

Gloucester City Council

# Monuments Review Implementation

Progress Report to January 2023

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## Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
Project Background.....	2
2. Monuments Review Recommendations .....	4
General Recommendations .....	4
Specific Recommendations .....	5
3. Methodology and timescale .....	6
4. Progress to date .....	7
General Recommendations:.....	7
Specific Recommendations: .....	10
5. Conclusions, suggestions and project risks .....	17

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is a report seeking to outline the progress made by the City Council on the implementation of the recommendations of the Gloucester City Monuments Review.

## Project Background

- 1.2. On Thursday 9th July 2020 the following motion was passed at a meeting of the Council:

*'Council is appalled by and condemns the recent killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA.*

*Council recognises and supports the 'Black Lives Matter' efforts to raise awareness of racial inequality and institutionalised racism within the United Kingdom, however deplores any violence and damage in the name of the campaign.*

*Council notes that black people in the United Kingdom are:*

- 8 x more likely to be stopped as part of 'stop and search laws' than white people*
- More likely to be in low paid jobs or unemployed*
- More likely to live in poor housing conditions*
- Less likely to have good educational opportunities*
- More likely to die from the COVID-19 pandemic*

*Council recognises that whilst we have generally good community relations in the City, and these are reinforced by our cross party equalities working group we remain committed to tackling racial discrimination and working with our BAME community to address issues of racial discrimination.*

*Council resolves to:*

- Write to the American Ambassador on behalf of the City setting out our deep concerns and condemnation at the killing of George Floyd.*
- Set up a Commission with partner organisations in the City including the Police & Crime Commissioner, County Council, NHS, the Civic Trust and representatives of BAME community to review race relations in Gloucester with a view to producing recommendations to improve the lives of and enhance opportunities for BAME communities within the City.*
- Undertake a review of all monuments, statues and plaques including Bakers Quay within the City connected with the slave trade/ plantation ownership and for Cabinet and Scrutiny to consider its recommendations, taking advice from the Commission, and further resolves to review the way in which the contribution of minority communities is presented as part of the City's history, including at the Museum of Gloucester.'*

- 1.3. The first two of the above bullet points are addressed elsewhere and further information can be found on the City Council's website at <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/about-the-council/equality-and-cohesion/gloucester-city-commission-to-review-race-relations/>.
- 1.4. The third bullet point required a review of all monuments, statues and plaques within the City connected with the Trans-Atlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans. This review was undertaken over the course of late 2020 and 2021. This report is available here: <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/5784/os-committee.pdf>.
- 1.5. The review report was submitted to the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 31st January 2022. That committee recommended that an update on any progress on the recommendations be submitted in 12 months' time (further details available here: <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/5875/minutes.pdf>). This report has been produced in response to that recommendation.

## 2. Monuments Review Recommendations

- 2.1. Listed below are a summary of the recommendations made in the main report of the Gloucester City Monuments Review. These recommendations have been produced in consultation with the Gloucester City Commission to Review Race Relations. There are two sets of recommendations. These are 'General Recommendations' which are concerned with council or city-wide issues and 'Specific Recommendations' pertaining to a particular heritage asset.

### General Recommendations

- 2.2. These are discussed in more detail in section 7 of the main review report.

1. Where changes to the management or presentation of a heritage asset are being considered a programme of public consultation or engagement should be undertaken. This process should be transparent and inclusive.
2. The council should consider undertaking a broader review of Gloucester's colonial or imperial legacies and links.
3. The council should pursue education or interpretation projects at a city-wide level to improve public understanding of this topic. The council should work in partnership with appropriate stakeholders to develop specific educational resources that can be used locally. This will require a budget for implementation.
4. The Museum of Gloucester should create a permanent display sharing the history of the City and of the objects connected to the Transatlantic Slave Trade from 2023, with a temporary display undertaken sooner.
5. The council should seek imaginative options to address the City's contested history in a way that both challenges and educates. This could include interpretation panels, new monuments or public art. Opportunities should also be sought to celebrate the city's multicultural community.
6. The council should in future consider the background of new street names and monuments to avoid inadvertently commemorating or memorialising a link to the slavery economy. When considering new street names, the council should look for opportunities to celebrate Gloucester's multicultural history.
7. The council should encourage the Cathedral authorities to proactively identify contested heritage assets (especially celebratory monuments) within the Cathedral, and having done so, to explain, acknowledge or interpret those assets in accordance with the new national framework.
8. The council should welcome and support the plans of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum to both better discuss and educate with regard to historic slavery, and to promote the historic role of Black and ethnic minority soldiers in the Gloucestershire regiments.

9. The council should welcome and support the ongoing work of the Civic Trust to promote and protect the city's heritage. The council should engage with the trust to help develop a more balanced presentation of the city's history (for example online, on blue plaques and in guided tours etc) which includes consideration of any links to the slavery economy when appropriate.

## Specific Recommendations

2.3. These are discussed in more detail in section 9 of the main review report:

**Baker's Quay:** The council should engage with the owners of Baker's Quay to discuss options for the 'repurposing' of that public space in a way that educates, commemorates and acknowledges Gloucester's historic links to the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

**Phillpotts Warehouse:** The council should seek to contextualise the history of Phillpotts warehouse using interpretation.

**United Reformed Church:** The council should consult with the owners and/or users of this building to consider realistic options for interpretation and contextualization of the George Whitefield memorial.

**Blue Plaque on St Mary De Crypt School Room:** The council should encourage the Civic Trust to contextualise this plaque to reflect George Whitefield's connections with the transatlantic slavery economy.

**Memorial in St Mary De Crypt:** The council should engage with Discover de Crypt to produce educational resources and on-site displays that provide a full context to George Whitefield's life and works.

**Whitefield Street names:** The council should consult with residents on the renaming of the two identified Whitefield Street names.

**Whitefield House:** The council should approach the owners to discuss renaming this building.

### 3. Methodology and timescale

- 3.1. The recommendations of the Monuments Review are being implemented by City Council Officers with support from stakeholders and partners. The work is being co-ordinated by the City Council Archaeologist and managed by the Head of Culture.
- 3.2. A three year timescale has been agreed for the implementation of the recommendations. This report is being submitted at the end of the first year.

## 4. Progress to date

- 4.1. This section outlines the progress made to date (November 2022) on the implementation of each of the Monument Review Recommendations, these are listed in the same order as shown in section 2.

### General Recommendations:

*1. Where changes to the management or presentation of a heritage asset are being considered a programme of public consultation or engagement should be undertaken. This process should be transparent and inclusive.*

- 4.2. This is a 'behavioural' action – which is intended to be adopted going forward. The Heritage Team are aware of this general recommendation and will action it as needed. For an example see the discussion of the blue plaque on St Mary de Crypt School Room in the specific recommendations section below.

*2. The council should consider undertaking a broader review of Gloucester's colonial or imperial legacies and links.*

- 4.3. Currently two other institutions in the city are reviewing this topic for themselves. At the end of this project's three-year period it is recommended to review if the council should do the same.

*3. The council should pursue education or interpretation projects at a city-wide level to improve public understanding of this topic. The council should work in partnership with appropriate stakeholders to develop specific educational resources that can be used locally. This will require a budget for implementation.*

- 4.4. The Council Archaeologist is working in partnership with Dr Christian O'Connell, (the Academic Course Leader in History, University of Gloucestershire) to commission a consultation exercise for this project. The idea being to consult with appropriate stakeholders (presumably including teachers, museums, the Civic Trust, community representatives, Historic England etc) about the scope, approach and subject matter of any education or interpretation project.

- 4.5. The University of Gloucestershire (UoG) have been in discussions with specialists who have undertaken similar projects in the past and who have a track record in approaching difficult history in a way that promotes empathy and goodwill rather than division. They should receive costs for the consultation soon. Assuming these are acceptable we would hope to undertake the consultation in late 2023. The University of Gloucestershire may be in a position to fund this consultation element.

- 4.6. The aspiration, going forward, is to use the results of the consultation to form the basis of a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) application (or similar) to actually produce the education or interpretation resource, which we would envisage doing in year three of the project (2024).



*4. The Museum of Gloucester should create a permanent display sharing the history of the City and of the objects connected to the Transatlantic Slave Trade from 2023, with a temporary display undertaken sooner.*

- 4.7. The Council Archaeologist, the Museum Collections Officer, the Museum Project Officer and the Engagement Officer are currently working on creating a temporary display in the community gallery of the Museum of Gloucester.
- 4.8. The topic would be George Whitfield (for more information see section 9 of the Monuments Review report). The Museum has a number of artefacts relevant to Whitfield, and these can be combined with a discussion of various places in the city (where he was born, where he preached etc). The aspiration currently is to create a general history of Whitfield's life that does mention his various achievements and charitable works but that also integrates his support for the legalisation of slavery and his exploitation of enslaved labour. This is a topic that requires sensitivity and consultation but the aim would be to have an exhibition in place by the middle of 2023.
- 4.9. **Please note:** this is later than outlined in the recommendation. This is largely due to the unexpected discovery of asbestos in the Museum in early 2022 which has required a great deal of work to address. Also, the IT incident has meant that the Museum has not had access to its collections database - which is rather fundamental.

*5. The council should seek imaginative options to address the City's contested history in a way that both challenges and educates. This could include interpretation panels, new monuments or public art. Opportunities should also be sought to celebrate the city's multicultural community.*

- 4.10. Again, this is a 'behavioural' action and is in some respects feeds in to all the other recommendations. The Council Archaeologist has outlined the project recommendations to the Culture Trust and various departments within the City Council to aid awareness of this.

*6. The council should in future consider the background of new street names and monuments to avoid inadvertently commemorating or memorialising a link to the slavery economy. When considering new street names, the council should look for opportunities to celebrate Gloucester's multicultural history.*

- 4.11. The Council Archaeologist and the Business Support System Officer responsible for street naming and numbering (sometimes called the Address Custodian) liaise on a regular basis with regard to new street names in the city and this issue is now one that comes under consideration. The Address Custodian is currently reviewing whether the Street Naming policy needs to be updated to take this into account. Since this recommendation was approved there have been a number of consultations with regard to this issue, including at least one from a councillor, so it is being implemented.

*7. The council should encourage the Cathedral authorities to proactively identify contested heritage assets (especially celebratory monuments) within the Cathedral,*

*and having done so, to explain, acknowledge or interpret those assets in accordance with the new national framework.*

- 4.12. Rather than focus solely on the transatlantic slavery economy the Cathedral have made the decision to review all the contested heritage within the building as part of the same project. They currently envisage doing this as a strand in a forthcoming NLHF project. As a first step they plan to constitute a Contested History Steering Group to advise the Cathedral how to respond to each issue as it arises. The Steering Group will need to be made up of a wide cross section of society, so that advice will be given to the Cathedral by those who have lived experience of any issues identified. The Cathedral hopes also to include Gloucester's wider community in the identification, research and discussion around any contested heritage.

*8. The council should welcome and support the plans of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum to both better discuss and educate with regard to historic slavery, and to promote the historic role of Black and ethnic minority soldiers in the Gloucestershire regiments.*

- 4.13. The Council Archaeologist has been working in partnership with the History Department at the University of Gloucestershire on this. As a first step the University has commissioned a post-graduate student to undertake a research project into the life of Ukasaw Gronniosaw (who was formerly enslaved and later served as a soldier with the 28<sup>th</sup> (North Gloucestershire Reg), in the West Indian campaigns of the Seven Years War). This included a review of Gloucestershire Regiment records held at Kew. The resulting report is included here as **Appendix 1**. It didn't find out much new information about Gronniosaw's life, but it has provided important context and background which will be very useful going forward.

- 4.14. As a next step the Council Archaeologist, the Academic Course Leader in History, University of Gloucestershire and the Museum Director at the Soldier's of Gloucestershire Museum will be meeting to discuss the possibility of students in the department creating a temporary display about Gronniosaw combined with artefacts from the 28<sup>th</sup> Foot and the associated military campaign – the aim being to produce a display by autumn of 2023.

*9. The council should welcome and support the ongoing work of the Civic Trust to promote and protect the city's heritage. The council should engage with the trust to help develop a more balanced presentation of the city's history (for example online, on blue plaques and in guided tours etc) which includes consideration of any links to the slavery economy when appropriate.*

- 4.15. The Council Archaeologist is currently working with Civic Trust on the George Whitefield Blue Plaque (see below) we hope to further engage with them as part of the education and outreach project.

## Specific Recommendations:

***Baker's Quay:*** *The council should engage with the owners of Baker's Quay to discuss options for the 'repurposing' of that public space in a way that educates, commemorates and acknowledges Gloucester's historic links to the Transatlantic Slave Trade.*

- 4.16. The Head of Culture has been in contact with the site owners to understand their preferred approach with regard to this. In response the owners have advised the City Council that they are working to slowly remove the Baker's Quay name from their development. Baker's Quay is not being used in the address for the phase 1 development (Provender and Premier Inn) and it is not intended to be used in phase 2 development when that comes forward.
- 4.17. Obviously, the general recognition of the site as 'Baker's Quay' is not something that either the City Council nor the site owner's can be responsible for.
- 4.18. **Please note:** The site owners have chosen a different approach to that outlined in the recommendations section of the report. The City Council, as previously outlined in paragraph 6.4 of the main report, has no powers nor statutory obligations to require the owners of a heritage asset to manage or display a heritage asset in a particular way. It may be that a different site can be found on which to acknowledge Gloucester's historic links to the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

***Phillpotts Warehouse:*** The council should seek to contextualise the history of Phillpotts warehouse using interpretation.

- 4.19. Some draft text for an interpretation panel or plaque has been produced in consultation between the Council Archaeologist, volunteers and partners. The text is below:

*'Phillpott's Warehouse was built by Abraham Hodgson Phillpotts in 1846. Abraham was the son of Thomas Philpott's a 'West India Merchant' and slave-owner. In 1834, with the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, Phillpott's senior received a sizable compensation payment, which he reinvested in Gloucester and throughout Britain. Abraham went into business with his father and almost certainly benefited from his father's compensation payment. Phillpott's Warehouse was one of many new projects throughout Britain at the time funded by, or linked to, abolition compensation. The enslaved people Thomas Phillpott's had 'owned' in Jamaica received nothing.'*

- 4.20. There are no plans currently to produce a physical graphic panel on this site, however the text could be used as part of the city-wide educational resources produced as in recommendation 3 above.

**United Reformed Church:** *The council should consult with the owners and/or users of this building to consider realistic options for interpretation and contextualization of the George Whitefield memorial.*

- 4.21. The Council Archaeologist has made a number of attempts to contact the current owners of this building but thus far has received no response. The Council Archaeologist intends to approach ward councillors and community groups for advice and suggestions with regard to how to proceed.

***Blue Plaque on St Mary De Crypt School Room: The council should encourage the Civic Trust to contextualise this plaque to reflect George Whitefield's connections with the transatlantic slavery economy.***

- 4.22. New wording has been agreed in consultation with Discover Decrypt, the Civic Trust and GREAG, as follows:

*George Whitefield*

*The famous evangelist was born at the Bell Inn on Southgate Street in 1714. He was a pupil at Crypt School and preached his first sermon at St Mary de Crypt Church in 1736. Crossing the Atlantic thirteen times, he was parish priest in Savannah Georgia, where he established the Bethesda Orphanage. Despite his charitable works, Whitefield's views on slavery tarnish his legacy. He campaigned successfully for the legalisation of slavery in Georgia, and his orphanage was supported by income from plantations worked with enslaved labour. He died in 1770 and is buried at Newburyport, Massachusetts.*

- 4.23. The intention is to install the new plaque early in the first quarter of 2023. This will be slightly larger than the previous one but will otherwise be a like-for-like replacement.

***Memorial in St Mary De Crypt:*** *The council should engage with Discover de Crypt to produce educational resources and on-site displays that provide a full context to George Whitefield's life and works.*

- 4.24. Once the blue plaque has been replaced the Council Archaeologist plans to work with Discover Decrypt on this matter. De Crypt are aware and in general agreement.

**Whitefield Street names:** *The council should consult with residents on the renaming of the two identified Whitefield Street names.*

- 4.25. The Council Archaeologist is in the process of drafting a brief for a public consultation on this matter. Early in 2023 he intends to approach potential providers for costs based on this brief and it is hoped that the consultation can be undertaken in 2024. Should the residents of either of the two streets involved wish to change the name actual implementation is likely to take another year. Please note that the council would only change the name of the streets, if the majority of residents wish to do so.



***Whitefield House:*** *The council should approach the owners to discuss renaming this building.*

- 4.26. The Council Archaeologist has been unable to contact the owners of this building but will redouble efforts to do so in 2023.

## 5. Conclusions, suggestions and project risks

- 5.1. The first year of the implementation has seen mixed results with some elements proceeding well whilst others have yet to progress. The most encouraging aspect to date has been the positive partnership working with the University, the Cathedral, the Soldier's of Gloucestershire Museum and the Civic Trust. The lack of progress with the former United Reformed Church and with Whitfield House feels most disappointing.
- 5.2. It is suggested that the Council Archaeologist arrange a meeting with GREAG, the Civic Trust and other stakeholders to consider other approaches to addressing the legacy of Whitfield at the URC and acknowledging Gloucester's links with the slave trade more generally. One option could be public art in City Council owned land, another approach may be something celebratory about Gloucester's Black community, or the creation of a city-wide interpretation resource that incorporates locations with links to the slavery economy.
- 5.3. With regard to project risks there are two elements that cause concern. The first is workload, much of the implementation work is being undertaken by the Council Archaeologist alongside his core duties, this is achievable but may require a time extension to fully implement. The second concern is that some elements of this work (the consultation especially) will require a budget, as yet unidentified.