

Moseley Road Baths Completed Capital Works Make a Splash

Latest Major Capital Works Unlock New Spaces for Community Use

New York, NY, November 16, 2022 – At the beginning of this year the project to transform Moseley Road Baths and Balsall Heath Library entered a new phase. The recently completed latest stage of capital work has restored the façade and ‘Manager’s Flat’ and Boardroom, unlocking these interior spaces for future uses and giving swimmers and the city an exciting glimpse of what is to come.

The work was supported by £125,000 from World Monuments Fund (WMF) for the restoration of the façade, alongside £223,000 from Historic England (HE) for the restoration of the Manager’s Flat and Boardroom, and £309,000 from Birmingham City Council (BCC) to supplement both grants.

Executive Director of WMF Britain, John Darlington, said: *“Over the last few years we have seen the Baths go from a place that was to be shut down to become an ambitious concept where heritage and health combine to regenerate Balsall Heath. Now that concept is becoming a reality, we at WMF are proud to be part of a unique coalition of local, national and international organisations helping to make it happen.”*

Deborah Williams, Head of Midlands Region at Historic England said: *“We are delighted that the work to transform the Boardroom and Manager’s flat, within Moseley Road Baths, from a derelict state to beautiful, clean and useful spaces is now complete. We are excited about the planned future uses for the community and proud to have played a key role in the renaissance of this part of the building.”*

Cllr Mariam Khan, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care said: *“The ongoing transformation of the Baths is amazing and just shows what can happen with a strong partnership, working together for the benefit of the community. I’m so proud of the work everyone has done to breathe new life into this amazing building - a community asset, open to everyone.”*

This phase of major capital work was designed to unlock interior spaces in the Baths and Library, with potential future uses in mind. The restoration of the Flat ensures a flexible space that can be used for programming and to accommodate community groups who already use the Baths for a range of activities. The completed work was unveiled to the public during Birmingham Heritage Week on Saturday 17th September 2022, with project architects Donald Insall Associates leading interior tours to showcase the newly refurbished spaces. The rooms provide a number of possibilities for groups who currently feature as part of the engagement programme at the Baths. Among these are *Yoga For All*, a rejuvenating and relaxing easy to follow yoga class; *Chat and Splash*, a group for women wanting to learn English and enjoy a free swim afterwards and *Mindfulness & Stress Reduction*, a 12-week workshop series currently held in MRB’s Edwardian Changing Rooms, which includes a different theme each week under the topic of mindfulness and stress reduction. The new rooms will offer groups a warm and bright welcome as well as the flexibility to incorporate private, breakout spaces into their activities.

Donald Insall Associates said: *“Moseley Road Baths is a wonderful building, of great significance in our local community, and it has been a great pleasure to work on this project and see these spaces brought back into use. Working with Mann Williams, PDQS and Chroma Conservation, we are delighted with the outcome and congratulate the contractor Quadriga on the finish of the rooms and repairs to the roof and façade. Leading tours of the spaces for the public, their reaction was extremely positive.”*

Lucy Reid, Chair of Moseley Road Baths CIO (who operate the Baths) said: *“Seeing the façade after the scaffolding came down, and these interior spaces for the first time after the work had been completed was an emotional moment for many of us – these rooms were previously in an advanced state of dereliction, with huge holes in the roof, windows falling in and dead pigeons on the floor. They are totally transformed and are a brilliant statement of intent for the future. We can’t wait to see them in use. It’s an exciting time to be part of the Moseley Road Baths journey.”*

The project team are now working up the next major phase of work in the masterplan to transform the Baths and Library, funded by the Levelling Up Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Birmingham City Council. Moseley Road Baths CIO are responsible for operations and programming. The spaces can be hired for community use, if

you are interested in finding out more contact keepswimming@moseleyroadbaths.org.uk or visit their website for more information <https://moseleyroadbaths.org.uk/>.

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Moseley Road Baths Background

Moseley Road Baths is one of the oldest of six Grade II* Listed swimming baths currently operating in the United Kingdom. For many years, the Baths were under threat of closure. Faced with the potential loss of a cherished community facility, local people campaigned to keep their pool open. So significant are the Baths that the Friends of Moseley Road Baths secured the interest of the World Monuments Fund, who included the Baths on the **2016 World Monuments Watch** to call attention to the planned closure. They also feature on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. In 2016 a group of organisations came together to form a 'coalition of the willing', led by the National Trust, to work alongside Birmingham City Council (who owns the building) to reimagine a new future for the Baths with swimming at its heart. Working together, the coalition has developed a £32.7m masterplan to restore the magnificent Grade II* Baths and Library at the heart of the Balsall Heath community. 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. Since late 2017, the Baths have been operated by Moseley Road Baths CIO. The coalition comprises Moseley Road Baths CIO, the Friends of Moseley Road Baths, Birmingham City Council, Historic England and the World Monuments Fund. Working together, the 'coalition' has contributed over £3m of time, expertise and funding. In 2021 the coalition announced it had successfully bid for £15.6m funding from the government's Levelling Up Fund, and also received £0.477m in a Stage 1 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

About the coalition partners:

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.

www.wmf.org

Historic England

Historic England is the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment, from beaches and battlefields to parks and pie shops. We protect, champion and save the places that define who we are where we've come from as a nation. We care passionately about the stories they tell, the ideas they represent and the people who live, work and play among them. Working with communities and specialists we share our passion, knowledge and skills to inspire interest, care and conservation, so everyone can keep enjoying and looking after the history that surrounds us all.

www.historicengland.org.uk

Birmingham City Council

Birmingham City Council delivers more than 700 services to a population in excess of 1.1 million citizens. The council has an annual budget of £3.1 billion and employs just under 9,000 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) members of staff. The council owns the Moseley Road Baths and continues to support the coalition to keep swimming open for everyone.

www.birmingham.gov.uk

Moseley Road Baths CIO

Moseley Road Baths Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was set up at the end of 2017 with the aim of ensuring that the people of Balsall Heath can continue to enjoy fitness and wellbeing activity and swimming lessons that would otherwise be unavailable to them because of the cost or need to travel.

The CIO took over the day to day running of swimming at Moseley Road Baths at the beginning of April 2018 on a business-like but not-for-profit basis. Trustees are members of the local community and regular swimmers at the pool and many have been involved for some years in the campaign to save this Grade II* historic baths.

www.moseleyroadbaths.org.uk

Friends of Moseley Road Baths

The Friends of Moseley Road Baths was formed in 2006, following a long running campaign to stop the closure and deterioration of the building and to make plans for its Centenary year. The Friends are a group of local residents, swimmers and those interested in the heritage of the building with the aim to conserve and promote Moseley Road Baths as a public facility, lobbying for public swimming to remain at Moseley Road Baths, restoring the Slipper Baths and other architectural and historic features and developing ideas to bring currently unused areas of the building to use. Through lobbying, media campaigns and celebrating the history of the building through the 'Pool of Memories' project and book, the group have kept the building in the spotlight both locally and nationally. They are now an active partner in a coalition of organisations safeguarding the future of the Baths.

www.friendsofmrba.co.uk/

The National Trust

The National Trust is a conservation charity founded in 1895 by three people who saw the importance of our nation's heritage and open spaces and wanted to preserve them for everyone to enjoy. More than 120 years later, these values are still at the heart of everything we do. Entirely independent of Government, the National Trust looks after more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 778 miles of coastline and hundreds of special places across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Almost 27 million people visit every year, and together with more than 5.6 million members and over 65,000 volunteers, who help to support the charity in its work to care for special places for everyone, for ever.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Donald Insall Associates

Donald Insall Associates is a leading UK-based architectural practice and historic buildings consultancy with over 60 years' experience managing change in the historic environment. It has won more than 200 awards for design and craftsmanship, including 15 Europa Nostra Awards. The practice is 100% employee-owned, with a team of 120 working from nine offices to care for and repair historic buildings while using conservation as a catalyst for regeneration and new opportunities in sensitive settings. They have been entrusted with some of the UK's most important buildings, leading on the post-fire restoration of Windsor Castle and acting as the ongoing building advisors at the Palace of Westminster.

www.donaldinsallassociates.co.uk/

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