



St Margaret’s Hall resilience project: greening



Project outline

During the prolonged heatwave and drought conditions in 2026, starting mid-June, it was notable how unbearably hot the carpark area adjacent to St Margaret’s Hall was, compared to nearby treed areas. The stone wall in the Lamb’s Yard, despite also being fully south facing was much cooler by the addition of a Living Green Wall (completed 2021). The one or two hanging baskets struggled to survive and required constant watering, and provided almost nothing environmentally, either for cooling or biodiversity.

SMH is not listed but is a heritage building in the of the Conservation Area at the heart of Bradford on Avon. In November 2024, extensive flooding caused significant damage and it has only very recently been reopened for community use. An overarching resilience and carbon-footprint reduction project has been launched starting with commissioning an overarching scoping study (tba soon). The re-greening study fits with these aspirations.

After talking to several key green-fingered and environmental people, we thought it could be very advantageous to install a large area of living green wall on the south-facing stone wall. The LGW opposite the Co-Op is beautiful and often admired. It has a recycled/automatic watering. However, it was expensive to install and ongoing maintenance costs are high.

In further discussions, it was suggested that we could green up the wall effectively by planting suitable plants good for wall cover without damaging stone work, such as Boston, Japanese Ivy, Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus tricuspidate*, *Hedera rhombea*, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*.) These would take some time to establish but would be more sustainable and manageable. This option could provide shelter for some birds and insects as well as effectively cooling the wall.

Maintenance would be necessary, but could be done effectively to enhance and continue to show case much the historic stone character and make it more beautiful. There are some nearby houses with similar coverage. It is not inconsistent with rainwater collection.



This would cool, beautify, enhance, green and insulate SMH whilst providing some habitat, making it more resilient. In short, SMH would even more reflect the community that we it serves.

Recommendation: To work towards greening some of St Margaret’s south facing wall for heat alleviation and biodiversity, and explore the most manageable and expedient way forward, starting with some planting this winter.

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