

OXFORD WEST END REGENERATION NEWSLETTER

About Oxford's West End Regeneration



Oxford's West End renaissance is an exciting long-term regeneration project set to transform a currently under-used area of Oxford into a

vibrant, modern and stylish city quarter. Stretching from the railway station at its north-west corner to Folly Bridge in the south-east, the West End encompasses an area rich in hidden assets and represents a wonderful opportunity for the development of a new civic and cultural quarter. The award-winning Oxford Castle and Bonn Square transformations have already set the tone for the wider regeneration of the area. Future development will be designed to a high standard, will take the area's rich heritage into consideration, and will have social and environmental sustainability at its heart. For more information, visit www.oxfordwestend.co.uk.

Modern Art Oxford Redesign

Modern Art Oxford, in the heart of Oxford's West End, has undergone a £250,000 facelift. Work began in early March to create a new entrance on St. Ebbe's Street. In a contemporary take on the 19th century arcade concept, the ambitious scheme saw the interior yard transformed into a flexible social and creative space, bringing "the street into the gallery and the gallery into the street" and reinforcing MAO's role as a hub for contemporary culture in Oxford. The gallery reopened on April 16th with an exciting programme of events, including a new outdoor café and late night opening. View exhibition highlights at www.modernartoxford.org.uk.

Story Museum Finds Home in Oxford's West End

Rochester House, a Victorian building on Pembroke Street, is set to become the new home of the Story Museum. The museum has existed online for the past four years, holding events across Oxfordshire and running storytelling programmes in schools, however a £2.5m donation from an anonymous private benefactor means it can now take the first steps toward establishing a permanent home in the West End. The museum's team is currently conducting a publicity campaign to raise the £11m it needs to create the facility, which aims to attract 100,000 visitors a year when it opens in 2014.



Progress on the Old Fire Station

Oxford City Council and Crisis are working together to redevelop the Old Fire Station on George Street. At its heart will be a new Crisis Skylight centre and social enterprise café operating alongside high quality creative arts spaces. The project received planning permission in February and, following a tender process, the OFS team appointed the contractor ROK, which aims to be on site in July 2010 with a view to opening in summer 2011. A new arts company with charitable status will be set up to manage the arts function while Crisis will run the Skylight programme.



Fisher Row Pocket Park Enhancements

Work is in progress on a series of enhancements to Fisher Row Pocket Park. The aim is to develop the Castle Mill Stream walkway as a safe and attractive route between central north and south Oxford whilst recognising its role as a vital ecological link. The project is part of the West End Partnership's programme of improvements to public spaces along the central waterside corridor, which saw Hythe Bridge Pocket Park to the north and Lower Fisher Row Gardens to the south undergo similar upgrades. Proposed improvements include replacing the footway surface, upgrading the street lighting and furniture, improving access and renovating the stonework on the bridge. It's hoped the completion of the work this summer will encourage people to use this peaceful oasis whilst allowing it to continue its function as a key wildlife corridor.

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Westgate – What’s New?

In an exciting development for Oxford’s Westgate Centre, The Crown Estate, the UK’s largest commercial landowner, announced in February that it had exchanged contracts for the purchase of the Westgate Shopping Centre with former owner Capital Shopping Centres. An application is pending with Oxford City Council to renew planning permission for the redevelopment of the centre, paving the way for a new retail and leisure facility in the heart of Oxford’s West End. No plans or timescales have yet been released however a redeveloped facility may include a John Lewis department store.

Frideswide Square and Railway Station Update



Enhancements to Frideswide Square and the railway station are a core element of Oxford’s West End regeneration. The first phase comprises a new platform on part of the Becket Street car park site and a walkway connecting it to the existing station, to be completed in 2012 subject to planning approval and funding. To fulfil the civic and transport functions for the area, we believe major improvements to the adjacent Frideswide Square are also necessary. The Frideswide Square project will focus on transforming the square to create an attractive and welcoming “gateway” to Oxford, whilst simplifying the traffic layout to allow road users to move through the space safely and efficiently. For further information, including detail of forthcoming public consultations, visit www.oxfordwestend.co.uk.

Volunteer for the West End Historic Context Study!



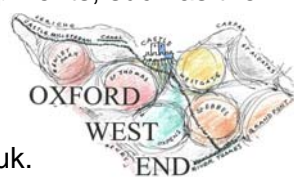
Volunteers are sought for a historic area study of Oxford’s West End, a joint initiative of the City Council and Oxford Preservation Trust. The aim of the study is to identify heritage assets within Oxford’s West End and to assess their value to the local community. We want to find out what you cherish, feel is significant, dislike, or just put up with, and what aspirations you have for the area. The information and evidence gathered from this process will be invaluable for future decision-making in this important and distinctive quarter of Oxford.

Under the guidance of the project co-ordinator, Dan Clarkson, participants will be allocated a series of streets within the West End and provided with a toolkit containing instructions on ‘surveying’ the area and providing feedback on their perceptions of it. On completion of the project, the findings will be consolidated into a working document that will inform how the heritage of the area is managed going forward. For more information, or to take part in this fascinating project, email dclarkson@oxford.gov.uk.



Oxford West End Community Group – Join Today!

The West End Community Group meets on a regular basis to discuss topics affecting Oxford’s West End, providing a forum for the local community to exchange their views and take an active role in planning the future of the area. All are welcome! Areas of interest range from local heritage assets, community events and public consultation opportunities to proposed developments, such as the railway station/Frideswide Square. The next meeting will take place in October at Oxford and Cherwell Valley College. Details will be posted on the ‘Community Involvement’ page of the West End site: www.oxfordwestend.co.uk.



What’s On ‘Go Live’

From community markets to ice skating to modern art, Oxford’s West End is arguably home to the best in arts and entertainment the city has to offer. A new ‘What’s On’ section of our website reflects this, providing links to local venues and details of events and attractions, to be updated on a weekly basis. To see for yourself visit www.oxfordwestend.co.uk/PageRender/oxfordwestend/Events.htm.