

# SUMMARY DESIGN STATEMENT

HIGH STREET PROJECT, BURTON UPON TRENT

# 1 | Introduction

This Design Statement outlines the comprehensive redevelopment proposal for the Burton High Street Project, centred on the historic Bass Brewery site in Burton upon Trent. The development aims to revitalise this significant heritage location, creating a vibrant, mixed-use destination that celebrates Burton's brewing legacy whilst providing new amenities and public spaces for the community. The site's transformation represents a crucial part of Burton's broader urban regeneration strategy, complementing ongoing initiatives including the Washlands revitalisation and improvements to surrounding civic buildings.

The key components of the proposed development include: the refurbishment of Bass House into a brewing heritage experience centre with exhibition spaces and food/beverage facilities, creation of a new multi-function public plaza, conversion of Carling House into a branded hotel, development of a new Washlands Visitor Centre, integration of enhanced landscape features connecting the town centre to the Washlands, and adaptation of the iconic Water Tower to accommodate a visitor experience and viewing platform. This collection of interventions aims to sensitively adapt and repurpose key heritage assets whilst introducing new elements that complement the site's historic character and create a cohesive, accessible public realm.



**Above:**  
Historic Photo of the Meadowside Bass Brewery & water Tower



**Above:**  
Indicative visualisation of the Proposed Development

**Below:**  
Indicative visualisation of the Proposed Development



## 2 | Context & History

Burton upon Trent's brewing heritage stretches back to the 1200s, when Burton Abbey brewed beer for monks and pilgrims. The unique qualities of Burton's water played a significant role in its brewing success, particularly in the production of pale ale, which became a hallmark of the region. William Bass established his brewery on the High Street site in 1777, and it quickly grew to become one of the largest and most prominent breweries in Burton upon Trent. The brewery complex expanded extensively throughout the 19th century, with significant developments including the iconic Water Tower in 1866, the construction of Bass House in 1878, and various other brewing facilities that supported its operations.

Today, the site contains several Grade II Listed buildings that reflect this rich heritage, including Bass House, the Water Tower, and Town House (built around 1750). The site sits within the Burton No. 2 and 3 Town Centre Conservation Area and occupies a strategic position between the High Street and the Washlands. This location presents a unique opportunity to reconnect the town centre with the River Trent whilst preserving and celebrating the town's brewing heritage. The site's current configuration includes Carling House, a 1980s office building previously serving as Molson Coors' headquarters, and Trent House, a vacant modern office building earmarked for demolition to create new public space.

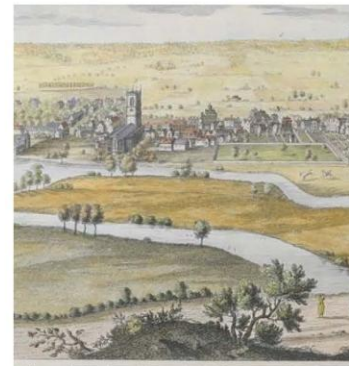
- ① Town House
- ② Bass House
- ③ The Water Tower
- ④ Car Park
- ⑤ Trent House
- ⑥ Carling House
- ⑦ Meadowside Leisure Centre
- ⑧ Washlands
- ⑨ Library



**Above:**  
Existing Site Aerial



**Above:**  
Contemporary photo of Bass Brewery Water Tower



**Right:**  
Historic images / photos of the site and context

# 3 | Design Development & Public Consultation

The design development process began with extensive analysis of the site's constraints and opportunities, establishing key principles for regenerating the High Street and Meadowside area. Initial studies explored the site's potential to create stronger connections between Burton town centre and the Washlands, whilst respecting and enhancing the site's significant brewing heritage. A key early decision was the identification of Trent House as a non-contributing element whose removal could enhance the historic relationship between Bass House and the Water Tower, creating opportunities for new public spaces whilst improving heritage appreciation and site permeability.

Extensive public consultation was undertaken throughout the design process, including guided tours of Bass House, a major public forum at Burton Town Hall, and permanent exhibitions at the Brewery Heritage Centre. The scheme was also subject to detailed pre-application discussions with East Staffordshire Borough Council, particularly regarding heritage considerations. Conservation officer feedback led to refinements in several areas, including modifications to the Water Tower additions and more sympathetic canopy designs for Bass House. This iterative consultation process has been fundamental in shaping the final proposals, ensuring they respond appropriately to both heritage considerations and modern functional requirements whilst supporting the broader regeneration objectives for Burton town centre.



Above: Indicative Demolition Plan



Above: Indicative Development Plan at the Pre-App Stage



Above: Landscape Spatial Concept  
Right: Public Consultation Boards



## 4 | Proposed Design - Plaza

Following the demolition of Trent House, the proposed public plaza will serve as a transformative intervention at the heart of the Burton High Street Project. This new civic space is designed to act as a vibrant focal point, seamlessly connecting the town centre, the historic brewery site, and the natural beauty of the Washlands. The plaza's design prioritises improved movement and accessibility, creating intuitive pedestrian routes that link the surrounding areas whilst establishing clear sightlines and pathways that reconnect the wider urban area with the river, enhancing Burton's relationship with its riverside setting.

The plaza incorporates extensive landscaping and tree planting, which play a crucial role in providing shade and visual interest whilst contributing to improved microclimate conditions and biodiversity within the urban environment. The space is designed to accommodate a range of events and activities throughout the year, with integrated utility provisions for markets, performances, and public gatherings. The design utilises the existing historic buildings, particularly Bass House and the Water Tower, as visual anchors, complemented by thoughtful landscaping that balances the open nature of the plaza with more intimate, human-scaled spaces. This new civic heart will serve as a testament to the town's regeneration efforts and provide a valuable amenity for residents and visitors alike.



**Above:**  
Indicative visualisation of the Proposed Development



**Right:**  
Proposed Site Plan



**Left:**  
Indicative visualisation of the Proposed Development



**Below:**  
Indicative visualisation of the Proposed Development

# 5 | Proposed Design - Bass House

Bass House, a Grade II Listed Building completed in 1878, will be transformed into a centre of heritage, history and brewing celebration. The proposal includes carefully considered adaptations to accommodate new uses whilst preserving the building's historic character. The scheme aims to enhance the building's relationship with the new public plaza through a high-quality, sympathetic extension facing the plaza, designed to activate the plaza edge whilst complementing the existing architecture. Internal alterations will create space for exhibitions, flexible learning facilities, an administration base for the national Brewing Heritage Trust archives, an on-site Pilot Brewery, and a food and beverage offering.

The visitor experience, designed by Samer International, will create an immersive cultural attraction that celebrates Burton's brewing and cultural heritage and its significance in global beer production. The experience is carefully structured across multiple zones combining traditional museum elements with contemporary interactive technologies, including a "Magic Waters" introduction highlighting Burton's unique water chemistry, educational zones exploring beer history, and period recreation spaces featuring detailed reconstructions of historic pubs from different eras. The design incorporates multiple interpretive layers using advanced audiovisual installations, interactive displays, and multisensory elements, creating an attraction that would serve as both a significant local landmark and an international visitor destination.



Above: Indicative Ground Floor Plan



Above: Indicative Visuals of Visitor Experience Spaces

Below: Indicative Visuals of Visitor Experience Spaces



Below: Indicative visualisation of the Proposed Development



## 6 | Proposed Design - Carling House

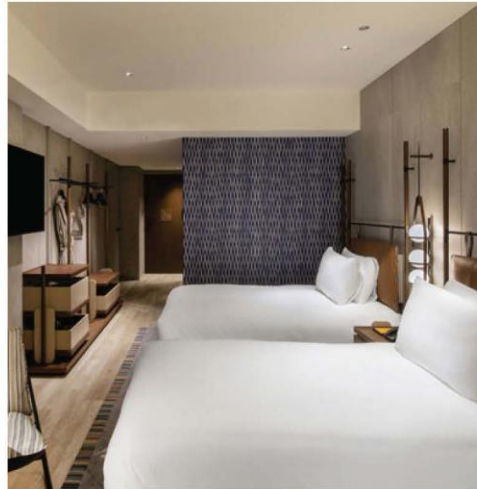
Carling House, a prominent 1970s office building currently serving as Molson Coors' Head Office, is set for transformation into a branded hotel as part of the broader regeneration of the site. The proposed conversion represents a sustainable approach to urban regeneration, making efficient use of the existing building stock whilst adapting it to meet contemporary needs. The building's distinctive angular plan form, originally designed to maximise office space and natural light, presents both opportunities and challenges for hotel conversion, with the linear wings creating natural divisions for bedroom arrangements and the regular structural grid supporting efficient bedroom layouts.

The transformation includes carefully considered external alterations aimed at enhancing the building's kerb appeal and functionality as a hotel. The existing entrance canopy will be removed and replaced with a more appropriate and inviting structure that signals the building's new purpose. The external stair cores will undergo a visual transformation through re-cladding to soften their appearance and better integrate with the overall design aesthetic of the hotel. Internally, the conversion will create around 128 guestrooms in total, including a mix of standard bedrooms (120 keys) and accessible rooms (8 keys), making efficient use of the building's form whilst providing the variety of room types required by modern hotel operators.



**Above:**  
Indicative Ground Floor Plan

**Above:**  
Carling House as Existing



**Above:**  
Typical Guestroom Precedent



**Below:**  
Indicative visualisation of the Proposed Development

# 7 | Proposed Design - Water Tower

The Water Tower, a Grade II Listed Building constructed in 1866, is intended to be regenerated into a prominent visitor attraction as part of the brewery heritage experience. Currently unoccupied, the Water Tower will be revitalised to protect and enhance Burton's brewing heritage through its transformation into a viewing platform, offering visitors panoramic views of the brewery site and the surrounding Washlands. The interior will be repurposed to host exhibits detailing the historical and engineering significance of the Bass Brewery, providing an educational journey through the site's industrial past.

The sensitive integration of new elements includes a ground-level extension using weathering steel cladding that complements the tower's red brick while clearly reading as a modern intervention. At the viewing platform level, the extension takes a more transparent approach, utilising high-performance glazing to create an almost ethereal addition to the tower's summit. A new lift and stair core will ensure accessibility for all visitors, seamlessly blending into the existing framework without detracting from the tower's visual appeal. These additions will collectively ensure the tower's functionality as a visitor attraction while preserving its historical significance as a landmark structure.



**Below:**  
Indicative visualisation of the Proposed Development



**Above:**  
Indicative Plans and Axonometric



## 8 | Proposed Design - Town House

Town House, a Grade II Listed Building built around 1750, played a significant role in Burton's brewing history as William Bass's original town house, purchased in 1777 before he built his brewing facility on adjacent land. While its future use remains flexible, the proposed interventions will be carefully crafted to respect and enhance the building's historical quality. The development approach prioritises the preservation of its architectural integrity while adapting the structure to meet contemporary needs and standards.

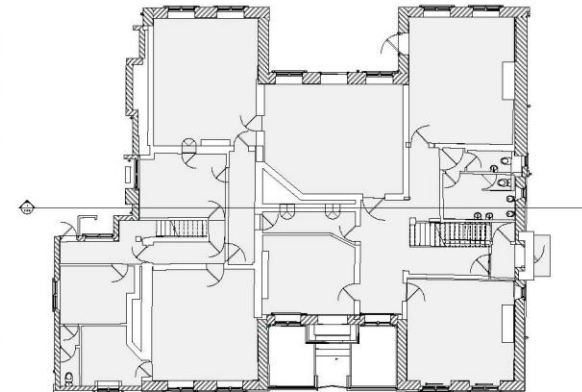
The building's treatment will focus on preserving and restoring original architectural features whilst carefully adapting internal spaces for future use, respecting original layouts. Improvements to accessibility will be made while minimising impact on historic fabric and building services will be upgraded sympathetically. The scheme aims to enhance the building's relationship with surrounding public spaces whilst conducting necessary repairs using appropriate conservation techniques. Any modern interventions required will be subtle and distinguishable from original features, ensuring the building maintains its important place in Burton's architectural heritage.



**Right:**  
Existing Elevation of Town House



**Above:**  
Front Facade & Rear Facade of Town House



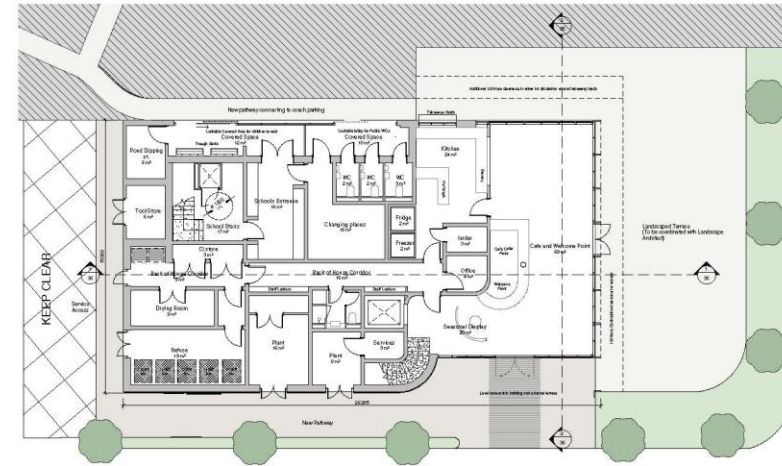
**Above:**  
Existing Plan

# 9 | Proposed Design - Washlands Visitor Centre

The Washlands Visitor Centre, designed by BHB Architects in collaboration with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, will serve as both an educational resource and gateway to the Washlands landscape. The building has been positioned to face onto the new public realm, with the service access facing onto the Washlands. The design incorporates sustainable features including a living green roof, solar PV, and exemplar insulation, aiming to create a self-powered, carbon neutral community asset that complements the wider Washlands Enhancement project.

The centre will provide a café with climate responsibility serving locally-sourced food made on-site, along with two interconnecting classrooms designed to be inspiring, accessible and flexible. The building's material palette responds to its surroundings and use, incorporating timber as a sustainable material that ties the building back to the Washlands, whilst the use of brick, metal and terracotta references the site's industrial heritage. A unique feature of the design includes community-crafted clay tiles on the façade, fostering a sense of local ownership and engagement with the building.

**Below:**  
The Proposed Washlands Visitor Centre - Material and Form



**Above:**  
The Proposed Washlands Visitor Centre - GF Plan

**Below:**  
The Proposed Washlands Visitor Centre - Elevation



**Below:**  
The Proposed Washlands Visitor Centre - Elevation



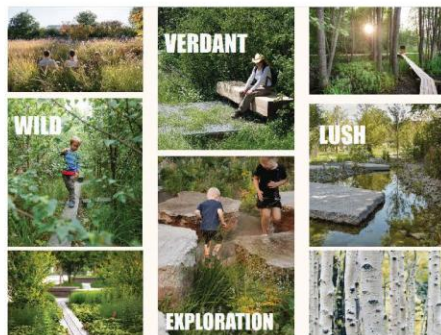
# 10 | Proposed Design - Landscape

LDA Design's landscape proposal creates a coherent network of interconnected spaces that flow naturally between the town centre and the River Trent. The spatial framework is anchored by the central civic space surrounded by a 'necklace' of smaller, more intimate spaces, allowing for both large-scale events and everyday activities. The design carefully transitions from the more formal, urban character near the historic buildings to a naturalistic approach closer to the Washlands, creating a gradient that reflects the site's unique position between town and river.

The design incorporates three distinct but interconnected character areas: The Washlands Gardens, featuring naturalistic wetland planting and woodland areas; Brewery Place - The Meadow, forming the civic heart with interactive water features and flexible event space; and The Brewers Gardens, establishing formal garden spaces around the historic buildings with ornamental planting including hops and barley. The planting strategy creates a rich, biodiverse landscape that celebrates seasonal change and local ecology, whilst the materials palette reflects the site's industrial heritage through the use of natural stone paving, poured concrete, and resin-bound gravel.



**Below:**  
Landscape Design Concept



**Above:**  
Landscape Design Concept Sketch

# 11 | Conclusion

The Burton High Street Project represents a transformative opportunity for Burton upon Trent, creating a world-class destination that celebrates the town's brewing heritage whilst establishing new connections between the High Street and the Washlands. The scheme's careful balance of preservation and innovation will breathe new life into significant heritage assets including Bass House, the Water Tower, and Town House, whilst creating vibrant new spaces for community gathering and cultural activities.

Through thoughtful design interventions and extensive public consultation, the project will deliver multiple benefits for Burton upon Trent: establishing a new visitor attraction celebrating the town's brewing heritage, creating flexible public spaces for events and gatherings, providing new hotel accommodation to support tourism, enhancing biodiversity through careful landscape design, improving connectivity throughout the site, and creating new employment opportunities in hospitality, tourism and cultural sectors. The development represents a significant step forward in Burton's regeneration, creating a sustainable future for these important historic buildings whilst delivering substantial social, economic and environmental benefits for the wider community.

In conclusion, the proposed development has the potential to:

- Preserve and enhance significant brewing heritage assets, including Bass House, the Water Tower, and Town House
- Create a vibrant, mixed-use destination that celebrates Burton's brewing and town legacy
- Establish a new public plaza as a focal point for community gatherings and events
- Improve connectivity between the town centre, site, and washlands
- Introduce new amenities, including a hotel and visitor attractions
- Enhance public access to and appreciation of historic brewery buildings
- Provide flexible spaces for a range of cultural and community events throughout the year
- Improve the urban landscape through thoughtful design and enhanced green spaces
- Support local tourism by creating new attractions and accommodation options
- Contribute to the wider regeneration efforts in Burton upon Trent
- Promote sustainable development through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings
- Improve accessibility and movement throughout the site for pedestrians
- Create new employment opportunities in hospitality, tourism, and cultural sectors
- Enhance biodiversity and improve the site's environmental performance
- Provide educational opportunities through the brewery, social and heritage experiences



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