

# Conservation and restoration of Bath's street signs wins national award

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**The ongoing conservation and restoration of historic street signs across Bath has been recognised at the UK's Georgian Group Architectural Awards 2019.**



Repairing and reinstating historic street signs in Bath began in 2010, and soon became an ongoing programme, organised and funded by the Bath World Heritage Enhancement Fund, a partnership between The City of Bath World Heritage Site, Bath & North East Somerset Council and Bath Preservation Trust (BPT).

By the end of 2018, in the 50th anniversary of the Bath city-wide conservation area, fifty-two street signs had been completed; more are planned.

The City's World Heritage Chairman, Professor Barry Gilbertson explained: "Our project restores the chisel-marks of the architects and builders of the 18th Century who understood the importance of good signage.

"The street signs are generally at first floor level – not so much for the Georgian pedestrians, but for carriage-drivers, sitting up at that level, with horse reins in hand, who could see the signs clearly, even without the benefit of any street lighting on dull days and gloomy nights."

The work entails sensitive cleaning of the signs, carefully preserving the existing original letters, meticulously matching lime mortars and inserting new pieces of Bath stone for repair.

Missing or worn letters are re-carved and re-painted. Signs that are not incised but simply painted on to the wall are re-painted in the existing style, using Keim mineral paints to match the existing colours.

Councillor Ruth Malloy said: “We restore a handful of street signs each year and every time the impact on our World Heritage Site city is remarkable, for residents and visitors alike.

“For the project to have been recognised by The Georgian Group – arbiters of the best conservation work in the country – is fantastic.

“The WHEF is one of those vital organisations which diligently organises conservation and improvements to pieces of Bath’s heritage, using a dedicated group of volunteers and drawing on the expertise of specialists.

“This sort of accolade makes our achievements all the more worthwhile and I urge anyone interested in supporting us, with time or money, to get in touch via the website.

“Partnership contributions from residents make such a difference to the projects we take on.”

BPT’s Ms Ainslie Ensom, Project Manager and Administrator for the World Heritage Enhancement Fund, added: “We’re so proud to have won this award, and proud that another project, financially supported (with seed funding and mould-making) by our City of Bath World Heritage Enhancement Fund, the restoration of the Great Pulteney Estate Overthrow Lighting, was also a winner.

“Just like the restored street signs, beautifully brought back to life, the Fund is enjoying a moment in the spotlight again.

“I can’t thank enough our expert craftsmen who work so carefully on these listed assets; Iain Cotton and Mark Holland who specialise in repairing and preserving the incised signs, and Brian Barclay of the Bath branch of Cliveden Conservation who is a master at cleaning and repainting the painted signs.

“Thank you to the judges, too, for recognising the challenges encountered when working in a UNESCO World Heritage site, and to Bath Preservation Trust who support our work in so many ways.”