

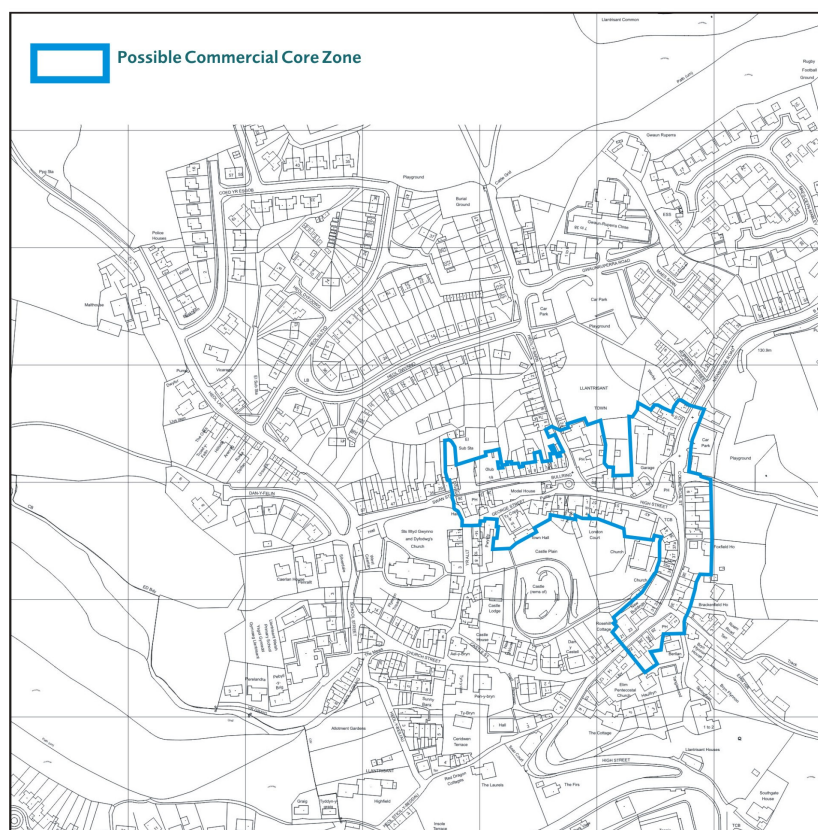
T1: Town Centre Policies

The commercial core of the town is centred on the Bull Ring and High Street/ Commercial Street. There has been a growth in specialist shopping and eating-places over recent years, but there has also been pressure for changes of use from commercial to residential development within the town centre. For the future there is a need to protect the existing core and encourage new commercial uses through:

- Identification in planning policy of a commercial core zone where conversions to commercial uses will be favourably considered and where the loss of commercial units will be discouraged; and
- Favourable consideration of licensing and planning regulations with regard to encouraging appropriate commercial, cafes and restaurants uses to stimulate the day-to-evening economy.

Existing local plan policies seek to protect the town centre, but it is important that this is continued and strengthened in emerging planning policies. Figure 3.10 shows a suggested boundary for a commercial core of the town, within which there could be a presumption against the conversion of commercial units to residential and favourable consideration of new commercial units.

Figure 3.10: Possible Commercial Core Zone



It is appreciated that licensing restrictions are County-wide and seek to achieve a range of objectives. However it would be advantageous if there could be a facilitatory approach to new licenses for any restaurants seeking to establish within the identified core of Llantrisant.

The encouragement of new retailing and leisure developments (including coffee shops and restaurants) within the historic town centre should help to enhance and invigorate the existing offer and to act as a catalyst for establishing a new mixed-use, vibrant and high quality atmosphere within the town centre.

Careful consideration would need to be paid to the design of shop-fronts, advertising, and shutters. New retailing development should not be encouraged outside of the commercial core of the town. In such locations it could have a detrimental impact on residential land uses and detract from the Bull Ring/ Heol-y-Sarn area as the main retailing / eating quarter.

Capital Cost/ Funding/ Lead Partner

The project requires a policy based project requiring the input from planning and regulatory staff within the local authority and as such does not have a capital cost or need for funding. The lead partner would be private sector businesses seeking to establish/ develop within the town centre.

T2: Events and Festivals

The town has a long tradition of attracting visitors to special events and festivals such as the marking of the Parish boundaries by the Freeman of Llantrisant and the former music festival. Such events, if appropriately managed, serve to raise the profile of the town, foster community spirit and attract additional spending to the town's businesses.

The Castle site offers the opportunity to continue providing appropriately managed special events, such as local farmers markets, historical re-enactment events and outdoor dramatic plays. Recently a farmers' market was successfully held on the Castle Green. The Bull Ring also provides a suitable venue for outdoor fairs and carnival events.

Any such events need to be carefully managed, however, to ensure that the Castle site and Bull Ring are appropriately restored once the event is over. Good signing is also required from car parks to the events.

It is recommended that the possibility of the farmers' market becoming more regular, such as once per month, is given consideration. In addition, there could be potential to stage a Spring or Summer brass band or classical music festival, using the Castle Green and the Church as a location for concerts, linking to the development of the Old School as a base for the County Borough's Music Service. There is a need to establish a budget to annually promote the town and its events.

Capital Cost

An annual budget of £5,000 would be appropriate.

Funding

Possible funding sources include Llantrisant Town Trust, the Community Council and the local authority.

Lead Partner

The Old Town Forum.

T3: Enhancing the High Street

The High Street is the historic commercial centre of the town but provides a poor visual impression, with poor quality public realm and pedestrian environment. There are a number of prominent vacant properties that detract from the quality of the Conservation Area. In many ways the area has lost its function and there is a need to upgrade the quality of the area to provide a fitting entrance into the historic town, invigorate the commercial and residential uses and create a safe and attractive area for pedestrians.



Photos 3.9 to 3.11: The High Street: There are properties in need of investment and a poor quality public realm.



Proposals to enhance the quality of this important street of the town centre include:

- The introduction of two traffic priority features, with priority to traffic coming up the hill, to enable footways to be extended and traffic to be calmed;
- The redesign of the public realm around the junction of High Street/Commercial Street to reduce the visually unattractive and redundant sea of tarmac in favour of more public space with pedestrian crossing points and short-term parking spaces clearly defined.
- Consideration of relocating the bus stop from opposite the Wheatsheaf Pub (a current pinch point) to a location closer to the High Street/ Commercial Street junction, thus helping to draw visitors up to the focal hub of the town centre at the Bull Ring and the Castle;
- Re-paving of the area in Welsh Pennant natural stone and replacement of lighting

Page 3-21

and street furniture;

- Restoration of the steps and railings to the Tabor Chapel;
- Providing a change in surfacing at the junction of High Street/ Commercial Street, to highlight an alteration in the character of the area and slow traffic, whilst not impeding emergency vehicle movements with any horizontal deflection;
- Redevelopment of the New Buildings and adjacent properties, with options for: (A) new residential dwellings which follow the traditional building line along High Street or (B) a public car park for approximately 12 spaces, with appropriately designed boundary walls.

The proposals for the High Street would help to link this street with the Bull Ring and therefore improve legibility, creating a better first impression of the historic core zone and offering the opportunity to develop more on-street café or retailing uses similar to that already established within the Bull Ring.

Figure 3.11 How the High Street could Look



Figures 3.12 Ideas for the Junction of High Street/ Commercial Street



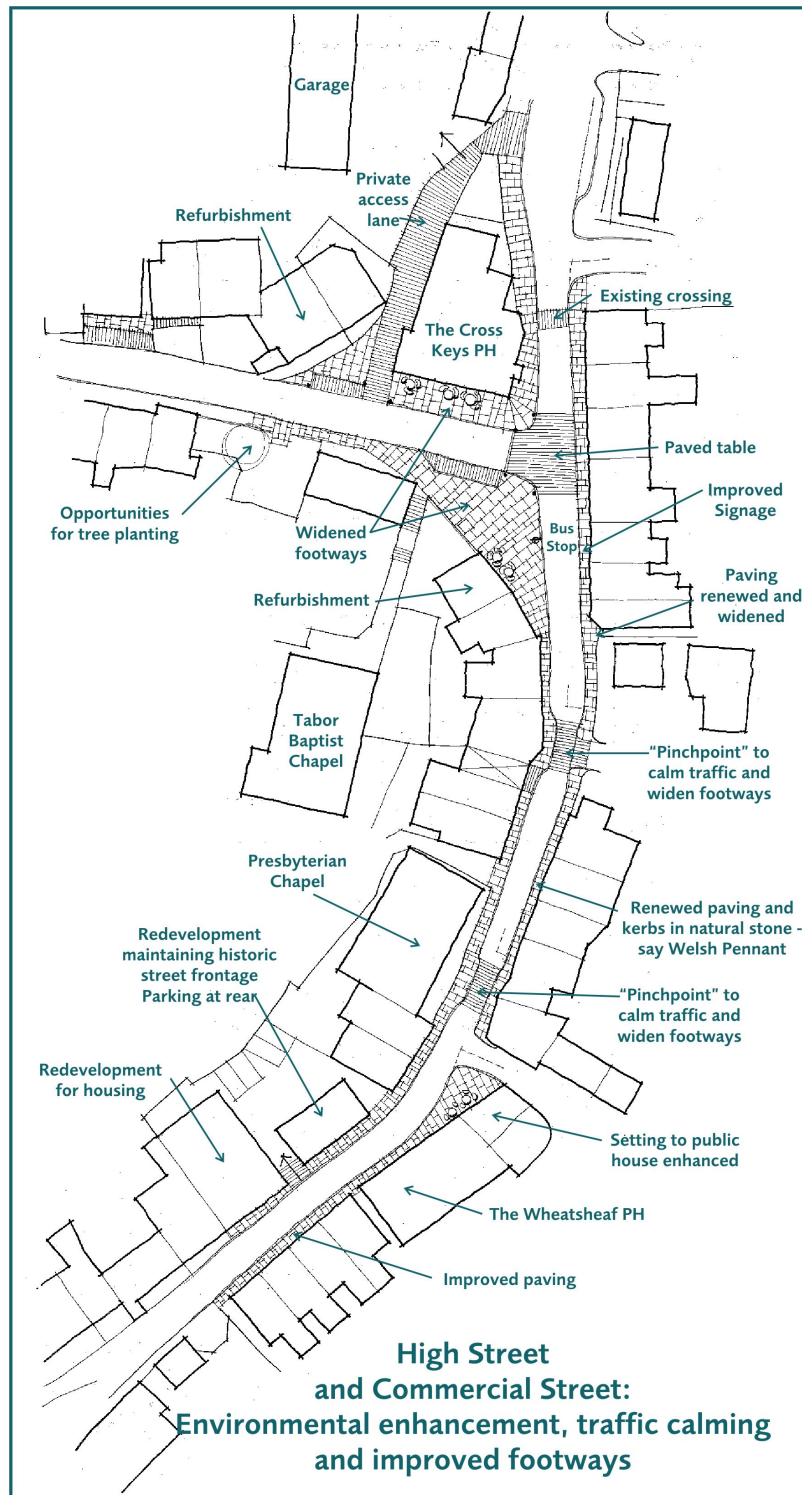


Figure 3.13: Enhancement of the High Street

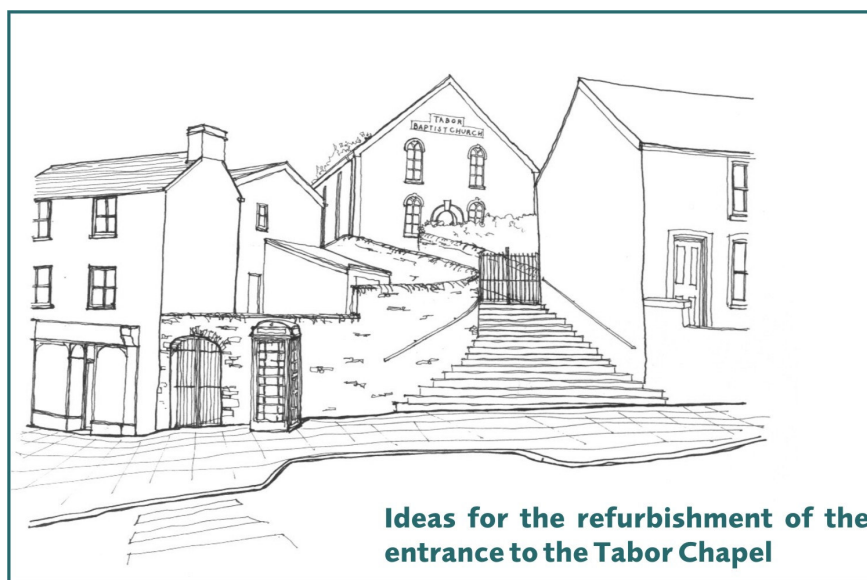


Figure 3.14: Ideas for the entrance to the Tabor Chapel

Capital Costs

Costs of the public elements of the scheme, (i.e. the streetscape enhancement works) are estimated to cost approximately £350,000. The cost of provision of a small public car park has not been included as this would be dependent on which option for the site was taken forward. The cost of refurbishment of buildings would be part of a THI scheme.

Funding

Possible funding sources for the streetscape works include Physical Regeneration Funds, a contribution from the local highway authority for the traffic elements and Objective One, post 200, Local Regeneration Funds and the Welsh Development Agency, Town Improvement Grant.

Lead Partner

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

T4: Enhancing the Bull Ring

The Bull Ring was enhanced in the late 1980s and the scheme, together with the opening of the Model House, provided a successful catalyst for the regeneration of the area. In the future however, it would benefit from enhancement in a manner more appropriate to the Conservation Area, to provide an attractive space that can be better utilised as a social meeting place and focus for the town centre.

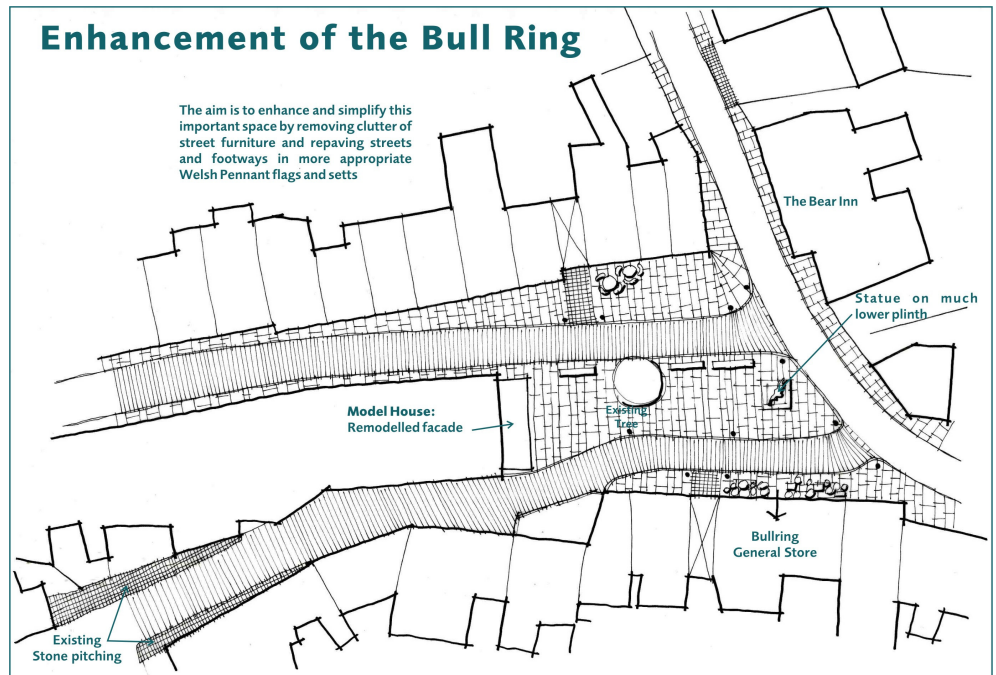


Photos 3.12 and 3.13: The Bull Ring

Proposals for the area could include:

- Resurfacing in Welsh Pennant stone, with outward-looking and rationalised street furniture, a new setting for the Dr William Price statue and opportunities for outdoor eating places;
- Review of the no waiting restriction on the north side of the square to allow short term parking opportunities;
- The Model House conversion has already proven to be a successful and innovative approach to regenerating a prominent historic building. However, there may be long-term opportunities to redesign the building to provide a new façade with enable views across the square, and into the Model House itself, so people can see what's going on inside this building. Any redesign of the façade should be innovative and contemporary whilst respecting and reflecting the character of the Conservation Area.
- Use of lighting and street furniture to make the experience of being in the Bull Ring more exciting and enjoyable.

Ideas for the Bull Ring are shown in Figures 3.15 and 3.16. The Model House is discussed under Project C2.



Figures 3.15 and 3.16: Enhancement of the Bull Ring



Capital Costs

Costs of the streetscape enhancement works, including a new setting for the statue, are estimated to cost approximately £260,000.

Funding

Possible funding sources for the streetscape works include, as for the High Street, Physical Regeneration Funds, a contribution from the local highway authority for the traffic elements and Objective One, post 2006, Local Regeneration Funds and the Welsh Development Agency, Town Improvement Grant.

Lead Partner

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

T5: Car Parking

The problem of parking in the old town is appreciated and if there are additional visitors to new and improved attractions of the Guildhall, Castle and Victorian School, as well as increased retailing and eating opportunities in the Bull Ring and High Street, the problem will only increase. The car park at Gwaun Ruperra is poorly located for visitors and pedestrian links, particularly for those with disabilities or prams and pushchairs, are very poor.

The only real option that has materialised from the study is an extension northwards of the existing Swan Street car park. Swan Street car park is the best located car park for visitors, with easy access to the Bull Ring and Model House and a short walk from the Castle, Church and Guildhall. It is much better for visitors to use than the Gwaun Ruperra car parks, which although they serve a useful purpose, have poor pedestrian links to the town centre.

Photo 3.14: Swan Street Car Park



There are level issues but the land is in local authority ownership, although part of the site is subject to a lease agreement. There are also allotments, which would need to be relocated in accordance with legislation and good practice. The proposed car park extension site, taking account of the need for a ramp both for vehicles and for pedestrians, would provide an additional 25-30 spaces. This figure takes account of the loss of some spaces from the existing car park. The car park would need to be well lit to ensure security and well screened from properties to the rear.

Capital Costs

Costs of the car park would be approximately £160,000. This does not include any costs of purchasing land in leasehold ownership from the local authority or the relocation of allotments.

Funding

It is recognised that funding for car parks is constrained given the demands across the County Borough for improved facilities and this would be a relatively expensive car park given the need for ramps and retaining structures.

The most appropriate way forward would be to combine the car park project with the enhancement of the Bull Ring, for funding as it has a regeneration purpose.

Lead Partner

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, Development and Regeneration.

T6: Town Centre Management

The proposals to enhance the town centre public realm, facilitate new commercial uses and develop new attractions will bring about regeneration of the town centre, but unless the town centre is well managed in future, the benefits will not be sustained. It would be of benefit if there could be a single designated officer to act as a contact point for all initiatives in the town centre. Such a person could liaise with local authority departments, the Community Council, the Town Trust and local traders to make sure that town centre activities are co-ordinated, to inform the local community of progress on projects and undertake activities on behalf of the Town Forum. They could also be responsible for managing the regeneration action plan implementation. Such a person would be likely to report to the Town Forum.

Capital Costs/ Funding/ Lead Partner

The part-time involvement of a local authority officer would be a revenue cost which it is assumed would be met by the authority in the Development and Regeneration Department, with a possible contribution from funding sources such as Objective One where the role is the project management of specific projects.

A1: Traffic Calming on the Northern Approach

The approach to the town from the Common and through Heol-y-Sarn is narrow and a particularly difficult area for pedestrians, with limited footways, vehicles approaching at a speed not in accordance with the local conditions, a need for properties to be serviced and for residents to park.

There is an appropriate alternative network for through traffic (via the A4119) and therefore it would be appropriate to slow through traffic as a deterrent. One-way systems, 'shuttle' traffic signals, road humps, reliance on signing or weight restrictions would not be appropriate or have only limited effects.

Two options were developed for Heol-y-Sarn to improve the pedestrian environment and calm traffic problems and improve linkages from the Gwaun Ruperra Street car park to the Bull Ring area:

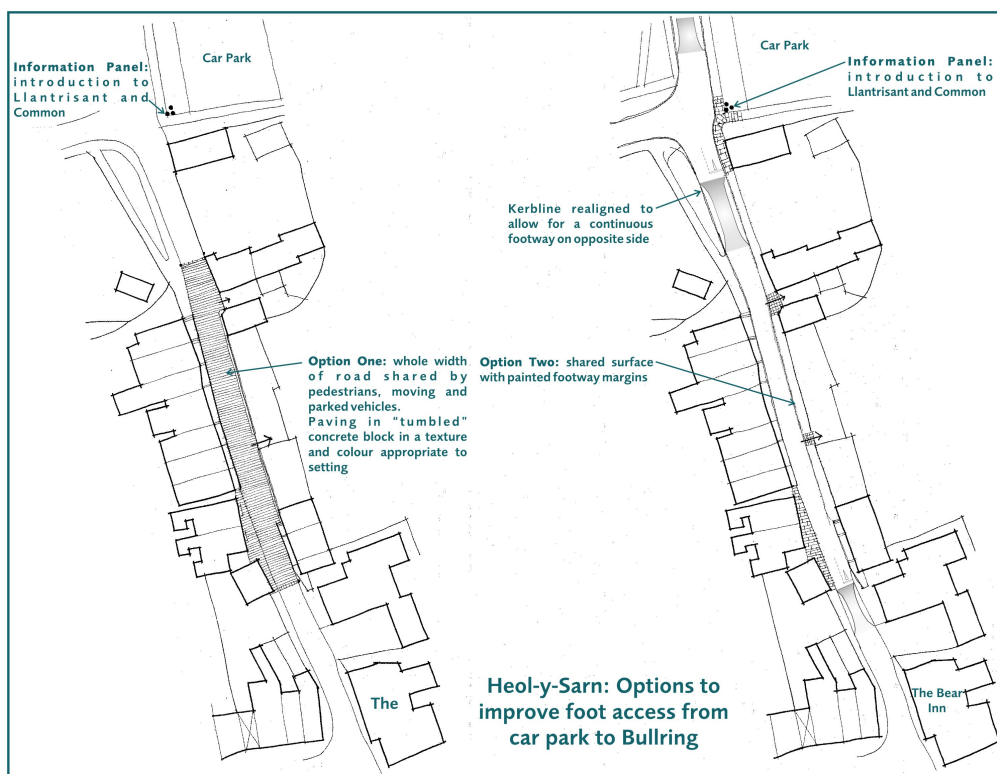
- Option One: whole width of the road shared by pedestrians, moving and parked vehicles;
- Option Two: Three pinch points introduced to provide additional footways and calm traffic, with a painted footway margin. Road narrowings, with a clear priority for directional flow (usually uphill) slow the traffic, provide short distances of carriageway for pedestrians to cross and can help (in some locations) to define on-street parking areas.

The options are shown in Figure 3.17. Following discussion with the Highway Authority and further consideration, Option Two is preferred for reasons of safety and legibility for drivers.

With this option the 30 mph speed restriction should begin at the cattle grid, at the northern edge of the Common, thus reducing the speed of vehicles across the Common and on the approach to the town where there are no footpaths.

The road narrowings will involve kerb build outs in appropriate materials, give way markings for one direction and the required traffic signs. The carriageway at these points would be reduced to 3.5 metres.

Figure 3.17: Options for Heol-y-Sarn



Capital Costs

The cost of the scheme is estimated at £95,000.

Funding

The Highway Authority would be the most appropriate source of funding for the scheme. A possible source could be from Transport Grant Safe Routes to Schools, if the primary school in Llantrisant is a future project.

Lead Partner

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, Highways.

A2: Signing Strategy

Signing to Llantrisant is relatively good from the strategic highway network, with motorway signing from Junction 34 of the M4. However, once in the Llantrisant/ Talbot Green area, there is a lack of signing for visitors to enable them to locate the town attractions. The Church is evident on the top of the hill above the A4119, but there is no obvious way to reach it. Moreover, once within the Old Town, it is easy to miss the historic core and not find the Castle and Church. Car parks at the northern end of the town are also poorly signed. There is a need for a signing strategy to be developed to include:

- Providing a brown 'by-passed town' sign highlighting 'Llantrisant Historic Town, Church and Castle' (for example) from the A4119;
- Improved signage to the car parks within the town centre; and
- Improved signs at car parks for pedestrians to locate features of interest.

Capital Cost

The cost of implementing a signing strategy might be in the region of £10,000.

Funding

Funding would be required from local authority highways' budgets, with a possible contribution from the Community Council and local traders.

Lead Partner

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council.

C1: Llantrisant Old School Community and Arts Centre

The Victorian School building is located on School Street on the west-side of the town centre. It was vacated at Easter 2005 by the Welsh Medium Primary School and the outbuildings and structures have been demolished to put the site into good order for future development. The building is in the ownership of the local education authority. A sub-group of the Town Forum has met and organised a public consultation on the future of the building, and there is a general consensus that it should be kept for community use of some form.

The building is predominately a single storey masonry Victorian building with a more recently constructed single storey toilet block on the front. It is situated elevated from the main town and occupies a sloping site with extensive views out to the south. There is a

small car parking area to the front and playgrounds held with a retaining wall to the rear, as well as level with the building on the south side.

Photo 3.15: The Old School Building



The building comprises seven former classrooms, three large circulation spaces, two offices and toilets. The building is internally on two levels, with steep steps connecting the two parts along the central corridor.

The Victorian School has considerable charm and character and has played an important role in the community for more than one hundred years. It would indeed be a considerable loss if the building were to cease to have a public use and be sold for redevelopment.

Temporary use has been agreed with two occupants, in order to ensure the building is kept in use for the next year while development proposals are taken forward. The Rhondda Cynon Taff Music Service is using the upper part of the building as a base for development of music services for the County Borough. This will include an examinations centre, workshop base for extra-curricular activities such as the brass band development and certain of the orchestra practices, the meeting of music teachers and storage of instruments. It is hoped that workshop weekends might take place, involving concerts at the Parish Church.

The Model House wishes to occupy the lower part of the building to provide a studio space and teaching areas in which arts and craft courses and workshops can be held. The usage will be predominately in the evenings and weekends. This will extend the community arts development role of the local authority through the Model House organisation in the local area.

Both of the uses will provide valuable learning and development opportunities, for young people and for the whole community. They would both appear to be compatible and appropriate uses for the building.

Consideration has been given to other possible uses for the building, including the following:

- Tourist accommodation, such as a YHA (the YHA would not be interested in this site as it is not compatible with their strategy for new provision);
- The Town Library, relocating from the rear of the Model House (the library service have expressed satisfaction with their current location);

- Heritage centre (the building is not as suitable as the Guildhall in terms of location for visitors); and
- Conversion to residential uses (this would mean the loss of the building for community use).

It is considered that in addition to the use of the building for the music service and arts classes, the building could provide meeting rooms for the community. This would complement the facilities in the Caerlan Hall and could also generate a limited amount of rental income for the building. Moreover, the local authority owned Social Hall has recently closed as the building is no longer suitable for use, thus there is a need to replace the facilities that were available.

Two of the classrooms could be made into a more flexible space with a partition, to enable it to be used for two meeting rooms or one larger one. These rooms could also be let commercially for business meetings and seminars, again bringing in some income.

The building has had essential maintenance in the past few years but no major refurbishment. A building surveyor has undertaken a walkover survey to identify if there are any major issues with the building. On the whole it appears sound but is in need of investment, most importantly to provide disabled access and new toilets and to serve as an attractive and welcoming facility for the future. It is recommended that the toilet block be demolished and consideration given to providing a new, contemporary entrance to the building, serving as a foyer and circulation space and incorporating toilets. A kitchenette could be provided in the office at the upper level.

The rear playground is retained by structures, parts of which appear in need of repair. The opportunity to regrade the playground and provide a sloping garden and patio area serving the building should be considered.

A next stage would be to undertake a full structural assessment of the building, including an asbestos survey and M&E survey, and engaging an architect to produce detailed designs of improvements. A business plan, identifying the potential ongoing revenue commitment of the premises will be required. The main issue with the future of the building will be its ongoing revenue costs since the two main occupiers are connected to the local authority and cannot contribute significant revenue income.

Capital Cost

Initial surveys and business plan work would cost in the region of £9,500.

The capital cost of refurbishment of the building is estimated at approximately £275,000, although this would depend on the outcome of the more detailed surveys.

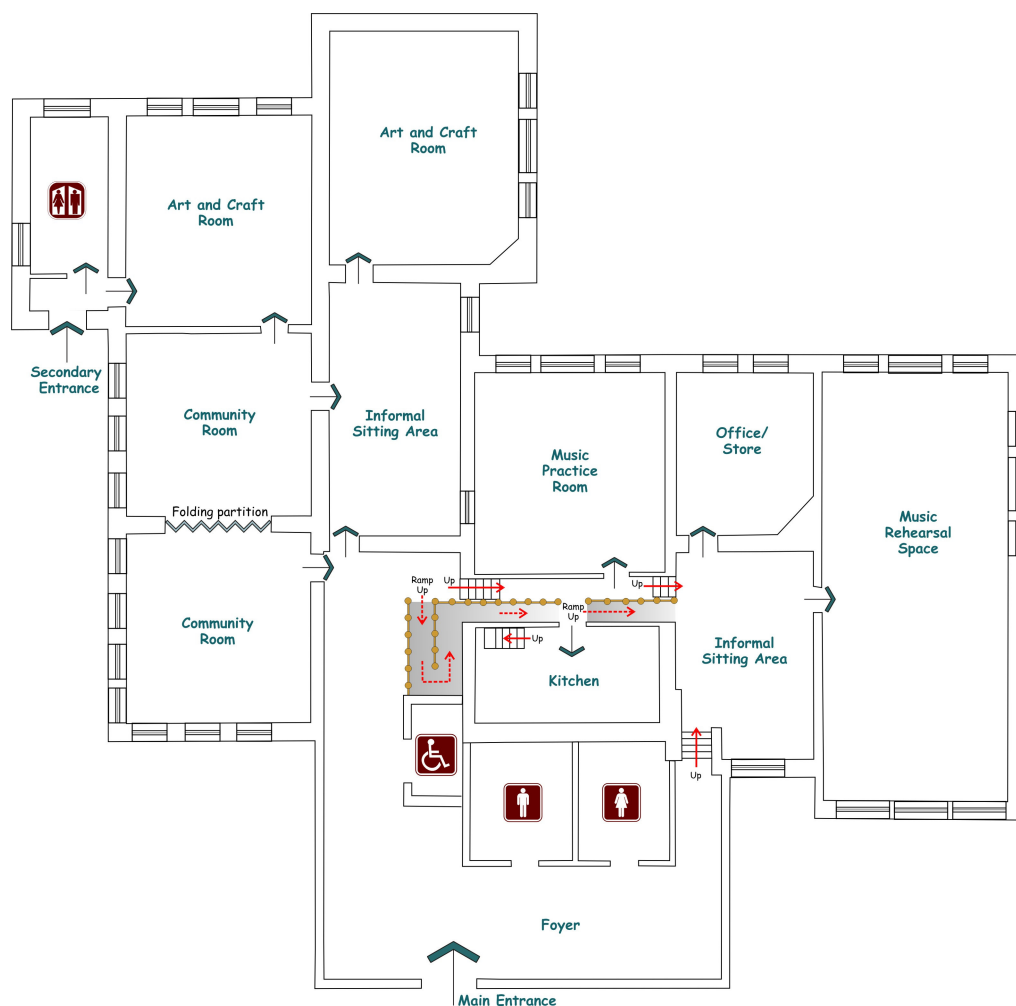


Figure 3.18: Ideas for the Use of the Old School Building

Funding

The funding potential is dependent on the ownership and management of the building. If a voluntary/ community sector group were to take on the building from the authority, then there would be greater scope for charitable and lottery funding. However, this would also limit the possibility of ongoing local authority revenue support, which will be important.

In the past, the Arts Council of Wales Lottery Grants would have been the obvious source of funding for a community arts project such as this one, but lottery funding is now focussed on investing in established facilities as the overall funding stream is declining. There may, however, be a possibility of a grant of under £50,000.

Other possibilities would be the Welsh Assembly Government's Community Facilities and Activities Programme (CFAP) (but only if it is a community group) which gap funds community facility projects, grant giving trusts and the local authority through capital receipts from sale of the Social Club.

C2: The Model House

The Model House is a successful centre for contemporary arts and crafts but it would be of benefit to invest in the building and its activities in the future to sustain its appeal and role in the area. The façade of the building relates poorly to the Bull Ring public space and there is an opportunity to redesign this frontage to not only improve its visual appeal, but to improve the legibility of the building and its relationship with the public space. Internally, the circulation is adequate but the building does not flow well for the visitor. A remodelling of the frontage could also provide better public circulation space, toilets, stairs and lifts. The possibility of a café on a balcony level, franchised to a catering operator, could be considered.

The first floor would be vacated following development of the Guildhall as a museum and archive centre and this would give the opportunity to use the floor for additional lettable workshop space and classrooms for evening and weekend courses.

The creation of additional workshop space could provide a base for additional businesses to start up and develop within the centre, as well as an additional attraction to visitors wishing to see craftspeople at work.

Capital Costs

There would be a need to undertake concept design of façade improvements and re-configuration of the internal space in order to estimate the capital costs.

Funding

In the longer term there may be the possibility of Arts Council funding to upgrade the centre, although it is appreciated that funding is limited at present. The costs of creation of additional workshops could be eligible for WDA, Objective One and/ or local authority SME grant support.

Lead Partner

Llantrisant Model House Craft and Design Centre.