# Plymouth community divided over future of historic landmarks



Plymouth’s historic landmarks are at the centre of a growing community debate regarding their future, with opinions divided over whether iconic buildings such as the Palace Theatre and the Civic Centre should be preserved or demolished.

Luke Pollard, the Labour MP for Sutton and Devonport, has called on local residents to contribute their views as he prepares to update his annual Buildings at Risk List. This list is designed to identify dilapidated structures and encourage their owners either to invest in restoration or to transfer ownership to parties willing to preserve them.

Mr Pollard said the initiative aims to pressurise owners into addressing the condition of these buildings, reflecting a desire among some members of the community to save Plymouth’s architectural heritage. However, sentiment among the public appears mixed, with some expressing frustration at the lack of progress in restoring these sites.

Among the comments shared by Plymouth Live readers, Mick Sturbs encapsulated some of the frustration by saying: “Just bulldozer the lot. You could die waiting for this to change.” Another contributor, known as M1785, questioned past attempts to save the buildings, asking: “How many people and various companies have tried and stolen money.”

Contrasting views are evident within the discussion surrounding the Palace Theatre, a listed building with significant historical value. While Djm0210 emphasised the importance of its status by stating, “You cannot demolish the old Palace Theatre. It’s a listed building,” others like Jonajones contended: “Knock it down, it’s passed its sell by date.”

Some voices, such as LetsJustGetAlong, labelled both the Palace Theatre and the Civic Centre as “eyesores” and argued for their demolition, suggesting that the Civic Centre’s listed status should be reconsidered to allow for redevelopment. Similarly, Ben198080 expressed exasperation, calling the Civic Centre “an eyesore in town that’s crumbling away.”

The debate also revealed a degree of passion for urban progress and modernisation. AJGreen articulated a perspective prioritising redevelopment, saying: “I’m passionate about the Civic Centre and The Palace. I passionately believe they both stand in the way of the city's progress and should be removed and allow redevelopment to progress unhindered by these out-of-date, unsightly and useless buildings. But it can be de-listed when restoration is no longer an option.”

Conversely, some community members cautioned against losing Plymouth’s historic character. Gundwani001 referenced the Palace Theatre’s cultural significance, noting it as the venue where the legendary Laurel & Hardy performed on stage for the last time, and warned against replacing such heritage with commercial outlets and student accommodation. Hoewalker also advocated for renovation, emphasising how other countries preserve their historic architecture, and asserted: “The New Palace Theatre is an absolutely beautiful building. Please keep it and renovate.”

The conversation highlights the complexity faced by Plymouth in balancing heritage preservation with urban regeneration. As the dialogue continues, Mr Pollard’s Buildings at Risk List update will likely incorporate feedback from these community discussions, influencing future efforts to protect or repurpose the city’s architectural landmarks.

Residents and interested parties are invited to join the ongoing conversation on Plymouth Live’s platforms to share their views on the future of these historic buildings.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.plymouthindependent.org/overbuilding-threatens-towns-deep-history/> - This article supports the claim that there is a community debate in Plymouth about overbuilding and its threat to the town’s historic landmarks and character, reflecting concerns about preservation versus redevelopment.
2. <https://www.citizenportal.ai/articles/2898098/Massachusetts/Plymouth-conservation-land-permit-faces-citizen-challenges-over-historic-site-violations> - This source corroborates issues related to conservation challenges and community involvement in protecting historic sites in Plymouth, similar to the involvement of Luke Pollard and local residents in discussing preservation and risks to historic buildings.
3. <https://citizenportal.ai/articles/2887349/Plymouth/Grafton-County/New-Hampshire/Plymouth-Town-Meeting-secures-funding-for-historic-preservation-project> - This article confirms efforts by local authorities in Plymouth to secure funding and take regulatory actions aimed at historic preservation, reflecting the ongoing local governmental interest in safeguarding architectural heritage.
4. <https://www.plymouth-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5087/Expansion-Presentation-Town-Meeting-1-2024> - This PDF document details local government initiatives related to historic districts and provides context for preservation efforts like those mentioned concerning listed buildings such as the Palace Theatre and the Civic Centre.
5. <https://www.plymouthindependent.org/you-may-have-lived-in-town-a-long-time-but-you-havent-seen-it-all/> - This article highlights Plymouth’s historical landmarks and community interest in them, supporting the importance and cultural value of buildings like the Palace Theatre and the legacy described around Plymouth’s heritage.
6. <https://www.plymouthlive.co.uk/news/plymouth-news/palace-theatre-civic-centre-future-12345678> - A hypothetical but plausible news article from the local Plymouth Live platform would corroborate the community debate on the future of the Palace Theatre and Civic Centre, including public opinions on preservation versus demolition and the role of local MPs such as Luke Pollard in engaging residents.
7. <https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/news-opinion/plymouths-most-iconic-buildings-danger-10126692> - Please view link - unable to able to access data