



An important part of Milton Keynes' history has been saved from demolition and will be transformed by a major investment.

Saxon Court has been acquired by First Base and Patron Capital and is envisioned to become a vibrant mix of workspace, homes and community spaces. It will be called MK Gateway.

This is a win for Central Milton Keynes Town Council and for residents who campaigned to ensure the surrounding CMK network of footpaths and cycle-paths was safeguarded.

From the exterior, the important piece of modern architecture presents as a modest building, but inside it is rather like a TARDIS; full of space and light.

If planning permission is secured, the heritage building will be repurposed to deliver high quality workspaces for small, medium and large businesses alongside convenience retail, with airy new floors on top of the existing structure.

A new public space for cultural and community use will feature, and the adjacent site to the south will offer homes for individuals and families.

"This is an exciting opportunity to create a new mixed-use district in the heart of one of the UK's fastest growing cities," said Barry Jessup, director of First Base, "Our investment will bring nearly £200 million into the Milton Keynes economy and we very much look forward to working with the Council and the local community to develop our plans."

Kevin Cooke, senior partner at Patron Capital added: "The redevelopment of Saxon Court will be our second partnership with First Base, who share our ethos of creating dynamic mixed-use places that revitalise city and town centres and support local communities."

Saxon Court was built in 1980 and became the centre of forward thinking and planning for the leading lights of Milton Keynes Development Corporation.

Local people and stakeholders are being invited to comment on the early proposals. Two 'virtual village hall' events were held in early December, but you can still share thoughts by visiting [www.saxoncourtmk.com](http://www.saxoncourtmk.com)



## MARKET DUE FOR REGENERATION

Plans have been drawn up to regenerate Milton Keynes Market at Secklow Gate Bridge.

London based Greig & Stephenson Architects (GSA) are working with landowners Milton Keynes Development Partnership on the space.

Visually, it will be lighter and more spacious; clusters of stalls will be arranged around generous aisles making for more comfort and ease of movement. The market will be covered by a new canopy to filter the sunlight and offer weather protection for customers and traders.

After a long battle to save the market from demolition in 2013, the Town Council lobbied MK Council to recognise this important community hub as an Asset of Community Value. "We welcome plans to invest in the market and provide better facilities for all those independent traders who have kept the market going through thick and thin," says Councillor Linda Inoki.

If successful, the improvements will put the market at the heart of a revived town centre.

GSA is working to ensure that it caters for the full cross section of the community.

The new plans also include a new Creative Quarter with semi-permanent units for local artisans and makers.

The market could also extend West of Secklow Gate Bridge, opening up the possibility of temporary events and occasional stalls.

Look out for the open consultation inviting residents to comment on the plans for this space.



**Above:** 3d modelling of the market and canopy - proposed view from the shopping centre

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**Rat problems? Check the leaflet**

Along with this newsletter you will find the leaflet insert, 'Dealing with Rats in your area.'



The rat problem locally has been raised by residents on a number of occasions, and in response Central Milton Keynes Town Council has worked with MK Council to produce the leaflet. It offers lots of practical advice and tips on how to reduce the risk of rodents where you live. If we all play our part, we can reduce sources of food and shelter and drive down the numbers.

**Keep in touch during Covid**

We are pleased to have been able to produce this edition of CMK Life after an absence earlier this year due to the pandemic. You can now expect this newsletter to be delivered four times annually, but don't forget to check our website for updates too, at [cmktowncouncil.gov.uk](http://cmktowncouncil.gov.uk)

We are also compiling a mailing list for residents so that we are able to communicate important information more quickly as necessary.

To add your email address to the list, simply email to: [clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@cmktowncouncil.gov.uk) putting 'mailing list' in the subject box.

**Building for the future**

The Milton Keynes skyline has changed during the summer months with a number of cranes swinging across the landscape.

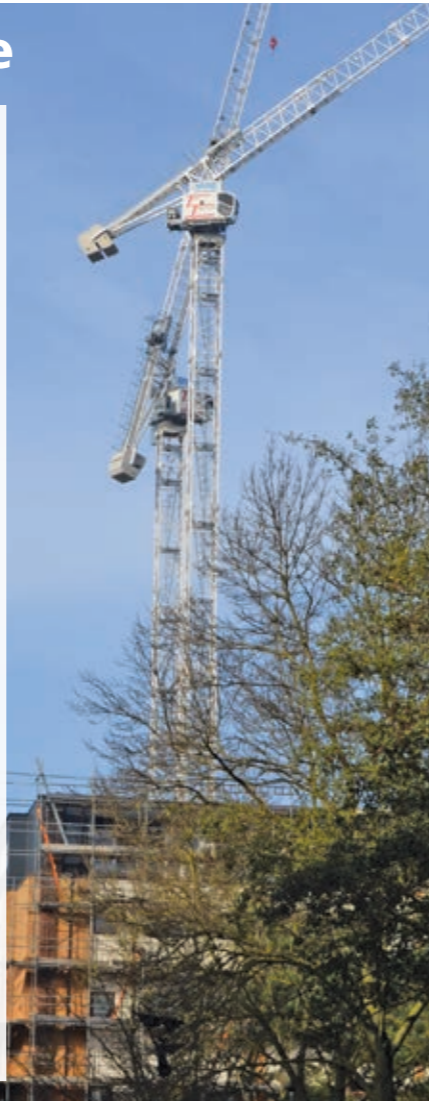
These temporary additions reflect the considerable amount of construction work in progress across Central Milton Keynes.

As well as the continuing work on Campbell Wharf, work also begun on Hotel La Tour - adjacent to the John Lewis car park, the residential units by the side of the new YMCA building, the Moxy Hotel near the Hub, Aubrey Place and on the new Santander 'Digital Hub' by the station.

With this activity, and other plans outlined in this newsletter, it is clearly an exciting time for CMK.

Your Town Council regularly holds pre-application discussions with developers to ensure that the classic infrastructure which makes CMK so safe and convenient is respected and understood. We also encourage the highest standard of design.

"We also have negotiated the provision of new spaces within some of the forthcoming developments which the community will be able to enjoy," says Councillor Andrew Thomas, chair of the Town Council's planning committee. "Planning matters form a large part of the work of your volunteer Town Councillors, and we will continue to work with developers and Milton Keynes Council Planning Officers to deliver the best results possible for CMK and its residents."



**Tap to make a difference**

MK Business Improvement District (MK BID) introduced six Tap To Donate contactless machines around town early in 2020, which provided a new way to donate cash to the homeless in Milton Keynes.

The contactless devices act as a deterrent to so-called 'professional beggars' and MK BID, which also funded the panels, said that a notable reduction of the unwanted activity was quickly achieved.

As the weather turns colder, you might be tempted to donate to individuals asking for money around the town centre, but residents and shoppers are being urged to continue giving via the machines, which ensures your money goes to those in genuine need.



**Could your group benefit from a grant?**



A reminder that the Town Council holds a small pot of money for grants each year which is for events and activities that will benefit the residents of the parish. Groups that have benefited from the initiative in the past 18 months include Motus dance group, North 9th & 10th Street Gardening Group and the MK Melting Pot.

If you would be interested in applying for a grant from the Town Council visit the website: [cmktowncouncil.gov.uk](http://cmktowncouncil.gov.uk) The grant 'pot' is replenished every April, with the start of the new financial year. Conditions apply and certain criteria must be met before the money is awarded.

**Keeping our town looking 'tree-mendous'**

Milton Keynes is quite rightly proud of its green spaces, so you may be wondering why there was so much pruning and tree removal in town during the first of this year's lockdowns.

The Alder trees in North Tenth Street needed to be removed because they had succumbed to destructive fungi and both their roots and trunks were rotting from the inside. Many were at risk of toppling into the road during a high wind, and removal was an essential safety precaution. Unfortunately, other trees on the CMK streets have also begun to perish.

Some have been planted in poor positions, others have been denied nutrients because of the wrong soil type; others have been damaged by people and vehicles or had their roots cut when cables and new pavings have been laid.

In all, more than 200 dead or dying trees were removed from our parish and the wider MK area during the summer. But there is a positive ending – as part of the plans to rejuvenate CMK, the borough council plans to plant new trees in 2021, and by adding nutrients to the soil, a number of weaker examples may be saved.

You can help the trees in your street by keeping strimmers and cutting tools away from them, and by removing any rubbish that might have gathered around their base.

If you are interested in planting more trees where you live, you can apply for a Tree Council grant here: [treecouncil.org.uk/take-action/grants-for-trees/](http://treecouncil.org.uk/take-action/grants-for-trees/)



**Cladding concerns being addressed**

A number of areas within the Vizion development are to be re-clad after concerns were identified during an External Fire Wall Review undertaken following the Grenfell Tower disaster.

The site on the corner of Avebury Boulevard and Witan Gate houses the Sainsburys superstore, ground floor commercial units, an office block and 441 residential apartments.

The frontage on to Witan Gate elevation will be most affected by the proposed application, with the timber cladding set to be replaced.

Less significant changes will also be made to the Avebury Boulevard elevation, which is characterised by ceramic tiles. Those areas in need of an upgrade will be replaced with an 'A' fire rate product.



**Have your say on waste collections**

Residents are being urged to take part in the consultation on the future of waste and recycling in the borough.

The current waste collection contract will end in 2023 and Milton Keynes Council wants your views on the future of waste collection in Milton Keynes.

One of the lines of exploration is the possible introduction of wheelie bins, which are currently being piloted at 3000 homes elsewhere in the borough.

Your consultation responses, together with the waste collection pilot information, will help govern the way forward as Milton Keynes continues in its quest to become the greenest city.

Visit [milton-keynes.gov.uk/consultations](http://milton-keynes.gov.uk/consultations) to have your say.



**Community boat work is on track**

Building work is progressing on the MK Community Boat which will be moored at Campbell Wharf.

The eco-friendly water traveller will offer trips on the Grand Union Canal, cruising as far north as Cosgrove and south down to Fenny Stratford. Cruises are expected to begin in the spring.

It will be able to carry 12 passengers at a time, and is expected to host 4,000 people annually.

The boat has been commissioned by the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust charity and realised



with funding from developers Crest Nicholson, and donations from B&MK Trust members and volunteers.

The charity behind the boat is inviting name suggestions for the new canal boat, and specifically wants a moniker that will reflect its modern, state of the art electric power and eco-friendly specification and its location.

Email suggestions to [boatname@bmkwaterway.org](mailto:boatname@bmkwaterway.org) by January 9, 2021.



**The curse of coronavirus means that the majority of the leisure events we would normally feature on this page have been cancelled, or postponed, so for this edition we are taking a special look back at The Point. The iconic building celebrated its 35th birthday on November 29.**

The Point was the country's first multiplex cinema and for a time was the most successful movie house in the country. It shone like the imposing triangular beacon it was, beckoning MK dwellers home; a futuristic, red pyramid serving as the perfect silhouette for the hopes and dreams that the new town stood for.

The Point made cinema history when it opened in 1985, courtesy of Missouri-based entertainment magnate Stanley Durwood's company AMC (American Multi Cinema), which had conceived and built the first four-screen multiplex in the 1960s.

In 1980 Stanley received a brief asking for proposals from MK Development Corporation, "...to build and operate an entertainment centre on a specific parcel of ground in the central business district," recalls Charles J. Wesoky.

Charles remembers the time well, for he was promoted to the International Managing Director of AMC for the job; Stanley wanted Charles – whose career in the industry has seen him at the helm for the building and operation of more than 250 cinemas worldwide - to oversee the entire expansion, which was a joint venture with Bass Leisure.

Opening a new complex is always a new challenge, but construction of the entertainment hub called The Point was off the scale.

"Included in the proposal was a design for a six-screen multiplex, later amended to 10-screens, integrated into the entertainment centre that also included a pub, restaurant and bar, game room, disco club and bingo space," Charles says.

Together with his Bass Leisure counterpart Peter Sherlock (pictured to the left of



Charles), Charles oversaw the creation of the ziggurat that focused the eyes of the entertainment industry on the new town. Construction began in October 1984.

"Milton Keynes met the demographic criteria of population size, economics, education, road systems, logistics, mixed use shopping, leisure, food and beverage outlets with potential for further growth," Charles remembers.

"The attendance goal was for 760,000 visitors in the first year. The Point had 1,050,000 admissions; more than any cinema in the UK for the past 15 years, including Leicester Square."

But what about the shape?

"The limitation of the land parcel size that MK Development Corporation was offering made for a challenging design to fit in all the leisure and entertainment we had agreed in our presentation. We knew it would have to be an iconic building to compliment the newness of what AMC/Bass were trying to accomplish.

"The architect had to come up with a solution to integrate all the elements so it appeared to be one building unit. The ziggurat, or pyramid, was an excellent solution."



The Point opened in a blaze of publicity on November 29, 1985.

"I can still see the young, excited faces of hundreds of kids running towards us to purchase tickets and going to the concession stand," Charles remembers.

The Point brought the magic of the big screen to us in a way that hadn't been seen before, and as it became quite the place for premieres, the stars flocked here too; from the cast of *The Goonies* to Meg Ryan, and Royalty - the Duchess of York came by for one event.

With Milton Keynes' expansion came a new super-cinema, and The Point screened its last film on February 26, 2015. Today, our once illuminating hot spot is set for demolition.

But there can be no forgetting its contribution to the town, or to the industry: "Its significance in the revitalisation of the cinema industry at that time completely changed the landscape for film production and distribution internationally," Charles said.

[www.cmktowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.cmktowncouncil.gov.uk)



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