



City of Bath

WORLD  
HERITAGE  
SITE



*This trail explains why Bath is  
a World Heritage Site – it takes  
about one and a half hours*

# City Trail



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



City of Bath  
inscribed on the World  
Heritage List in 1987

# The trail begins by the Roman Baths – heart of the World Heritage Site

## 1 Bath Abbey and the Roman Baths

The Abbey (late 15th C onwards) was one of the last great Gothic churches to be built before the Reformation. Below the Church Yard lie the remains of the Roman Baths, the Sacred Spring, and the Temple of Sulis Minerva, fed by the continuous flow of naturally hot water. In the elegant Pump Room (1790-95) you can sample the mineral water.



**2 UNESCO World Heritage Symbol** The symbol is set into the street; it is designed to represent the interdependence of cultural and natural properties – the circle indicates global protection and the square, human skill and inspiration. Look south towards Beechen Cliff to see the close relationship between townscape and landscape, an important element of Bath's character and significance. Bath Street (c1790) leading west is the only double colonnaded street in Britain.

**3 Cross Bath and St John's Hospital** The Cross Bath, with its own spring, is of Roman origin. It was developed for therapeutic bathing in the Georgian era, with a small pump room. Today it has a small pool where you can still bathe in the naturally warm spa water, as you can in the modern pools of Thermae Bath Spa. St John's Hospital, founded c1174, continues today as an important charitable institution. The entrance range to the Hospital of 1727 was architect John Wood's first building in Bath.

**4 Theatre Royal 1805** This replaced the first theatre in Bath which had opened in 1750 in Orchard Street and is now a Masonic Hall. The new theatre's original entrance façade (1802-5) can be seen in Beauford Square (1730s); the entrance was moved to Saw Close when the theatre was rebuilt in 1862 following a fire.

**5 Queen Square 1728-34** John Wood laid out Queen Square with the northern terrace designed as a single Palladian palace, divided behind its magnificent façade into separate houses. The square has been altered over the years, and the western side now houses the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution in a Neo-classical building inserted in 1830. The sequence of Queen Square, the Circus and the Royal Crescent is one of Bath's great triumphs of 18th century town planning.

**6 King's Circus, begun 1754** Conceived by John Wood and completed by his son, the Circus was originally paved, without trees. The design displays John Wood the Elder's genius and his interests, including ancient Rome, the architecture of Inigo Jones and Andrea Palladio, Stonehenge and the Druids, and Masonic symbolism.

**7 Royal Crescent 1767 – 1775** Bath's first crescent, by John Wood the Younger, forms a semi-ellipse with a single classical palace façade, built in harmony with the landscape and countryside; views across the lawns below look towards Bath's southern slopes. No 1 Royal Crescent is a furnished house, open as a Museum run by Bath Preservation Trust.

**8 Museum of Bath at Work** Housed in a former Real Tennis Court (1777) this museum tells the fascinating story of two thousand years of Bath's industrial and commercial history and heritage.

**9 Assembly Rooms 1771** Designed by John Wood the Younger, this is one of Bath's greatest public buildings, where fashionable Georgian Society danced and gambled beneath the magnificent chandeliers. Later, Charles Dickens gave public readings here. The Fashion Museum is in the basement.

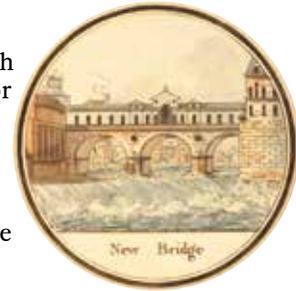
**10 Museum of Bath Architecture** This is the place to discover how Georgian Bath was built, and to see a wonderful model of the whole city. The Museum occupies the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel (1765), a rare example of Gothick style in Bath. The chapel organ is still played for occasional concerts.

**11 Milsom Street from 1768 onwards** Developed as the residential link between the lower town and the rapidly expanding upper town, and designed over some twenty years by a number of architects (look up to see the different styles) Milsom Street soon became, as it remains, one of Bath's smartest shopping streets.

**12 Guildhall 1775-8** The beautiful Banqueting Room, on the first floor, is the finest 18th century interior in Bath. The Victoria Art Gallery, on Bridge Street between the Guildhall and Pulteney Bridge, houses the public art collection and regularly changing exhibitions. Bath's covered market is near the Guildhall steps.

## 13 Pulteney Bridge 1769-74

Designed by Robert Adam, with echoes of Palladio's proposal for the Rialto Bridge in Venice, Pulteney Bridge leads to the Bathwick Estate which was built as a new town for Bath at the end of the 18th century. The vista of Great Pulteney Street (1790) towards the Holburne Museum is one of the great set-pieces of Georgian architectural town planning. From Laura Place looking south there is a view of Prior Park, the mansion built by John Wood the Elder for Ralph Allen; the gardens there are now managed by the National Trust. You can now return across Pulteney Bridge, or take a detour to:



**14 Sydney Gardens 1795 and the Holburne Museum 1796-7** Sydney Gardens is the only survivor of several Georgian pleasure gardens in Bath, which once offered all manner of outdoor entertainment from public breakfasts to concerts and firework displays. Sydney House, initially an hotel and tavern for the Gardens, became a museum in 1916. It is home to the collection amassed by William Holburne (d.1874) and offers regular exhibitions.

**15 North Parade 1740-8 and North Parade Bridge 1835-6** The Parades, now as when built, are for promenading and enjoying the views from the city centre towards the green hills beyond. Looking east from Grand Parade (trees permitting) you can see Sham Castle (1762) which is just a façade, built for entrepreneur and philanthropist Ralph Allen as an "eye-catcher" from his town house in York Street. From North Parade Bridge (1835-6) there are views of the Abbey, Pulteney Bridge and Parade Gardens looking north and west, and Prior Park to the south.

**16 Ralph Allen's Town House 1727** In York Street, to the right of the Friends' Meeting House (1817-19) you can catch a glimpse of this hidden gem. Designed by Ralph Allen's friend John Wood in Palladian style, the town house displays the beauty, quality and versatility of the golden Bath stone which was mined in the local quarries owned by Allen.



# The City of Bath

## World Heritage Site

Bath's three natural hot springs, the only ones in Britain, have attracted and inspired people for thousands of years. Bath was a sacred place for the Celts who worshipped Sulis, goddess of the springs, and for the Romans, who built the complex of Baths and the great Temple to Sulis-Minerva.

Edgar was the first monarch to be crowned king of all England, in 973 in the Saxon monastery of St Peter. Mediaeval Bath, a centre for the woollen trade, saw the building of a cathedral, renewal of the baths and the establishment of charitable hospices for the poor and sick. In the 18th century, transformed by a series of extraordinary architects, Bath became the country's most fashionable resort for health and entertainment.

The City of Bath together with its surrounding landscape was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1987 for its "outstanding universal value to the whole of humanity".

### Bath's most significant attributes:

**Roman remains:** among the most famous and important north of the Alps, marking the beginning of Bath's history as a spa town.

**Georgian architecture:** inspired by the newly fashionable Palladian style, architects of genius from John Wood onwards designed individual buildings and grand architectural set-pieces to create a beautiful city built entirely of Bath stone.

**18th century town planning:** the city's carefully planned terraces, crescents and squares blend harmoniously with the natural environment, to form an innovative "garden city" in a green landscape.

**Landscape setting:** the city lies in the Avon valley and is integrated, by deliberate design, with the hills which provide both its building stone and its picturesque setting.

**Natural hot springs:** the reason for the city's existence through two millennia as a destination for health, pilgrimage and enjoyment.

**Social and cultural values:** Bath's historic streets and buildings reflect the evolution of human society and culture, of particular significance with regard to the Georgian era.

## For further information

### Bath & North East Somerset Council

[www.bathworldheritage.org.uk](http://www.bathworldheritage.org.uk)  
[www.romanbaths.co.uk](http://www.romanbaths.co.uk)

### Bath Preservation Trust

[www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk](http://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk)

### UNESCO World Heritage Centre

[whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org)

### National Trust

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bath-skyline](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bath-skyline)

### Cotswold Way

[www.nationaltrail.co.uk/cotswold-way/](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/cotswold-way/)

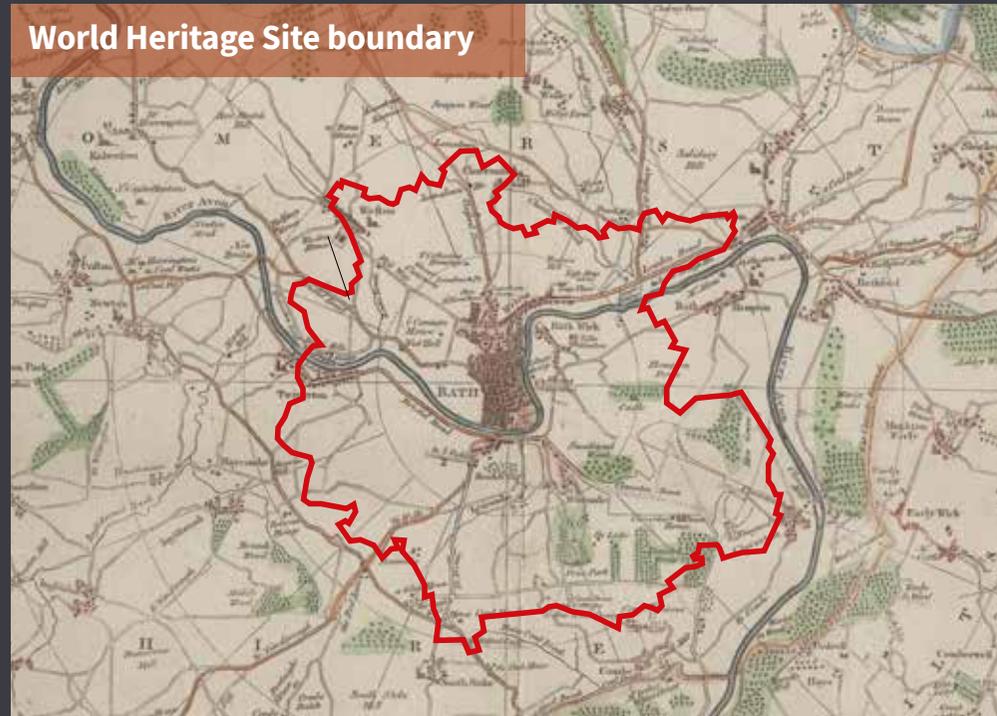
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Bath  
WORLD  
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### World Heritage Site boundary



Historic map: Taylor and Meyler 1787. Courtesy of Bath Record Office.

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council

