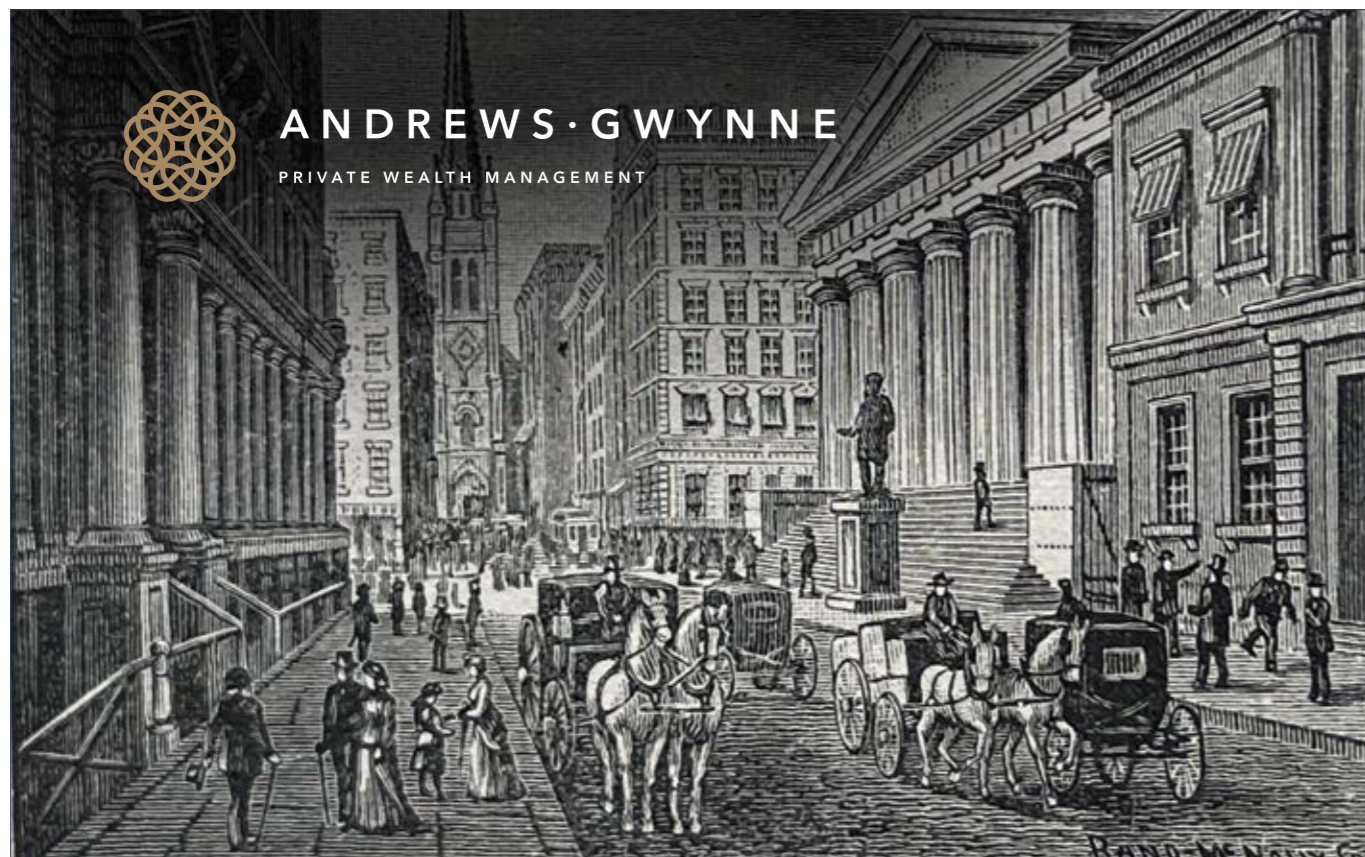
This year, we commissioned landscape architects Urban Wilderness to capture the learning from the Eastside project so far to create a Vision document for re-imagining the space.

Building on the ideas and principles set out in 2021's 'Liveable Leeds' public competition and the Trust's 'Draft Supplementary Planning Document' in 2022, the document puts forward a vision for Leeds Eastside "to become an attractive, lively and inclusive space within the heart of the city centre".

Community participation was at the core of the vision's development. In January 2023, Urban Wilderness' Hannah Beard and sound artist Alex De Little took a 3D model of the site to key organisations representing different users of the space - the Leeds Minster, the Palace Pub, Mecca Bingo, Leeds Playhouse, Leeds City College and East Street Arts - to facilitate conversations that could actively inform the design process.

01 Alex de Little, Ishita Antony and Leeds Civic Trustee Hannah Beard talk to a local resident about our Eastside proposals in the Palace Pub





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- 01 An axonometric drawing of how Eastside could develop in future years
- 02 Eastside before and after – the current view looking over the expanse of roadscape, and a glimpse of how it might look in the future

What transpired was a collective vision illustrating the multi-faceted possibilities for change in Eastside including the daylighting of the Sheepscar Beck that currently runs underneath the A61 and creating a new public park which we called ‘Livett Park’ (inspired by the Quarry Hill architect and visionary pre-and post war Director of Housing at Leeds City Council R.A.H Livett who received a blue plaque a few years ago) centred around the beck.

The proposals also include the redirection of the A61 to free up highway land, a sustainable transport corridor, and the provision of affordable housing and community space.

Moving into 2024, we are looking to further collaborate with Eastside’s residents and communities to bring the vision to life, starting with a public launch event in Spring 2024 and the co-creation of temporary installations in the area.

Find out more at
www.liveable-leeds.org.uk.



Public Transport

Taking the Imagine Project Forward

The future of bus reform in West Yorkshire remained uncertain as 2023 drew to a close. Back in May following a comprehensive bus service review, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) declared franchising as their 'preferred option' and launched a public consultation to this end. The consultation asked the public for their views on two options for future bus reform across the region – continuing the status quo through an 'Enhanced Partnership +' between private providers or greater public control via franchising.

The Trust has long been a supporter of bus franchising, seeing greater public control as a means to improve passenger experience by simplifying the system and increasing accountability. In 2021, when publishing our 'Imagine an Excellent Bus Service in Leeds' report, we highlighted several principles to underpin an improved bus service, including accessibility, connectivity, safety, reliability, speed and frequency, eco-friendliness, affordability, accountability and an all-round pleasant experience and urged WYCA to move towards a franchised bus system as quickly as possible.

Two years on from 'Imagine', there have been several positive developments in Leeds' bus strategy including the move towards franchising, increased funding for the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the £2 "Mayor's fares" and integrated ticketing schemes like 'MCard', commitment to net-zero goals and some plans for increasing bus frequency. However, several challenges remain. For instance, many services have seen reduced frequencies, routes withdrawn and high levels of cancellations while real-time information remains inaccurate, and integration with other transport modes and routes between neighbourhoods is lacking.



- 01 A bus seems to emerge from the midst of excavations as work on the New Station Street entrance to the city station continues. We have criticised the lack of signage to direct people to bus services from inside Leeds City Station
- 02 We held a webinar to add our voice to the debate about bus franchising in West Yorkshire

As such, bus patronage in Leeds and across West Yorkshire has failed to return to pre-pandemic levels which were already lower than many comparable regions. Buses need to become a more accessible and attractive option if we are to encourage people to use them.

Partnerships are essential to strengthening the lobby for change which is why the Trust has begun reaching out to the public and key stakeholders. We ran a webinar 'Towards Franchising in West Yorkshire?' in November, including speakers such as Rod Fawcett (former Head of Policy, Transport for Greater Manchester), Paul Swinney (Centre for Cities) and Matthew Topham (We Own It), as a means of kickstarting a broad coalition to take forward bus improvements.

A Mass Transit future?

Despite sustained efforts to develop a mass transit system over the last three decades, Leeds remains one of the largest cities in Europe that does not benefit from such a network. In launching their 'Mass Transit 2040 Vision', WYCA alongside its district partners intends to accelerate the development of mass transit, should it receive the required support from Westminster. When the government announced the scrapping of HS2 north of Birmingham, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak also pledged to prioritise investment in West Yorkshire's mass transit.

The Trust has been a long-term supporter of mass transit for Leeds including various schemes that never came to fruition like the 'Supertram' and 'Trolleybus' of the 1990s and 2000s respectively. In keeping with its vision, WYCA launched a formal consultation on mass transit in the region, providing opportunities for the Trust to deploy the expertise of our members and galvanise public support.

A sub-group of the Trust's Transport and Liveable Leeds Group has been working hard to develop specific proposals about what a tram system could look like in Leeds – along city centre, west, east, north, and south corridors.

The group has successfully built trusted relationships with WYCA's leadership on mass transit development, meeting at regular intervals to exchange ideas and provide local input at a corridor level. At the heart of the Trust's proposals is an emphasis on the transformative opportunities for placemaking and connectivity presented by mass transit development. We will continue to illustrate these possibilities through our positive relationship with WYCA officials. Whilst the challenges of political uncertainty and public opinion may still affect the investment and prioritisation of mass transit in the long-term, the future of mass transit in West Yorkshire remains hopeful as WYCA's vision process is rolled out and the Trust will continue to advocate for its development.



Coming and going

Leeds City Bikes

Launched in September 2023, the 'Leeds City Bikes' scheme provided around 300 e-bikes for hire across the city centre. The scheme is intended to enable people to travel short distances in a quick, easy and eco-friendly way. Accessible via the 'Beryl bikes' app, the scheme provides a network of docking stations at various intervals across the city where users can unlock and return the bike at different locations. The scheme forms part of Leeds City Council's wider strategy to help make Leeds a "city where you don't need a car" (Connecting Leeds, 2021). By the end of 2023, around 8,000 journeys had been made using the bikes covering over 12,000 miles. The fleet will expand to 515 bikes by Spring 2024.

Coming and going in the city

Providing our input on local proposals for transport and placemaking is an integral part of our work at the Trust. This year brought about a multitude of opportunities to cast a constructive and sometimes critical eye on proposals that impact how people can come and go easily to the city. For example, we saw £3.6 million invested in transforming Leeds Bus Station to include a new shop, refurbished travel centre and improved entrance along Dyer Street.

The Trust has also been working closely with a group of practitioners interested in making improvements to the 'city integration' of Leeds Train Station as a gateway for people who live, work, and visit the city - an increasing challenge while improvement works are ongoing at the station.

01 A fleet of electric bikes for hire were rolled out across the city centre and Headingley. Appropriately they are named after our city's own Beryl Burton - champion cyclist whose life is celebrated through our Blue Plaques Scheme

One clear success was the recent unveiling of a permanent outdoor exhibition of artwork on Neville Street, comprising ten unique works showcasing communities within the south of the city and created by local artists.

With the pedestrianisation of City Square now complete and the city centre 'loop' severed, we have continued to share our thoughts on city-wide schemes that promote active travel like walking, wheeling and cycling including the 'Leeds City Links' scheme covering north and south of the city centre.

02 "Making a Stand" the temporary Leeds 2023 installation surrounds the Black Prince. The expanded Christmas Market took advantage of its closure to through traffic implemented during 2023



A national context of uncertainty

With the cancellation of HS2 to the north, cabinet reshuffles galore and a general election looming, transport investment has been in a state of flux.

This uncoordinated national transport and investment strategy has a significant impact on our city. This is why, when the Transport Select Committee made a call for evidence inquiring into how the Government sets its strategic transport objectives in August 2023, the Leeds Civic Trust jumped at the opportunity to present its views on a national transport strategy in England. Funding for transport infrastructure is dispersed among several government departments and modal transport bodies, which can hamper local governance and decision-making and create siloed working.

Such lack of cohesion hinders the UK's response to urgent societal challenges like climate change, rising social and health inequalities and building back better in a post-pandemic world. In our case for a national transport strategy, we argued for:

1. An overarching vision to connect transport and planning - a vision and principles to align with the government's broader social, economic and environmental objectives, where transport and planning are considered together.
2. Fairness in local investments and services - cities such as Leeds feel the impact of regional investment gaps. The average public transport spending per head in the UK was £430 per capita, rising to £864 in London but down to £328 in Yorkshire between 2009-2020.

3. Decentralisation in investment powers - devolution of funding to local transport authorities can be undermined by central decisions to earmark funding for specific purposes or modes.

4. A clear governance framework - to support effective decision-making, prioritisation and accountability.

Moving towards a coherent national strategy could provide Leeds with a supporting structure to better prioritise, plan and deliver transport systems that realise its ambitions to reach net zero and tackle health inequalities together. As such, we will continue to keep our ears and eyes open as the national conversation unfolds.

03 A part of the new Neville Street Mural under the railway. As governmental priorities change, the needs for continuing investment in and expansion of Leeds City Station is as urgent as ever



Committees and Groups

Events Committee

Jane Taylor (Chair),
Meryll Wilford, Roderic Parker,
Joan Hick, Mark Parry,
Garance Rawinsky

Finance Committee

John Pike (Chair),
Catherine Black, Jeremy Burton,
Robert Solyom, Jane Taylor

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Rick Amos, Peter Baker, Carol Page,
Clare Chapman, Christine Osborne,
Garance Rawinsky, Tony Ray,
Helen Sanders, Clive Woods,
Meryll Wilford

Heritage Open Days Group

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Clifford Stead, Jane Taylor,
Jeremy Thompson, Clive Woods,
Colin Woodward

Transport and Liveable Leeds Group

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Howard Dews, Jeff Gleisner,
Adrian Jones, Mark Parry, Mike Piet,
James Riley, David Smith, Jeff Turner,
Clive Woods

Community Groups affiliated to Leeds Civic Trust

Aireborough Civic Society
Alwoodley Community Association
Far Headingley Village Society
Friends of Lawnswood Cemetery
Friends of Middleton Park
Friends of Roundhay Park
Friends of Temple Newsam
Gledhow Valley Conservation Group
Horsforth Civic Society
Little Woodhouse Community Association
Newlay Conservation Society
Pudsey & District Civic Society
Thackray Museum
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FOR ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

Paul Mitchell or Carl Braim
01924 291 800
paulmitchell@harrispartnership.com
carlbaim@harrispartnership.com

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