

Building on Bradford's Heritage

Bradford

CIVIC SOCIETY



"Common Sense"

REGENERATION

A Plan to Revive the Fortunes of Bradford and its People

"Common Sense"

REGENERATION

A Plan to Revive the Fortunes of Bradford and its People

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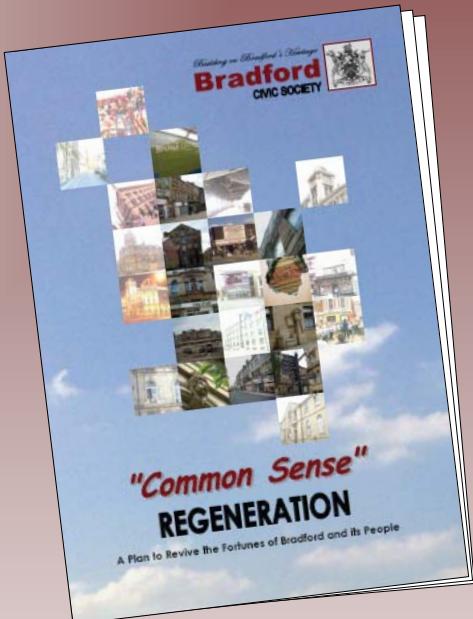
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Also, please inform your friends, family and colleagues (and any other interested parties) that our plan, "*Common Sense*" REGENERATION, is available to download now.

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Some Proposals to Regenerate Bradford and its City Centre

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"Common Sense" **REGENERATION**

A Plan to Revive the Fortunes of Bradford and its People

FOREWORD

Civic Societies have traditionally been organisations, usually charitable trusts, which represent local people who care for and take pride in their historic built environment.

Recently, these organisations have become more representative of a larger audience which recognises that the built environment offers a certain pleasure, at a subconscious level, or the exact opposite depending on the condition of the surroundings.

It is now widely acknowledged that the historic built environment is something that the people of England hold dear. No longer is wanton destruction or neglect tolerated. We want to see our heritage shown at its best and campaign, and rightly so, to keep that which we inherently love and cherish.

These things are nationally recognised; at a local level we can, with the right encouragement and leadership, help to sustain the nation's desire for heritage.

Heritage is also a major tourist attraction and has been the subject of regeneration throughout the UK and beyond. Heritage sells a place or a particular individual property. It has intangible value and monetary value.



Unfortunately in Bradford, it seems that we have not cared enough about our heritage; a shame really, for it is our forefathers who created the city and left a legacy of superior architecture.

As you walk the streets of Bradford city centre you'll notice that so many of our historic buildings are derelict or empty, so many are uncared for, so

many have had inappropriate adulterations forced upon them. The few that have been restored look absolutely superb. Surely something can and should be done to improve the rest.

I sometimes walk through the centre with rose tinted spectacles, imagining how the place might look sympathetically restored and renovated - the streets busy and vibrant with the hustle and bustle of city life; a centre with places to visit and things to do, or maybe just to sit a while in a park or square to admire the wondrous architecture. A dream currently - but surely not too much to ask for, is it?

In terms of regeneration, Bradford has had several attempts. What they did in the 50's and 60's may have been considered forward thinking at the time. We now know that the wholesale destruction of many parts of Bradford's historic centre was misguided and tantamount to mindless vandalism. A number of later developments in the 70's and 80's were not much better and now leave an ugly scar on a once beautiful streetscape.

I remember "Bradford's Bouncing Back" in the 90's but I can't remember Bradford doing so. And so to the 21st century - a global economy striving forward at a pace not seen before, a property boom previously un-witnessed - did Bradford prosper?

Unfortunately not! Six years of a regeneration agency that tried in vain to propel its own agenda on our beloved city - an agenda that, to anyone who looks for real physical evidence, FAILED!

It is easy to talk about things once they have occurred - hindsight is a wonderful thing. What we're proposing in this document hopefully learns from the mistakes of the past and suggests how and what needs to be done to correct the present and plan for the future. The ideas and suggestions are not set in stone; planning the regeneration of a city needs to be fluid, needs to take account of changing markets, needs to listen to the people, and needs to be realistic whilst being ambitious.

Yours faithfully

Anthony Mann

Chair, Bradford Civic Society

July 2009

"Common Sense" REGENERATION

A Plan to Revive the Fortunes of Bradford and its People

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to some estimates, Bradford was the richest city in Europe in 1910; a place to be reckoned with; a city which many believed was destined to take its place alongside such great cities as Chicago, Philadelphia and Hamburg - a major player on the twentieth-century world stage. That didn't happen and, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it might seem rather astonishing that anyone would have considered it at all possible. But such was the self-confidence of Bradford's civic leaders and the commercial acumen of the great textile barons, that many did believe that the city was destined to continue its growth in importance and influence. People knew of Bradford in those days.

And what are they likely to know, if anything, of the Bradford of today? For a start they may well be hazy about where it actually is, which is why, one presumes, its address is almost always written as "Bradford, West Yorkshire." No other major English city is addressed in this way; Coventry is not "Coventry, West Midlands", nor is Southampton "Southampton, Hampshire." These places are simply "Coventry" and "Southampton," the assumption being that people have heard of them and know where they are. Not so Bradford, even though it is larger than either of these two examples. And whenever the national media turn the spotlight on the North (usually focusing on some negative aspect), press and television reports frequently use the lazy blanket term, "these former mill towns," thereby immediately reducing Bradford, a city of nearly half a million people in total, to the status and dimension of

"Can I respond to your article which took me gently to task for not mentioning Bradford during a speech I made at the Yorkshire International Business Convention last week. Mea culpa! I am guilty as charged."

From a letter to the Telegraph and Argus, written by Rosie Winterton MP, Regional Minister for Yorkshire and the Humber.
13th June 2008

places such as Burnley or Oldham, which are scarcely a fifth of Bradford's size. The strong impression all this gives is that Bradford, these days, is a place that the rest of the world is only dimly aware of, if at all; a clapped-out small town of little significance, possibly the size of Halifax, somewhere "up there" in the North; a place which doesn't even merit a mention when the government minister responsible for the region makes a key speech about economic development.

But this is to be too pessimistic. Bradford has some unique features which, with astute handling, could actually lead to a resurgence of prosperity and influence. One important feature concerns the city's age profile. Unlike most other places in the UK, Bradford does not have an ageing population – quite the reverse. Having a lot of young people around should mean that there is an energy about the place. If this energy can be connected to forward-looking civic and political leadership – not always evident in recent times – then there is a chance that an upsurge in legitimate entrepreneurial activity can once more provide a basis for long-term economic growth.



Secondly, despite the efforts of Messrs Wardley and Poulson in the 1960s to create a city centre of quite formidable blandness, Bradford has managed to retain a substantial number of impressive Victorian and Edwardian buildings, not just in Little Germany but also in the City Centre, Goitside and around Canal Road. Most of these buildings were originally warehouses linked to the wool trade. Bradford Civic Society believes that many of them can be refurbished

as leisure and cultural facilities, shops, offices, cafes and places to live, the likes of which are not to be found in other cities in the UK.

If this could be done, Bradford Civic Society believes that Bradford would regain some of the status and prosperity which it has sadly lost over the years. To this end its members have prepared this report, which contains a range of proposals which it asks Bradford Council to consider. Some of these proposals are not dissimilar to those already published by the Council and BCR (in their "Forty Point Plan" for example). Others offer alternatives to what the Council has proposed.

And let it be said at the outset that it is not Bradford Civic Society's intention to act as a forum-cum-pressure group for those disillusioned and disgruntled citizens who may wish to take the Council to task over every aspect of its regeneration policy; rather the Society wishes to act in the role of a partner and "critical friend" to the Council, in the knowledge that both parties - Bradford Council and Bradford Civic Society – are motivated by the same desires and share the same aim, namely the restoration of Bradford to its traditional and rightful place as a prosperous and attractive major city - a place that its citizens can be proud of.



Bradford has some unique features which, with astute handling, could actually lead to a resurgence of prosperity and influence

2. CONSULTING THE CITIZENS OF BRADFORD

"As I see it, the Council faces a difficult situation, which is historically unprecedented in the UK, or even perhaps in Europe, in combining rapid cultural and demographic change with economic transformation and decline. The Council has shown a penchant for grandiose schemes planned or executed by people from outside the district, who are often paid enormous consultancy fees. These schemes have often involved 'Ground Zero' thinking, in which the idea is to tear down what exists and build from scratch, rather than adapting and developing what already exists. This point applies both to physical facilities and to cultural and popular institutions and traditions. This amounts to a kind of pathology - an inferiority complex, maybe - in which local views and local people count for very little, whereas external experts, who know next to nothing about Bradford, are received with rapt attention."

Professor Alan Carling, University of Bradford

In March 2009, Bradford Civic Society held a consultation event aimed at gathering views from the general public regarding the regeneration of Bradford city centre. The Telegraph and Argus (23rd March 2009) reported that some 250 people attended the event to give their views, either orally or in writing. Others, unable to attend the event itself, contributed views by email and letter. What follows is a summary of what people had to say.

People responding to the event were usually aware that Bradford has a distinguished history; that it was a powerhouse of Britain's industrial success and grew into an important city with an international reputation. However, whilst many of them felt some remnants of pride in Bradford's past achievements, they also had feelings of frustration, cynicism and even embarrassment that the city has not, in recent times, made best use of its impressive



heritage, in order to transform itself into an attractive, prosperous and dynamic place. Reasons put forward for this were as follows.

- People felt that Bradford has suffered from a lack of effective civic leadership, probably stretching back several decades.
- People also felt that planning is too often in the hands of individuals who have scant knowledge of, or interest in Bradford's unique and important heritage, and for whom Bradford may be merely a project, or a "stepping-stone" towards career advancement elsewhere.
- People felt that the Council and its planners are too prone to produce grandiose schemes, supposedly aimed at transforming the city, without securing the means to follow them through to completion. This is a particular source of annoyance, (especially when linked to the following point).
- People expressed a very strong feeling that members of the public are not listened to and that "consultation" is a sham. Because regeneration is in the hands of Bradford Centre Regeneration (BCR), a non-elected body, linked to Yorkshire Forward another non-elected body, there is a particularly strong view that proper accountability to the citizens of Bradford does not exist and these bodies can therefore act with an impunity amounting to arrogance. As one person commented, "Things are done to the people of Bradford, rather than for the people of Bradford." Another commented, "These bodies have an agenda which is not that of the citizens of Bradford." There were many other similar comments.



Strong views were expressed about the perceived failure of politicians and planners to deliver what is required. Thus a petition to the Prime Minister about the parlous state of Bradford's regeneration agenda was mooted by more than one person; several others demanded that "heads should roll" and that the "fat-cats" charged with overseeing the regeneration agenda should be sacked, because they had achieved so little. Some suggested a public enquiry into the "Westfield fiasco" by the Council's Scrutiny Committee. Others wanted similar action over what are perceived as flawed consultation procedures. And others commented that the "wrong people are at the helm of regeneration." Nobody expressed the view that the politicians and planners were performing satisfactorily, or were likely to do so in the foreseeable future; for example, a fear was expressed that the windfall provided by the sale of Leeds-Bradford Airport would probably be frittered away.



On a more positive note, a number of people approved of the recent reconstruction of Eastbrook Hall and the way, some years ago, that the Wool Exchange was refurbished for a new purpose. These were seen as examples of how things should be done - buildings of historical and cultural importance preserved and put to new uses, rather than being demolished and replaced by nondescript concrete edifices, as sadly happened in Bradford in the 1960s. As one person wrote, "We should modernise in a way that complements our city's heritage, as some European cities have done." It was also suggested that any new buildings within the city centre should be constructed out of the

traditional materials which often make our Victorian and Edwardian buildings so attractive. Other people believed that Centenary Square was an asset to the city centre, although there were mixed views about the "New Banana Building," some feeling that it lacked appropriate scale for a city and others fearing that it would soon show signs of wear and tear. The Impressions Gallery (where the consultation event was held) attracted some positive comments. One person commented favourably on the Gatehaus.

There was virtually total disapproval of the current plan for a Park at the Heart, with the concept of a substantial area of water next to City Hall attracting particular criticism. People noted that lottery funding for this project has been denied, so they felt that the scheme should not be pursued, even in a modified and reduced form. However, a good number of people favoured an open space elsewhere in the centre (see below). There was overwhelming disapproval of Yorkshire Forward's plan for the Odeon site. Only two people recorded a wish for the Odeon to be totally demolished, though both of these felt that a better plan than Yorkshire Forward's New Victoria Place was needed. A number of people mentioned the plan to re-open the Bradford Canal; they felt the idea had potential, but with little or no consultation about the scheme were not sure what route it would take or how it would be delivered. The small number who mentioned the development of the market areas around Rawson Square held the opinion that a retrograde step had been taken years ago when Rawson Market was demolished.

There was a considerable amount of agreement regarding what people would like to happen in the city centre.

- Almost everyone felt that the Council should disengage itself from Westfield altogether. Some wondered why the Council has not

insisted on penalty clauses in the contract with Westfield (or if they had; why have Westfield not been penalised). Others expressed relief that the Westfield project has probably terminated, as they felt that artists' impressions depict a shopping centre disappointingly out-of-date and too similar to the characterless shopping malls which already blight many English towns and cities.

- Many people felt that the Westfield site should now be landscaped to become the Park at the Heart (without a lake, although one or two mentioned the possibility of opening Bradford Beck as a feature of the park). Some noted that such an open space would provide excellent views of the splendid buildings at the bottom of Little Germany – an impressive vista which few English cities can match. Others suggested that a weekly open market and/or flea market could be incorporated. Public art, especially sculpture, was suggested as a feature of this park, which could also be used by drama groups, performance artists and musicians given that the Kala Sangam South Asian Arts Group occupies St Peters House. A suggestion for more trees in this area and along nearby streets was also made.
- Many people said they would like to see the historic buildings of the city centre put back into use but it was noted that little had been done to encourage this. The re-use of these historic buildings would ensure that they had a long and sustainable future and bring people into the centre to live and work. The restoration and conversion of existing buildings should occur before any more "glass and concrete towers" are built on the fringes of the centre.



- If retail outlets were not to be the main feature of the Forster Square area, some suggested that Godwin Street and Sunbridge Road be developed as shopping parades and that part of Broadway could also be rebuilt with shops, provided that there was no repetition of "the hideous concrete blocks." There was a strong feeling that a better range of shops, including "quality" outlets, should be encouraged throughout the city centre to offset the current preponderance of "discount" shops.
- It was suggested that Ivesgate could be made into an impressive covered arcade of shops and that the arches between Forster Square Station and the Midland Hotel could be utilised as attractive small shops.
- Several people suggested that Little Germany, one of Bradford's undisputed assets, was too isolated from the rest of the city centre and needed better integration with the centre.
- It was suggested that better road access to the fringes of the city centre would be an advantage, perhaps incorporating a "park-and-ride" scheme and with an extension of pedestrian-only areas. Leeds Road was considered to be a particularly depressing entrance to the city centre and in need of improvement.
- A number of people suggested that a park in the Forster Square area of the city centre would facilitate the provision of a CrossRail link, which would enhance accessibility to Bradford from the main-line rail network, including a rail link to the airport.
- The much-discussed issue of the Odeon site received a good deal of attention. With only two exceptions, the overwhelming consensus was that, at the very least, the iconic towers and the façade between them should be retained. Others went further,



suggesting that the Odeon site be developed as an auditorium, perhaps similar to Manchester's Bridgewater Hall. This large auditorium, augmented by the nearby Alhambra, the Media Museum and St George's Hall, would give the city a series of venues of different sizes which could potentially make Bradford the North's foremost entertainment and conference centre. Nearby former textile premises, especially those along Thornton Road could be "recycled" for office, hotel or apartment space.



Some important general points were made in addition to the specific ones described above. It was emphasised by many that Bradford's image will only improve if the city centre is properly managed and maintained. There ought to be more harmonisation with regard to such things as street furniture and pavements. Litter, cigarette ends and discarded chewing gum were mentioned as things which currently spoil the city centre. One of the things which make people cynical about the



construction of a mirror pool, for example, is a belief that it would be quickly and regularly filled with discarded take-away cartons and supermarket trolleys.

Another point made at the event concerns the possible risks inherent in "whole-area, top-down" planning, with little or no real consultation with the public. Ideally, cities should develop organically and incrementally, bit by bit. If the whole of the city centre is

subject to "The Big Plan" (like the ruinous one implemented by Wardley and Poulson in the early 1960s) then there is always a danger that, even if the necessary cash is forthcoming, we could end up with our own version of Milton Keynes, or some similar anonymous and soulless place.



It was emphasised by several people that really vibrant cities derive much of their success from having first-class cultural venues – top-quality concert halls, theatres, galleries, which attract people who will also want to avail

themselves of good hotels, bars and restaurants. The civic leaders of even comparatively small places, such as Salford and Gateshead, appear to have understood this and they have encouraged the successful creation of cultural spaces which attract people (and their money) from far and wide.

Finally, the point was made that Bradford is a city – once a great and famous one – and not a small town. All buildings, therefore, should be worthy of a city, in terms of size, scale and impressiveness.

The views expressed by Bradfordians at this consultation event form the basis of some of the proposals which Bradford Civic Society would like Bradford Council to consider.

.....the city has not, in recent times, made best use of its impressive heritage, in order to transform itself into an attractive, prosperous and dynamic place

PROPOSALS FROM BRADFORD CIVIC SOCIETY

3. TWO IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

Bradford Civic Society believes that there are two specific issues of major concern which should be addressed as matters of urgency by the Council, not least because both of them are highly visible to any visitor to the city centre, but also because of the amount of hostile and demoralising criticism towards the Council which both have generated in recent years. The two are, of course, the future of the former Odeon building and the mothballed Broadway / Forster Square retail centre (commonly called the Westfield site).

"Unless people of Pakistani heritage, people on Holme Wood and people from Menston are all willing to come into the middle of Bradford because there is something there which they want and value, we're never going to work properly. And that something needs to be different from what other places offer - and we can do it here."

The Very Reverend David Ison, Dean of Bradford Cathedral



The Odeon building and "Westfield Site" today - why have we got an empty building crying out for restoration and re-use, and a derelict site that has cost millions in tax payers' money. What we want is action – a new plan that caters for the needs, desires and aspirations of Bradford.

THE ODEON BUILDING

Bradford Civic Society's views on the Odeon are very much in line with those of the Bradford Odeon Rescue Group (BORG), a group set up at the suggestion of the Council. Our belief is that the survival and refurbishment of the Odeon building is vitally important to the future development of Bradford, a city recently designated as the first UNESCO City of Film.

BORG has led a campaign to preserve the Odeon building for the last seven years. Detractors may accuse its members of being a small group of antiquated luddites, blinkered by nostalgia and blinded by sentiment, but this is far from the case. A high level of public support for BORG's campaign has been clearly shown by internet polls. The "Hug the Odeon" event in July 2007, when well over one thousand Bradfordians turned out in force (despite inclement weather), also indicated widespread support. It is also clear that the public of Bradford firmly rejects the proposed scheme for the Odeon's replacement, New Victoria Place, as can be seen on the Council's Planning Department website, where several hundred objections have been posted.



The outward appearance of the building – admittedly shabby – is merely a cosmetic issue and is largely the result of ongoing neglect. Neither the building's owners, Yorkshire Forward, nor Bradford Council will address the problem despite BORG's best efforts to persuade them.

Of great importance is the conclusion of the most recent structural

survey, which actually states that although some structural issues exist within the building, none of them are deemed to be major. In other words, despite what some have said, demolition of this historically important building, a building that is loved and cherished by the people of Bradford, is by no means necessary.



Bradford Civic Society agrees with the recommendation of a Council-commissioned feasibility study that Bradford requires a "world-class" concert hall to enhance the city's cultural renaissance. The Council has already explored the possibility of extending St George's Hall into the Telegraph and Argus building to create such a concert hall. Bradford Civic Society believes that the Odeon building is a better option, with St George's retained as a complementary, smaller concert hall. The Odeon is more than capable of providing Bradford with a world-class venue and should be developed as such.

In the late 1960's the interior of the former 3,300 seat capacity theatre was subdivided with lightweight materials to construct a bingo club in the former stalls with twin cinemas above at circle / upper balcony level. The original theatre layout survives, with all auditorium seating levels hidden within building voids. The construction remains solid and sound.

From the nineteenth century onwards, Bradford has had a tradition of welcoming people from all over the world. It is important to ensure that harmony between the different communities is promoted. A shared future is dependent upon shared



interest and entertainment can be a key factor in this. An increasing number of the younger members of Bradford's ethnic communities are moved to share the entertainment culture of western society, whilst at the same time introducing their own cultural entertainment to Bradford's indigenous youth. Bhangra, the work of WOMAD (World Music and Dance Organisation), Bite the Mango and Bollywood are all examples of the way different cultures are already coming closer together. A refurbished Odeon, with facilities for cross-cultural entertainment, would do a great deal to create a shared future. As well as a first-class concert and entertainment venue, the Odeon could also function as a convention centre, with participants coming to Bradford from far afield and this would stimulate the city's economy.

(3.3) Odeon Cinema Building

This building together with the Alhambra Theatre, the National Media Museum and the Central Library forms an impressive crescent of buildings along Prince's Way, with the domes of the Odeon and the Alhambra complementing each other. During the winter of 2000 / 2001 it was unused. **Ideally it should be refurbished and reused for leisure purposes.** The twin towers and façade of the Odeon alongside Princes Way should be retained and restored in any redevelopment proposals.

Extract from the "Replacement Unitary Development Plan for the Bradford District" (Adopted October 2005)

The above extract says everything you need to know about the Council's desire for the Odeon. Why did BCR continue with a plan to demolish a publicly owned building that, using the Council's own words, "should be refurbished and re-used for leisure purposes"?

....the public of Bradford firmly rejects the proposed scheme for the Odeon's replacement

A refurbished Odeon, together with the Alhambra, the National Media Museum and St George's Hall, all within walking distance of each other, could create a unique profile, which would establish Bradford as the entertainment and convention centre of the North. Such an achievement would help bring back Bradford's pride and self-confidence, from which economic regeneration would be a natural progression.

Just one building, if refurbished and developed with flair and imagination, can have a hugely beneficial effect on the surrounding area. One does not have to travel far from the centre of Bradford to see the truth of this. Before Jonathan Silver purchased Salts Mill, the village surrounding it was, to quote Jim Greenhalf of the Telegraph and Argus, "going downhill like a shoeless foot." Today Saltaire is not only a UNESCO World Heritage site; it is a positive oasis of style, with its galleries, boutiques, restaurants and sought-after houses and apartments.



PROPOSAL 1:

PRESERVE THE ODEON BUILDING AND REFURBISH IT AS A WORLD-CLASS CONCERT AND CONFERENCE VENUE, AS PER BORG'S PLAN.

THE WESTFIELD SITE



....the site remains undeveloped and very unattractive - a blot on Bradford's landscape

Westfield has a 999 year lease on the Broadway / Forster Square site, where it plans to build a retail centre. Whether such a centre is actually required is a debatable point, given that the possible knock-on effect on shops in Darley Street, Kirkgate, Godwin Street, Market Street and Ivesgate would be considerable. The Society has recently discovered that retailers in the city centre have been constantly and repeatedly canvassed by Westfield to move to their proposed new mall.

The likelihood under present plans is that these shopping areas would essentially cease to exist. What would replace the shops on these streets if the proposed retail centre did actually go ahead? Accordingly, Bradford Civic Society's view is that mainly new-to-Bradford retail outlets should be located in any new retail centre to safeguard other parts of the city centre.

Besides, a city-centre shopping mall seems somewhat anachronistic; the 21st century shopper is increasingly likely to use the internet for shopping, or make periodic visits by car to giant out-of-town malls, such as that at Meadowhall or the Trafford Centre.

Bradford Civic Society is aware that Westfield has invested £60-£70m on

the site and that the current global financial downturn has meant that any further work has been postponed. National retailers, who had previously shown an interest in opening outlets in the centre, are understandably less enthusiastic to do so in the current climate. However, Westfield has recently indicated that it is committed to the scheme and that eventually the centre will indeed be built, although the people of Bradford may have to wait many years for this to happen. Clearly Westfield, having invested such a sum, is unlikely to merely walk away from the project, unless Bradford Council compensates the company, which seems highly unlikely, given the large sums involved. Central government could possibly reimburse Westfield via Yorkshire Forward, its organ of regional development, although this also seems unlikely. Bradford Council looks, therefore, to be very much between a rock and a hard place.

In the meantime the site remains undeveloped and very unattractive – a blot on Bradford's landscape. Furthermore, Bradford now lacks the critical mass of retail outlets to provide shoppers the necessary variety, number and choice of retailers in order to select Bradford city centre as a destination. This is creating a "cause and effect" downward spiral of decline, where not enough shoppers coming to Bradford means that the current retailers are struggling to stay in business. Some have gone out of business already; others may go soon. Few if any new retailers want to locate to the city centre – there currently are more than sixty retail units vacant.



Bradford Civic Society has a proposal for the Council. Instead of creating The Park at the Heart around City Hall, which it would seem

hardly anyone outside the Council supports, part of the Westfield site itself should be developed as an open piazza with gardens. The Italianate buildings fringing Little Germany make a very impressive backdrop - it really is astounding that this splendid vista was masked for so many years by an ugly low-rise concrete terrace of third-rate shops and offices along Petergate.

Such an open space would lend itself to public art and could be used as a performance space for street theatre and musicians; cafés and perhaps an open-air market could help draw people to the area. There would therefore be no need to develop the "Park at the Heart" (especially as Centenary Square already exists and is one of the better parts of Bradford city centre), thus saving a substantial amount of the £20m earmarked for that project to be better spent elsewhere. A landscaped open space in the Forster Square / Broadway area would also open up the possibility of a CrossRail link, as described in a later section of this document.

Westfield could then develop a smaller retail centre to accommodate the new-to-Bradford retailers who have already agreed they would locate their outlets in the development. This would also save the current city centre retailers in Bradford by not having the "Mass Exodus" effect that the currently planned scheme would cause; it would also bring about a final conclusion to the ambiguity surrounding the development, thus sending a definite message to the market that Bradford is ready to continue business.

PROPOSAL 2:

DEVELOP THE "WESTFIELD SITE" AS AN OPEN PIAZZA WITH GARDENS AND DEVELOP A SMALLER RETAIL CENTRE TO ACCOMMODATE MAINLY NEW-TO-BRADFORD RETAILERS.

4. IN THE NEAR FUTURE

"I went to Warsaw in the 1970s. Warsaw wasn't bombed, it was deliberately dynamited by the Nazis. The Poles rebuilt the centre of Warsaw using the paintings of Bernardo Bellotto, who was a nephew of Canaletto. He painted Warsaw. A lot of people didn't want them to rebuild the centre, but they put the heart back into Warsaw from Bellotto's paintings."

David Hockney

Bradford Civic Society proposes that, in the medium term, the following three schemes should be developed and implemented. The Society believes that, whilst these are not as urgent as the two described in the previous section, nevertheless they are vital to the regeneration of the centre of Bradford and the wider district.

- The development of the Goitside Area along the lines of Little Germany. This should also include the development of an "Historic Quarter" in the Sackville / James Street area of the city centre, which would complement the proposed "World Mile" scheme and help to link Goitside with the City Centre.
- A re-routed Inner Ring Road through the Goitside area (three possibilities have already been proposed by the Council and their consultants).
- The re-opening of Bradford Canal but with an alternative plan to that published by the Council.



Goitside?



Ring Road?



Bradford Canal?

GOITSIDE

Goitside is a Conservation Area and essentially is the wedge-shaped area bordered by Godwin Street, Westgate and Thornton Road taking in Sunbridge Road and Grattan Road. The area takes its name from the "Goit" (a man-made watercourse), a spur off the Beck, that runs through the area and originally served the first mills in Bradford. The Goit, sadly, is now covered over and is a public footpath, albeit overgrown and uncared for. The area is the oldest part of industrial Bradford dating back to medieval times. It is now characterised by the large number of former warehouses (some in better condition than others) which dominate the area.

"I believe that Goitside is ideally positioned in terms of location, its built environment and physical features to benefit from Bradford's increasingly strong regeneration and economic development.

Together we can make the area the premier location to live and work within Bradford City Centre"

Jonathan Wright MBE (Chair, GDT)

Bradford Civic Society believes that this area should be regenerated in a similar way to the highly successful Little Germany area and thus extend the city centre, which is currently too small for a city the size of Bradford. It is essential that the unique character of Goitside is retained whilst creating a good mix of retail, office, residential and community space.

Goitside is perfectly located to take advantage of the "West End" entertainment area and its proximity to the city centre. The scale and mass of the built environment and street pattern also lends itself to today's requirements for access, use and development.

Further, we believe that the re-opening of the Goit (providing a "Green Corridor" through the area) and the implementation of the Sunbridge

Road Public Realm Improvement Scheme (already submitted to the LPA) would act as catalysts and set the quality standard for further investment and regeneration.



Some private sector regeneration work has already taken place with the development of Colonial Buildings and several other smaller buildings being restored, converted and re-used. The near completion of Woolston House and a further development by McAleer & Rushe to build new offices and an hotel is also evidence of this area's potential. More encouragement to Goitside's regeneration comes with news that an historic building on Thornton Road is to be converted by the YMCA to create a youth project called "New Fusion".

The Council should spearhead regeneration in the area in partnership with the Goitside Development Trust (GDT), an organisation of local businesses and residents that has been helping to revitalise Goitside for over nine years. Obviously, a refurbished Odeon at the city centre end of the Goitside area would act as further catalyst.



PROPOSAL 3:

**DEVELOP THE GOITSIDE AREA ALONG THE LINES OF
LITTLE GERMANY AND RE-OPEN THE GOIT TO ACT AS A
CATALYST TO FURTHER REGENERATION.**

AN HISTORIC QUARTER

Bradford Civic Society believes there is much to be said for the development of a small "Historic Quarter" as part of the Goitside development. This "Historic Quarter" would be located on a series of some of the oldest streets in the centre of Bradford, namely Duckett Lane, James Street, Jamesgate, Lower Westgate, Barry Street and Sackville Street. This development could be allied to the "World Mile Scheme" and would provide a link to Goitside from the city centre.

At present this area is largely in a state of neglect, but potentially it could become a real asset to Bradford, if the owners of property in the area were encouraged to refurbish and restore the buildings in a style sympathetic to that of their age, similar to what has been achieved in the Victoria Quarter in Leeds. Many of the buildings have unoccupied or unused upper rooms and basements, which could potentially be turned into craft workshops, small specialist shops, apartments, cafes and restaurants.



Duckett Lane and Sackville Street in particular have buildings which are full of character, though many are currently empty or in a state of disrepair. The two public houses in the area (the Boy and Barrel and the Commercial) could potentially become somewhat more up-market and family-friendly than at present, if the area was developed properly. At the corner of Sackville Street is a very grand and impressive building, (currently operating as "Leisuretime") This could be developed as an indoor market / craft hall, selling such things as antiques, specialist

jewellery, rare records, etc along the lines of Aflek's Palace in Manchester or the Piece Hall in Halifax.



The blot on the landscape, two storey block on the corner of John Street / Westgate should be demolished (it only has three or four tenants out of a possible nine or ten) to accommodate an open square for shoppers to take a well-earned break and to host small market days. The fine Victorian building bordering this plot on the corner of James Street / John Street could be refurbished and extended to provide a restaurant / café / bar, utilising the square for alfresco dining / drinking.

The selected demolition of the modern property on James Street could provide access into a new square in Duckett Lane. The rear elevations of the buildings facing Duckett lane could then be transformed into shop fronts providing smaller, niche outlets.

Distinctive lighting, possibly gas, could be a feature of the Historic Quarter. Gas lighting has been used to good effect in such places as Queens Square, Leeds, the Park in Nottingham, in London's Covent Garden and throughout most of the centre of Prague. Bradford Civic Society believes that such a quarter could become very successful, if marketed for tourism, just as Saddlergate in Derby and The Lanes in Brighton have proved to be successful.

PROPOSAL 4:

**DEVELOP AN "HISTORIC QUARTER" IN SACKVILLE
STREET/JAMES STREET TO REGENERATE THE AREA AND TO
ACT AS A LINK WITH THE CITY CENTRE.**

A RE-ROUTED INNER RING ROAD

A major drawback to the development and economic prosperity of Bradford is the lack of a coherent vehicular route to progress around the fringes of the city centre. This means not only that there are problems of congestion but that the city centre itself is confined to a smaller area than befits a major city because the current "Inner Ring Road" effectively constricts its growth.

Godwin Street, Sunbridge Road, Barry Street and Westgate now act as a formidable barrier which effectively cuts off the city centre from Goitside, (and the University, the Alhambra, the Media museum, the Central Library, the ice rink and the various bars and clubs nearby).

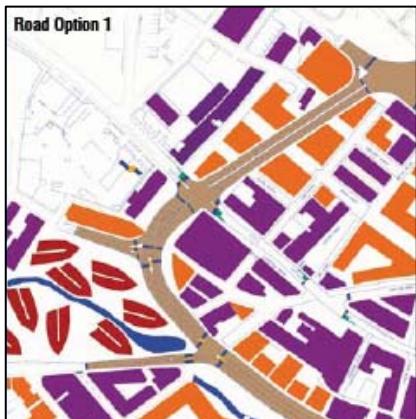
It is reported that when Philip Green visited Bradford to assess whether he wanted to purchase the former Sunwin House, the decisive factor which sent him hurrying back to London was seeing the dual-carriageway and clogged one-way system of Godwin Street, which he immediately realised would deter potential shoppers from visiting the store.

If Goitside, along with the Odeon and other amenities are to be developed in a way which integrates them properly into the city centre,



then this intrusive highway needs to be replaced by a ring road which follows a route beyond the Goitside area. This would allow Goitside to become a real part of a city centre which would then have a scale more appropriate to a city the size of Bradford.

In 2005 the Council / BCR commissioned the "Valley NDF". Part of the document addressed the re-routing of the Inner Ring Road. Below are the three options – when will one of them be built?



Three Inner Ring Road options identified by Council consultants.

The Society does not have a preference for any particular option but recognises that Bradford needs the completion of this section of Inner Ring Road sooner rather than later.

PROPOSAL 5:

RE-ROUTE THE INNER RING ROAD TO IMPROVE THE CITY'S TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE THUS INCLUDING THE GOITSIDE AREA AS PART OF A CONSOLIDATED, LARGER CITY CENTRE.

BRADFORD CANAL

A plan to re-open the Bradford Canal has been proposed a number of times. We understand that the Council is continuing work on this scheme.

The Society feels that the re-opening of Bradford's Canal could be one of the largest and most beneficial projects ever to happen in Bradford. After all, the canal was a major feature contributing to Bradford's wealth when the city was in its heyday.

It is, however, essential that the correct route is chosen. The route may not be the one that is easiest to plan in terms of land assembly. The canal will only be built once; careful consideration for the long term sustainability has to take precedence over the "simple option", otherwise it may become a "white elephant".

The final route must be the one that produces the best opportunities for residential, commercial and retail development whilst providing a "green" corridor for wildlife and city residents, workers and visitors.

The route also has to respect the boat-users who will frequent the canal. Therefore, the number of locks should be limited. Originally the canal had nine locks rising / falling some 86 feet but a reduction to just five locks could be achieved by planning a "feature lock" at a strategic location to provide a rise / fall of the equivalent of four locks. This feature would provide for a superb tourist attraction for visitors to the region and make navigation much quicker



for canal users, therefore guaranteeing constant use for the new stretch of canal. The Society believes that the "feature lock" could be either a lift similar to the Anderton Boat Lift in Northwich, Cheshire, or the Falkirk Wheel, both of which have become major tourist attractions. An inclined plane could be another option or, maybe, we could challenge the civil engineering community to propose an entirely new, innovative "Lock".

The canal also has to have as many marinas as possible to accommodate the growing trend of living on boats – this would also generate a considerable income and give the canal life. The canal should also feature a dry dock and workshops for boats – this would provide a necessary maintenance place for boat-users, local and regional, and create sustainable employment. There should also be plans for the introduction of a "WaterBus" and other leisure activities, such as a floating restaurant / bar etc...



....the re-opening of Bradford's Canal could be one of the largest and most beneficial projects ever to happen in Bradford

The delivery of the scheme should be done in two phases. The first phase of re-opening the Bradford Canal should be the stretch from Dockfield in Shipley, at its junction with the Leeds Liverpool Canal, to Bolton Woods. This is the easier part of the scheme as much of the original infrastructure still survives today and the majority of the land needed is un-occupied or in public ownership.

The opening of this section of the canal would regenerate its immediate environment and provide the impetus to create much needed housing and community facilities in and around the area.

Plans have been seen to convert a dilapidated but historically important canal building at the junction of the Leeds Liverpool / Bradford Canal, known locally as "Junction House", into a Visitor Centre. This scheme, obviously developed in tandem with the re-opening of the Bradford Canal, would form a gateway to Bradford's New Canal.

The Visitor Centre would deliver much needed regeneration to the immediate area, bringing tourism and providing educational facilities. The centre could show local canal history, and focus on Bradford's Canal in particular and even preview the ongoing construction works of the new Bradford Canal. The Centre could have a bar and restaurant. A waterbus stop could be strategically located here and a new marina with residential and commercial berths could help to create a spectacular place to visit, live or work. Adjacent property and land could be acquired and developed to provide office / commercial space and parking; with the rental income sustaining the Visitor Centre.

The construction of the first phase (Shipley to Bolton woods) would signify that the project has definitely begun; nothing could stop the next section reaching the centre of Bradford. Businesses, landowners and the people of Bradford would all see the benefits of and be united in seeing the completed scheme coming to fruition.

The second phase of re-opening the Bradford Canal would be the stretch from Bolton Woods to the City Centre. This is the route that the Society believes needs to be discussed, as it differs from that being planned by the Council. We feel that the route should run adjacent to the

railway lines running through the Hillam Road Industrial Estate and the along the route of Valley Road meeting up with the Forster Square Retail Park and terminating in a new residential marina at the site opposite the retail park.

This route would allow for the "feature Lock" (discussed earlier) to be positioned in the area now taken up by a car park outside the Empire Electrical Depot as the new canal comes under Canal Road. As the new navigation progresses through the industrial estate, obviously giving this area a new impetus to regenerate, it would reach Queens Road. The railway bridge could be extended to allow the new canal to pass under Queens Road and then it would follow the route of Valley Road and help to regenerate this somewhat run down area.

Finally, the new canal would reach the Forster Square retail parks; these could be redeveloped to produce a far superior shopping experience and supplementary mixed use development. At present these "tin sheds" are not befitting of a city centre and were definitely not what was originally intended for the site in the early nineties. It must also be noted that the owner of this retail park was attracted to Bradford to redevelop; the new canal coming through this site would provide the opportunity for such redevelopment.

Opposite the new development the canal would terminate in a residential marina on the site that was proposed to be developed by the now defunct Bradford Channel Company.

PROPOSAL 6:

RE-OPEN THE BRADFORD CANAL, BUT WITH AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN TO THAT PROPOSED BY THE COUNCIL.

5. IN THE LONGER TERM

CROSSRAIL LINK

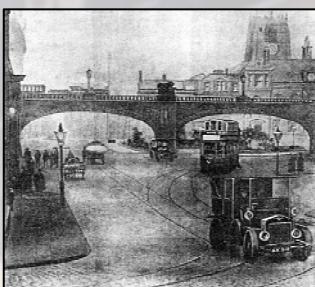
Bradford Civic Society supports the concept of a rail link between the Interchange Station and Forster Square Station and asks Bradford Council to carry out a new feasibility study, given that the last study was carried out some thirty one years ago.

Much has changed since then: the land between the two stations is now

"open country" because of the postponement of the Westfield development and Royal Mail (their building just beyond Forster Square) is relocating to Leeds. Furthermore, rail use was in decline in the 1970's and the use of the car, as the main mode of transport, was favoured. Now, however, car use is not so widely supported because of environmental issues, but rail use is increasing. The shift to public transport is increasing, not just for environment reasons, but in order to provide a transport system to allow for economic growth in the 21st century.

"Bradford became at once one of the most provincial and yet one of the most cosmopolitan English provincial cities. Its provincialism was largely due to its geographical situation. It is really in a back-water. The main railway lines went to Leeds, ten miles away, and not to Bradford".

J B Priestley:
English Journey



The CrossRasil Link is not a new idea; it was first planned in 1911 / 1912, but unfortunately the First World War stopped its development. In 1922 questions were raised in Parliament about the link. Even the now infamous Wardley raised the possibility of connecting the railway through Bradford as part of his

redevelopment of the city centre. The last time a feasibility study was carried out for the link was in 1978. This study confirmed that a CrossRail Link was physically possible – it is now more possible today and needed even more if Bradford and the region are to grow and prosper.

In the past Bradford Council showed vision with the provision of the Bradford Interchange for efficient rail / bus transfer for trains arriving from the south and east. If trains from the north could also reach the Interchange by means of a CrossRail link, then the use of this facility could be maximised.

Bradford Civic Society has a detailed plan for a CrossRail link, with scale drawings (an un-scaled diagram can be found on page 34). In summary, the plan is along the lines of those of the Bradford Rail Users Group (BRUG), based on an understanding that what is proposed must be practical, simple and affordable, as well as allowing for electrification.

Some suggestions have been made, on technical grounds, that Forster Square station may have to be moved and / or integrated with a new station in the Manningham area (to the side of Queens Road). If this is the case, then given that the opening of a station in the Manningham area is currently being reviewed, it may be wise to consider the moving / integrating of Forster Square station with the planned Manningham station. This solution would also free up commercial space in the city centre and provide better rail links throughout Bradford. For the purposes of this report we discuss the link between the two current stations.

The difference in height between the lines of the two stations could be overcome by starting the link further out from the Forster Square station. The route could progress through Broadway on a viaduct (the site is

devoid of buildings). Bridges could be built over Leeds Road and Lower Kirkgate to allow for the free flow of vehicular traffic, the viaduct allowing pedestrian and other activity to take place below. This new viaduct would also give passengers coming through Bradford wonderful views of the city centre.

The CrossRail link would help alleviate road traffic problems currently experienced by commuters who live to the north of Bradford and along the Aire Valley and who work to the south of Bradford. At present these commuters normally have to drive through a very congested Bradford road system to get to work – the link would give these commuters the option of rail travel. The CrossRail link would also open up the possibility of a two way, West Yorkshire Circular line which would create a superior regional transport system with stations at:

**Bradford Interchange - Manningham* - Frizinghall - Shipley -
Apperley Bridge* - Kirkstall* - Leeds - Woodlesford - Normanton -
Wakefield Kirkgate - Mirfield - Brighouse - Halifax - Low Moor***

(*Denotes possible / planned new stations)

More generally, an improvement to Bradford's links with the national mainline rail network will encourage more visitors to Bradford and improve the city's links with other major cities, including those in Europe, if a direct link to St Pancras can be established. Certainly a cross-city rail link which enabled access to Leeds-Bradford airport (if a spur from Guiseley to the airport could be constructed) would benefit Bradford's economy.

"My great grandfather was involved in the original scheme for a cross city rail link and if that had happened, it would be Bradford and not Leeds in the ascendancy now".

Sir James Hill

In summary, therefore, Bradford Civic Society believes that factors now exist today that present an opportunity for the CrossRail link to become

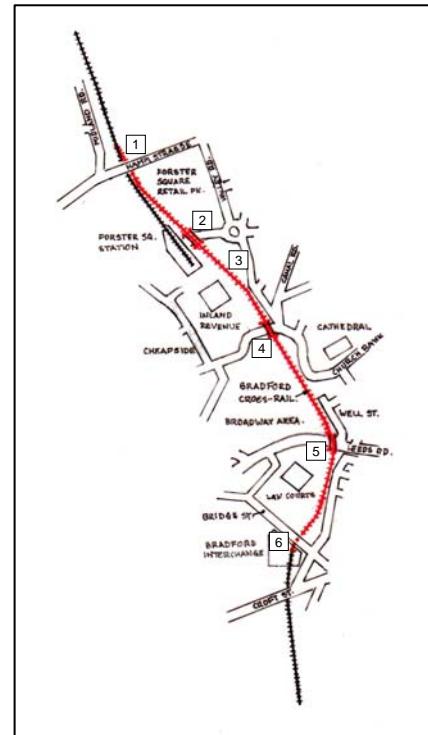
a reality and put Bradford at the forefront of transport policy in the 21st century. The CrossRail Link would provide for superior transport connections at local, regional, national and potentially international levels, thus bringing economic benefits to existing and future businesses in Bradford and the wider region. It would also be environmentally beneficial and make road journeys quicker by reducing cross-city commuter traffic on Bradford's already clogged roads.

The CrossRail Link

Potential Route shown in Red

Forster Square to The Interchange

The new double lines split from the current lines under the Hamm Strasse Bridge [1] and run adjacent to the current dead end lines to Forster Sq. Station. From there the new lines cross St Blaise Way [2] on a new bridge and then through the current Royal Mail site [3] (Royal Mail is relocating to Leeds in the near future). The lines then cross over Lower Kirkgate [4] on a new bridge and over the derelict Broadway Site on a viaduct. Finally they cross Leeds Road [5] on a new bridge and continue around the Law Courts and underneath Bridge Street [6] to join the lines at the Interchange.



PROPOSAL 7:

CARRY OUT A NEW FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CROSSRAIL LINK BETWEEN THE INTERCHANGE AND FORSTER SQUARE STATIONS AND CONSIDER RELEVANT LAND ASSEMBLY.

6. SOME KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The proposals which are presented in the foregoing sections represent specific schemes and suggestions from Bradford Civic Society. However, the Society would not want these to be seen in isolation one from another; there are certain considerations which should be viewed as important threads which inform all the proposals. Aesthetic appearance and the maintenance and management of the public realm are the two most important.

AESTHETIC APPEARANCE

"In the Sixties, when they pulled down Swan Arcade, most of the councillors wanted buildings that looked modern and that didn't cost much money. The idea is to make buildings very beautiful, but they said, 'Oh that costs too much' and the consequence was very ugly buildings. It is wrong to economise on beauty because if you put up something awful it has to be pulled down in twenty years. It is false economy. It is far more economical to make things beautiful because they will be admired."

David Hockney

Bradford city centre is a Conservation Area; the majority of its historic buildings are listed. Many of the shops in the centre of Bradford are located in these impressive historic buildings. However, the retailers do not always make best use of this fact. In particular, the appearance of shop fronts often leaves much to be desired. Bradford Civic Society does not advocate rigid conformity here, but its members do feel that there is scope for the Society to work with the Council (and any other interested parties) to try and achieve an aesthetic harmony between the shop fronts, the buildings the shops occupy and the streets they are on.

Ivegate, for example, is not at all pleasing to the eye because of the rather chaotic jumble of signs and shop fronts. Yet, as one of Bradford's oldest and most distinctive thoroughfares, it has the potential to be

transformed into a very attractive and pleasant street – perhaps the proposed “World Mile” Scheme might address this issue.

With the correct LPA encouragement and information (and enforcement, if necessary) retailers will be better able to create shop fronts that are in harmony with the building and immediate surroundings.

Bradford Civic Society advocates the introduction of a new programme to catalogue all existing shop fronts (and similar outlets at ground level) within the city centre and design a new shop front for each and every outlet. Funds should be secured to instigate a mass overhaul of the city centre shopping area in order to improve the overall streetscape. A similar scheme happened in the Bradford Moor area of the city some years ago – Bradford Council therefore has the experience of undertaking such a scheme and attracting the necessary funds.

The outcome of implementing such a scheme would be to create a unique city centre that would attract shoppers from far and wide. So many city centres are now just homogenised copies of one another with nothing different to offer - a transformed Bradford city centre would give the modern shopper a different and satisfying experience.

This scheme, carried out successfully, would serve to enhance and enlarge the retail offer and bring in more shoppers to Bradford, thus reversing the slow downward decline that we currently have.

PROPOSAL 8:

**INSTIGATE A NEW PROGRAMME TO INSTALL
TRADITIONAL SHOP FRONTS IN THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS
OF THE CITY CENTRE.**

Not all of the buildings in the city centre are of Victorian / Edwardian vintage and there are some more modern ones which, in terms of aesthetic appeal, currently stick out like the proverbial sore thumb.

In some cases it should be possible to improve the appearance of these mid-twentieth century edifices by shallow cladding, using local stone similar to that used by the original Victorian builders of Bradford. This would not only improve the appearance of such buildings, it ought to have a positive effect on their market value. By way of contrast, in other cases, such as the depressing and bunker-like Arndale Kirkgate Centre, one way of making improvements would be to embrace the modern by making use of mirrored glass. Imagine this building with a curtain of mirrored glass disguising its former ugliness whilst reflecting the beauty of the surrounding buildings. The cost of this could be outweighed by the introduction of more retail outlets at periphery ground level and, possibly, expanding the building beyond the current roof level to incorporate city living apartments.

PROPOSAL 9:

PROMOTE THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE EXTERIOR FACADES OF SOME BUILDINGS TO ACHIEVE A MORE HARMONIOUS OVERALL EFFECT THROUGHOUT THE CITY CENTRE.

Some good work has been done in flagging pedestrian areas with local stone and this definitely enhances the centre of the city. At the time of writing this document, the pedestrian areas of Hustlergate, The Tyrrels, Bank St etc are being overhauled with more robust but appropriate materials.

Bradford Civic Society welcomes investment in the Public Realm as long as it is sympathetic, of high quality and has appropriate uniformity

throughout. Unfortunately, much of the city centre is a hotchpotch of different materials, colours and styles none of which collectively enhance the Public Realm and visitor experience. A level of harmony needs to be introduced with materials that will stand the test of time instead of the patchwork, fix and make do, "sticking plaster" methodology of the previous twenty years or so.

PROPOSAL 10:

PROMOTE HIGH STANDARDS OF QUALITY AND UNIFORMITY FOR PAVEMENTS AND PEDESTRIAN AREAS IN THE CITY CENTRE.

MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

One of the issues which featured strongly in the responses to Bradford Civic Society's public consultation exercise was that of maintenance and management in the city centre. People felt that litter was a problem and that discarded chewing gum frequently disfigured pavements. If the centre of Bradford is to be an attractive place to be these matters need addressing. Care must also be taken to make sure that street furniture is positioned with care, properly maintained and in harmony with their surroundings.

Unfortunately, at present there are too many different designs of street furniture and signage, some of which are at the end of their useful life; this again serves to present a bleak, uncared for and unloved centre. A programme needs to be started to catalogue and thereafter address and rationalise this issue.

PROPOSAL 11:

PROMOTE HIGH STANDARDS OF QUALITY AND UNIFORMITY WITH REGARD TO STREET FURNITURE IN THE CITY CENTRE.

Safety and security issues have also been raised. For example, Centenary Square is generally a pleasant public space during the day, but it seems to attract sundry unsavoury types in the evening, whose presence is not really conducive to a comfortable visit. To say that most cities have such a problem rather misses the point; if we are to promote our city centre as a place which people will actively want to come into, our visitors need to feel safe and secure from any anti-social behaviour.

PROPOSAL 12:
**PROMOTE BETTER SAFETY AND PERSONAL SECURITY
IN THE CITY CENTRE.**

There is anecdotal evidence that some of the residential areas in the city centre are affected by noise pollution from nearby music venues. For example, residents in Piccadilly are generally full of praise for their apartments which have been created from converted warehouses. However they are unhappy about over-amplified music emanating from a recently-opened nightspot at the corner of Duke Street; this loud music continues until the early hours. Residents are now considering leaving the area because of this. This is an example of poor attention to zoning. Nightclubs and music venues should be kept well away from residential areas, if we are to be successful in attracting more people to come and live in the city centre.

PROPOSAL 13:
**PROMOTE BETTER ZONING IN THE CITY CENTRE, SO THAT
RESIDENTIAL AREAS DO NOT SUFFER NOISE POLLUTION
FROM ENTERTAINMENT VENUES.**

7. MAKING BEST USE OF OUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Bradford Civic Society believes that Bryson's appraisal of Bradford city centre is only partly correct. True, Wardley and his cohorts got rid of much that should have been retained in the Sixties. But much of Bradford's Victorian heritage remains, throughout the city centre and in areas such as Goitside, Little

"Once this was one of the greatest congregations of Victorian architecture anywhere, but you would scarcely guess it now.

Scores of wonderful buildings were swept away to make room for wide new roads and angular office buildings. Nearly everything in the city suffers from well-intentioned but misguided meddling by planners."

Bill Bryson: from Notes from a Small Island

Germany and along Canal Road. And in the Odeon building, Bradford has an important building from a later period which those who care about Bradford desperately want to keep. Bradford has plenty of excellent buildings. The trick is getting people to realise that preserving and restoring them, rather than knocking them down, is the way to kick-start the city's regeneration. This doesn't mean putting such buildings into aspic as museum pieces; it means using them for new and exciting purposes. That requires imagination and a certain amount of risk-taking. Who would have thought, for example, that the Wool Exchange could become one of the most agreeable bookshops in England? Who (if we go beyond the city centre) would have thought that an old tram shed in

Shipley could become a chic bar and restaurant? Or that a dilapidated Salts Mill could become home to an art gallery, two restaurants, a bookshop, upmarket shops and an IT company?



Bradford Civic Society proposes that the historic buildings of Bradford city centre be marketed for redevelopment. By redevelopment we mean

sympathetic restoration on the outside with new uses for the inside. The obvious choice is city centre living, but others could be overhauled to provide excellent office accommodation and a variety of other uses.

This has already happened to a number of buildings in the city centre; examples include the refurbishment and conversion to apartments of Sunbridge House and the Pearl Assurance building both on Kirkgate, the Prudential building and Centenary House overlooking Centenary Square, and the warehouses around Manor Row – all now fully restored, in use and saved for future generations.



The recent conversion of Vintry House on Piccadilly to high class offices is encouraging; Bradford Civic Society would like to see more of this kind of development.

These though, are only a handful of buildings in the city centre. There are many, many more that require restoration, refurbishment and a new use.



Bradford Civic Society proposes that the Council acts as mortgagee to the refurbishment and conversion of our historic buildings, providing funding to developers to purchase, restore and convert. This could be done with a limited rolling cash fund, such funds being repaid by the developer on completion and sale of the development. Attracting developers would then be simpler and the outcome would mean that so many of the derelict and empty properties would be put back into sustainable use.

In turn, the streetscape would become a much more pleasant and safer place, our heritage would be saved, income would be produced for the Council in the form of rates and retailers would have more customers on their doorstep.

The alternative, in the Society's view, is bleak. At present the regeneration authorities in Bradford seem preoccupied with inviting developers to our city to build "concrete and glass" towers on the periphery of the centre. Each new one that is built detracts from the saving of one of our historic buildings.

"There are people today amassing stupendous fortunes by systematically destroying our historic centres"

Architectural writer
James Lees-Milne, 1964.
[still relevant today !]

What will the future hold if we do not save and re-use our heritage now? In ten or twenty years time these buildings may well be beyond repair (economic or otherwise) - what then?

In further support of our proposals it must be noted that of all the city centre apartments built (new build and conversion) it is the smaller converted historic buildings that people enjoy living in, not the new "concrete and glass" towers. Have we not learnt from the mistake of the 60's and 70's when the Councils of the day destroyed communities and erected the tower blocks which are now such a blot on the landscape and where nobody would choose to live.

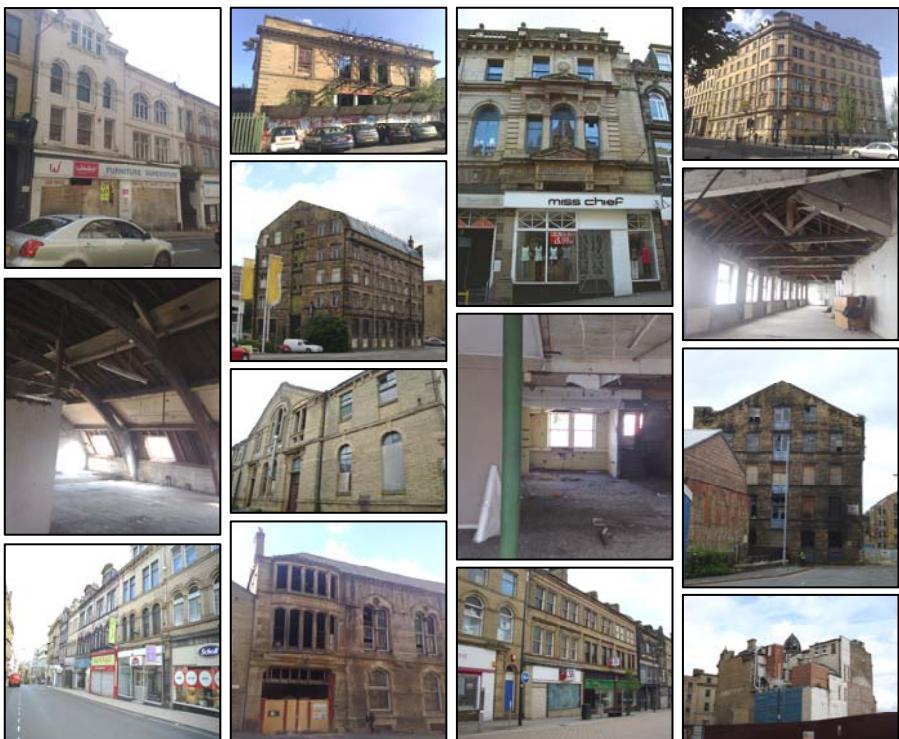
The buildings are there, many of them under-used or even standing empty. Plenty of other cities would give anything to possess some of them. Put to new uses they could be the means of reinventing Bradford as a vibrant and go-ahead city, especially if the transport infrastructure can be revamped. The doom-mongers' cry is often heard, "But we

cannot compete with places like Leeds," to which our reply should be that Bradford doesn't necessarily need to - it is its own place, a unique city with an impressive history and heritage. All it really lacks today is a sufficient amount of that spirit of optimistic adventure and brash self-confidence which originally made it envied throughout the world.

PROPOSAL 14:

INSTIGATE A NEW PROGRAMME TO MARKET AND FUND THE RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN THE CITY CENTRE.

Just a few examples of buildings in and around Bradford city centre that need attention! There are many more..... Why are we not concentrating on their restoration and re-use?



8. THE NEXT STEP

It seems clear that there is a need to re-appraise the current plans for the regeneration of Bradford, as it is evident that many of them have not worked, come to fruition or are simply un-wanted. Furthermore, many of the currently proposed plans may not even produce the physical and economic regeneration that Bradford needs and therefore to continue with them would be pointless and wasteful.

Bradford Civic Society believes that the proposals outlined in this document, once worked-up to an executable level and acted upon, will provide the necessary means to regenerate Bradford in a way befitting the city and in line with the desires and aspirations of the people of Bradford. We feel that they will produce better and more sustainable physical and economic benefits for the city and district.

In the past, Bradford's civic leaders led the way in developing a vibrant, economically sound, world renowned city, and were an inspiration to other cities and a model for them to follow; this could happen again.

We, the members of Bradford Civic Society, therefore hope that Bradford Council and others responsible for regenerating our city, having read this document and studied our proposals, will accept an invitation to work in a spirit of partnership with the Society (and with all others who have the future prosperity of Bradford at heart) in order to promote, oversee and help with the regeneration of Bradford.

We therefore recommend these proposals to the citizens of Bradford and look forward to living in a city that is prosperous and aesthetically beautiful once again.

9. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Proposal	Partners
1. Preserve the Odeon building and refurbish it as a world-class concert and conference venue, as per BORG's plan.	YF / BMDC / BORG
2. Develop the "Westfield Site" as an open Piazza with gardens and develop a smaller retail centre to accommodate mainly new-to-Bradford retailers.	Westfield / BMDC
3. Develop the Goitside area along the lines of Little Germany and re-open the Goit to act as a catalyst to further regeneration.	BMDC / GDT / Private Sector
4. Develop an "Historic Quarter" in Sackville Street/James Street to regenerate the area and to act as a link with the city centre.	BMDC / Private Sector
5. Re-route the Inner Ring Road to improve the city's transport infrastructure thus including the Goitside area as part of a consolidated, larger city centre.	BMDC / HA
6. Re-open the Bradford Canal, but with an alternative plan to that published by the Council.	BMDC / BW / Private Sector
7. Carry out a new feasibility study for the construction of a CrossRail link between the Interchange and Forster Square stations and consider relevant land assembly.	BMDC / NR / DfT / DTI / Rail Operators Private Sector
8. Instigate a new programme to install traditional shop fronts in the historic buildings of the city centre.	BMDC / BCS / Private Sector
9. Promote the improvement of the exterior facades of some buildings to achieve a more harmonious overall effect throughout the city centre.	BMDC / BCS / Private Sector
10. Promote high standards of quality and uniformity to paving and pedestrian areas in the city centre.	BMDC / BCS
11. Promote high standards of quality and uniformity with regard to street furniture in the city centre.	BMDC / BCS
12. Promote better safety and personal security in the city centre.	BMDC / WYP
13. Promote better zoning in the city centre, so that residential areas do not suffer noise pollution from entertainment venues.	BMDC / BCS / Private Sector
14. Instigate a new programme to market and fund the restoration and conversion of the historic buildings in the city centre.	BMDC / YF / Private Sector

Time Scales		Funding
Feasibility/Planning	Implementation	
Starting 2009	1 – 3 Years	YF / BMDC / BORG / other funding
Starting 2009	1 – 3 Years	Westfield / BMDC
Starting 2009	1 – 5 Years	BMDC / GDT / Private Sector / other funding
Starting 2009	1 – 3 Years	BMDC / Private Sector
Starting 2009	3 – 6 Years	BMDC / HA
Starting 2009	3 – 8 Years	BMDC / BW / Private Sector
Starting 2009	1 – 7 Years	BMDC / NR / DfT / DTI / Rail Operators / Private Sector
Starting 2009	1 – 4 Years	BMDC / Private Sector
Starting 2009	1 – 7 Years	BMDC / Private Sector
Starting 2009	1 – 3 Years	BMDC / other funding
Starting 2009	1 – 3 Years	BMDC / other funding
Starting 2009	1 – 3 Years	BMDC / WYP
Starting 2009	1 – 2 Years	BMDC / Private Sector
Starting 2009	1 – 5 Years	BMDC / YF / Private Sector / other funding

NOTES.....



"Common Sense" REGENERATION

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