



Moseley Road Baths Transformational Masterplan Moves 'Forward'

Coalition of the willing get underway with major capital works costing £657,000

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The project to transform Moseley Road Baths and Balsall Heath Library has entered a new phase, transitioning from a bold idea to the reality of major building conservation work.

Moseley Road Baths is one of the oldest of six Grade II* Listed swimming baths currently operating in the United Kingdom, and the only one outside London still open for swimming to the general public. The Baths were included on the **2016 World Monuments Watch** to call attention to the planned closure. In response, over the last four years a 'coalition of the willing' has developed a £32.7m masterplan to restore and reimagine the magnificent Grade II* Baths and Library at the heart of the Balsall Heath community.¹ The regeneration of both buildings will unite and transform these historic masterpieces into a heritage-led wellbeing, leisure and cultural destination run with and for local people, and open to the world.

Over the next two and a half years capital work focuses on arresting further decay and safeguarding the project and investment to date. As part of this first stage of major capital work, World Monuments Fund (WMF) is supporting the restoration of the façade with a £125,000 grant. Alongside £223,000 from Historic England for the restoration of the Manager's Flat and Boardroom and £309,000 from Birmingham City Council to supplement both grants.

Executive Director of WMF Britain, John Darlington, said: *"from the temples of Angkor Wat to the terraces of Machu Picchu, World Monuments Fund works across the globe, so Moseley Road Baths is in good company. We love that it combines a stunning building which is part of Birmingham's historic fabric with sport, health and wellbeing, that it is rooted in the Balsall Heath community, run by a strong local team and supported by a coalition of partners. We are also inspired by the ambition to make this the 'best local baths in the world'. The work to restore the façade of the Baths is an important step on the path to achieving that ambition, and we at WMF are delighted to play a role in making it happen."*

Historic England's Regional Director Midlands, Louise Brennan, said: *"Moseley Road Baths has been a key Heritage at Risk project for us for some time now and we're so keen to see this special building's future secured. We have provided many years of technical advice and expertise, project support and several grants to ensure this and we're delighted that the site's renaissance is gaining momentum."*

Birmingham City Council's Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Dave Wagg, said: *"It's great news that the capital works have started. It's vital the future of this amazing building can be secured but as we've always said, the project has always been about so much more than the building though; it supports Balsall Heath community with people at its heart."*

¹ The World Monuments Watch is a bi-annual global programme that seeks to discover, spotlight, and take action on behalf of heritage places facing challenges or presenting opportunities of direct relevance to our global society. Since 1996, the programme has issued a call to action for over 800 sites and worked with their communities to make a difference.

The façade work focuses on conservation to the brickwork and decorative terracotta elements, such as the City of Birmingham coat of arms situated over the Women's entrance. The original design granted to the city by the College of Arms in 1889, it contains the city's motto: '*Forward*'. A succinct definition of the coalition's approach to this current phase of the project, mobilised by the recent receipt of a £15.5m Levelling Up Fund grant. The major capital investment has been designed to unlock interior spaces throughout the Baths and Library, with potential future uses in mind. The restoration of the Flat will ensure the flexible space can be used for programming, and a range of other repairs and adaptation will bring other spaces back into productive use.

The Baths have been continuously open to the public for 115 years. Currently operated by the Moseley Road Baths CIO, leisure activities will continue throughout the capital works. Indeed, the coalition's approach to the project is reflective of the Bath's spirit of place, and ensures the community-focused and collaborative-working ethos present in programming and daily operations, is also woven into the historic fabric of the building.

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World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund (WMF) is the leading independent organisation devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places to enrich people's lives and build mutual understanding across cultures and communities. The organisation is headquartered in New York City with offices and affiliates in Cambodia, India, Peru, Portugal, Spain, and the UK. Since 1965, our global team of experts has preserved the world's diverse cultural heritage using the highest international standards at more than 700 sites in 112 countries. Partnering with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF draws on heritage to address some of today's most pressing challenges: climate change, underrepresentation, imbalanced tourism, and post-crisis recovery. With a commitment to the people who bring places to life, WMF embraces the potential of the past to create a more resilient and inclusive society.

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