

A DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

in support of a

PLANNING APPLICATION

for

MINOR ALTERATIONS

to

THE YMCA, MERTHYR TYDFIL

on behalf of:

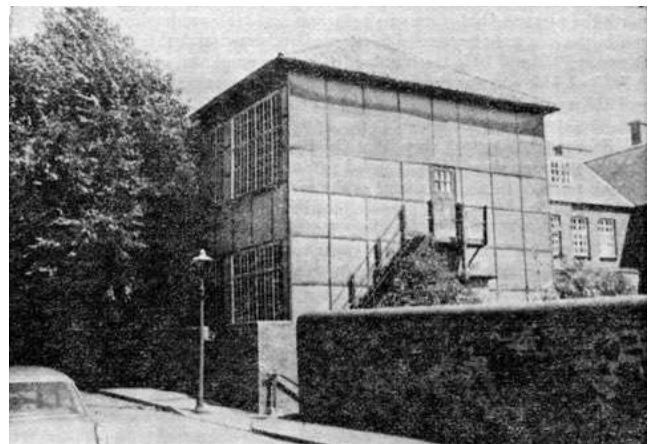
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

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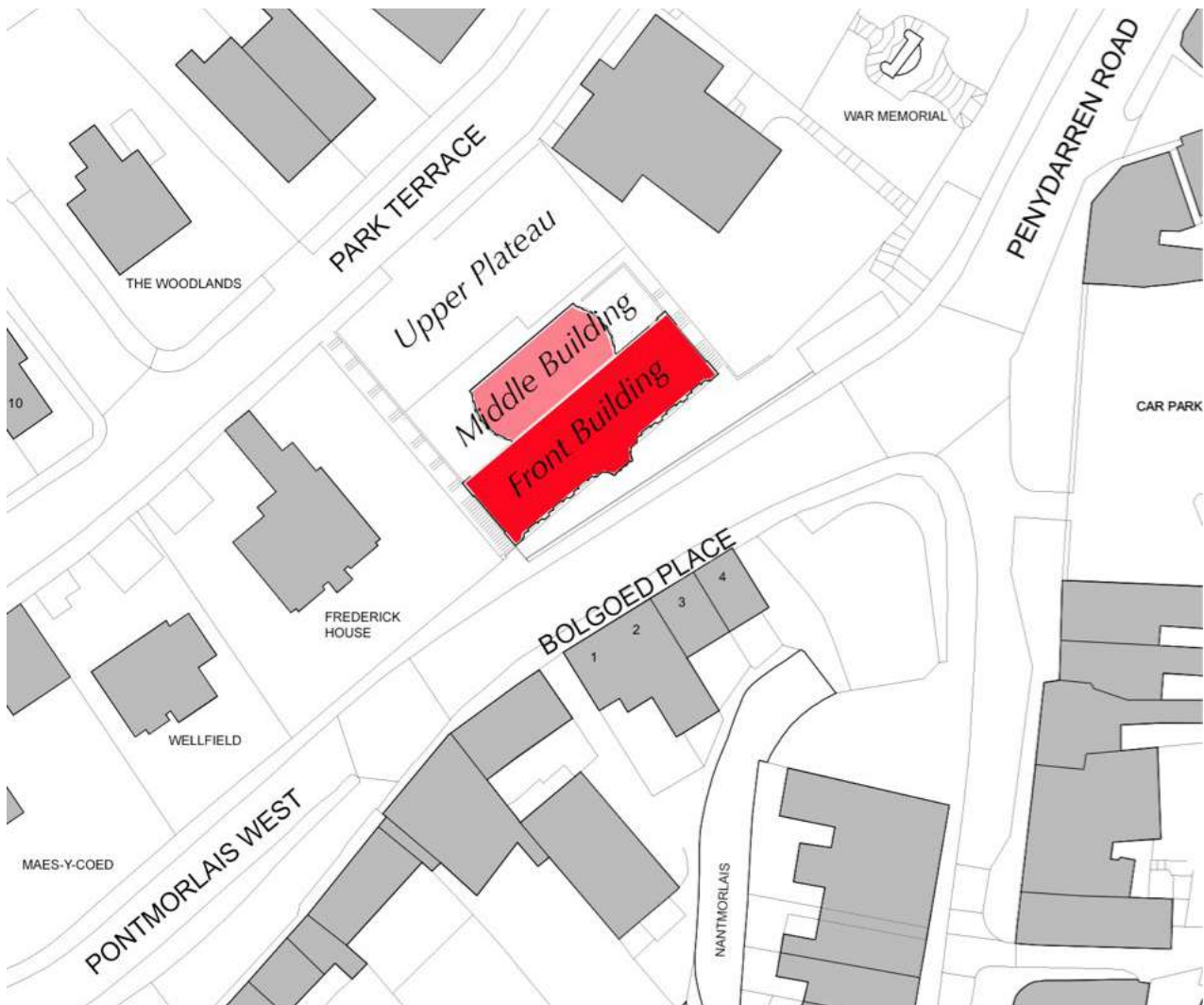
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement refers to, supports and supplements a planning application that is submitted on behalf of , in relation to the following development proposal:
“Refurbishment, alteration and extension of the YMCA Building, including the provision of car parking and alterations to the adjacent footpath, the latter to provide level access into the building”.
- 1.2 In line with statutory requirements, this Design and Access Statement aims to explain the design concepts and principles applied to the development in relation to:
- Access;
 - Character (including amount, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping);
 - Community safety;
 - Environmental sustainability; and
 - Movement to, from and within the development.
- 1.3 The full postal address is: The YMCA Building, Pontmorlais West, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8UT



Opposite: Historic images of the YMCA and Promenade. In the aerial view, the town centre is to the bottom right of the photograph, Pennydarren Park on the left. The photographs top and middle right also show the Rear Building on the ‘upper plateau’, this never have been constructed as originally intended, and prior to its relatively recent removal.



Various views of the buildings current exterior, following completion of the 'emergency' works. Prior demolition of a building constructed on the upper plateau has left the Middle Building's unsightly north elevation in full view, though 'Jones & Thomas' original design for this area was never completed.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The building was originally constructed in 1911 by the YMCA movement to provide a place for young men to congregate for recreation and personal improvement; 2 independent shops and a Cafe were also provided on the ground floor. The building was bought by Merthyr Corporation in 1934, whereupon it was used as offices. This use continued in later years, the building subsequently passing into private ownership and whereupon it progressively fell into disrepair; a serious fire in 2003 resulted in it being at serious risk of collapse. The Cambrian Heritage Regeneration Trust (CHRT) purchased the building in 2014 from Mr. G. Walters.
- 2.2 The building was designed by one of Wales' most eminent architects, Sir Percy Thomas, and is grade 2 listed. It is located in a prominent position overlooking the town below, and within the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 2.3 The site is a regular parcel of land of some 0.09 hectares that slopes steeply up from southeast to northwest. The YMCA is set into this slope and bounded by:
1. Northeast: The Masonic Hall, a brickwork retaining and boundary wall located between.
 2. Southeast: A wide pavement known historically as 'The Promenade' and which is retained above the adopted A 4102 below.
 3. Southwest: A narrow adopted and steeply stepped pavement, a brickwork boundary wall located between.
 4. Northwest: The adopted Park Terrace with pavement between, and within which are several semi-mature trees.
- 2.4 When completed the building comprised 3 distinct elements:
1. Front (Main) Building: Part of the original design, the extant terracotta and facing brickwork walls providing the YMCA with its main character. Its roof, top floor and central pediment are now missing, further walls also having to be removed to enable its repair.
 2. Middle Building: Part of the original design, this face brickwork building is a much plainer 'link' originally intended to connect adjoining Front and Rear Buildings. The roof finishes, structure and the top third of the northwest wall are now missing, further walls also having to be removed to enable its repair.
 3. Rear Building: A later and much poorer quality building located on an 'upper plateau', its floor being at first floor level of the Front Building to accommodate the sloping site. This building has been demolished, a cleared and hardcored informal 'car park' remaining.
- The buildings style is difficult to attribute: The Conservation Statement considers it to be both contemporary in its Art Nouveau-inspired lettering and ornament yet almost looking forward to Art Deco in the angularity of its oriel and top floor windows, the influences of C R Mackintosh and H H Richardson also being evident. Newman in the Buildings of Wales describes it as "confident Edwardian Baroque".
- 2.5 Vehicular access to the proposed car park is provided from Park Terrace at the rear, additional parking available on the adjacent streets. Pedestrian access to the site is provided from:
1. The Promenade via existing and original openings, the majority of which however incorporate steps to accommodate the sloping street;
 2. The rear, via a (missing) 'bridge' at 1st floor level.

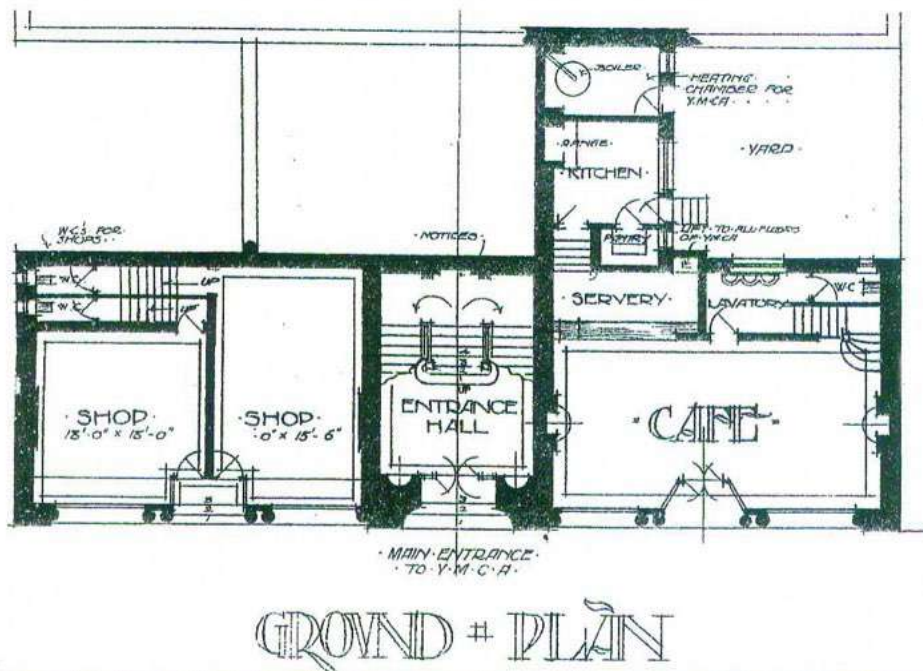
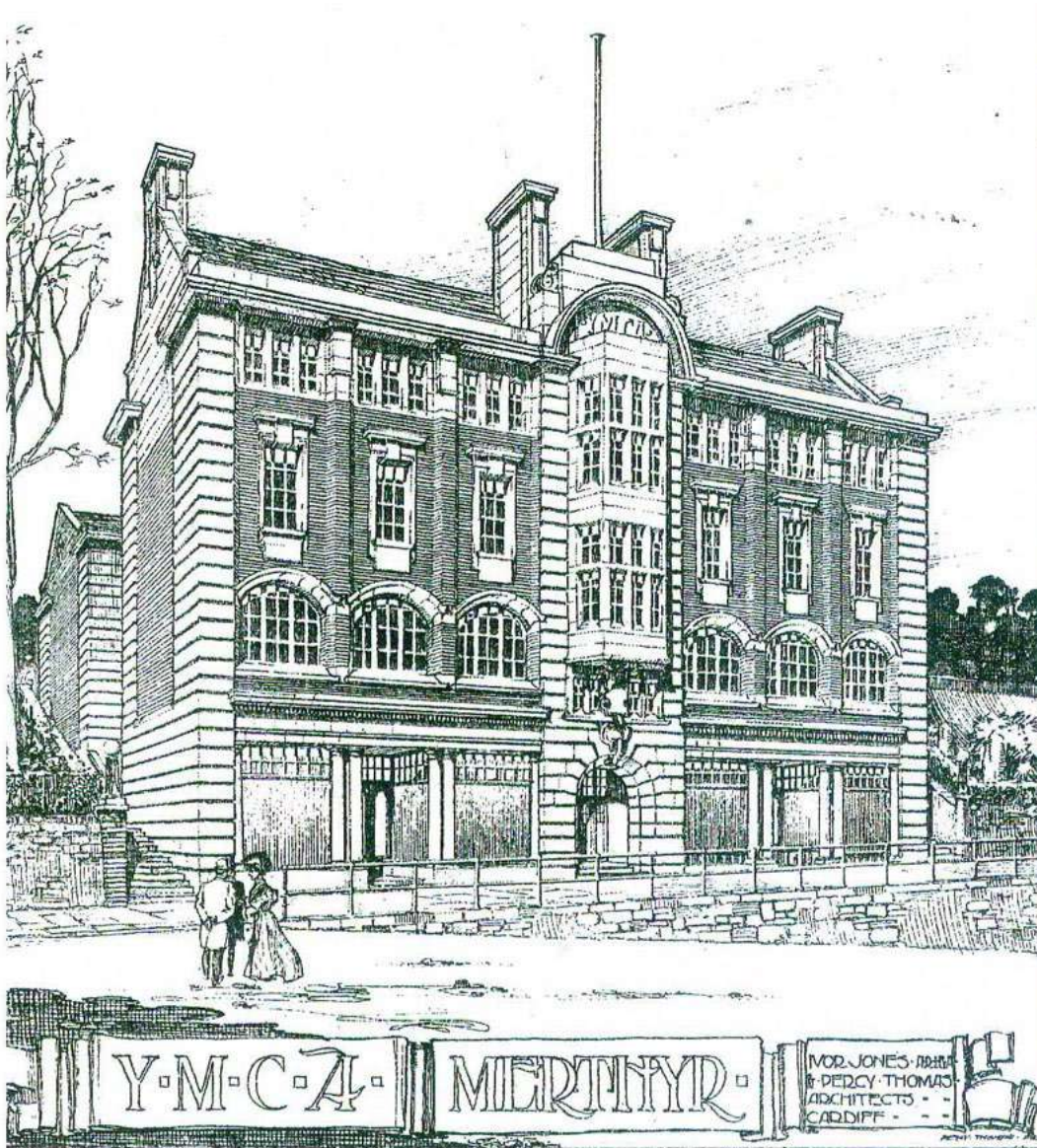


3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Good Design: Planning Policy Wales sets out that “meeting the objectives of good design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and applied to all development proposals, at all scales, from the construction or alteration of individual buildings to larger development proposals” (Paragraph 4.11.2). Further detail regarding the objectives of good design is set out within Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2014), the categories set out within this document being utilised to describe the project in more detail in the following sections.
- 3.2 The building is a prominent grade 2 listed building situated within both the Town Centre Conservation Area and the Pontmorlais Townscape Heritage Improvement area. The local authority’s response of the 16/12/12 to a ‘pre-application’ submission also confirms:
- The site is located within the settlement limits and the Primary Growth Area, as defined by the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (LDP), and as such new development is encouraged;
 - Policies AS19, BW1, BW4 and BW6 of the LDP support the principles of the proposals. Policy BW6 however requires proposals to demonstrate how the architectural quality, character and setting of a listed building will be preserved or enhanced;
 - Policy BW5 of the LDP identifies the need to maintain, enhance or not cause harm to protected species, the proposals potentially impacting upon nesting birds;
 - Policy BW7 of the LDP, amongst other criteria, seeks to ensure good quality design that is appropriate to its context, is accessible and protects local amenity. Given the number of residential properties to the rear of the site, the proposals will therefore potentially impact on these properties in terms of noise and disturbance, together with overlooking concerns as a result of the introduction of new windows, dormers, etc.
- 3.3 Informal vehicular access to the upper plateau already exists from Park Terrace at the rear and, though it primarily serves residential properties, this adopted road also currently serves existing commercial properties. The CSS Wales Parking Standards 2008 confirms that, given the proposed use and the town centre location, there is no requirement to provide additional off-street parking. Additionally:
- The entire urban area of Merthyr Tydfil is within reasonable cycling distance.
 - The existing railway station and new main bus station some 700m and 800m distant.

Left: Various images of the buildings interior before completion of the recent ‘emergency’ works (top and middle), the new temporary roof installed during these works pictured bottom left. Note that little of the interior remains, though the disassembled terracotta components of the original front pediment are stored within the ground floor Cafe (bottom right and right).





4.0 DESIGN ANALYSIS

4.1 Overall Vision

- 1 The proposals have been designed in line with national guidance on good design as set out within TAN 12 (2014). The vision is to provide a high quality, sensitive yet contemporary conversion that provides this redundant and 'at-risk' building with a beneficial new use. Simultaneous alterations will facilitate 'access-for-all' to and within the building generally, the character of the surrounding Conservation Area being enhanced in the process.
- 2 The main components of the proposal amount to:
 - The 'like-for-like' repair of the extant historic building;
 - The conversion of the building to enable it to accommodate a new beneficial use, including a new lift and stair to ensure 'access-for-all' is provided throughout;
 - The reinstatement of the independent Cafe, together with a small extension;
 - The addition of a new 3rd floor, to replace the original;
 - Formalising the existing rear car park upon the upper plateau and including a new dedicated entrance from Park Terrace;
 - Alterations to a range of existing outbuildings, to provide required mitigation.
- 3 The vision for these proposals is also informed and guided by:
 1. The Conservation Statement produced by Holland Heritage and which highlights the significance and special character of YMCA.
 2. SPAB principles, particularly:
 - **Repair not restoration:** *"Although no building can withstand decay, neglect and depredation entirely, neither can aesthetic judgement nor archaeological proof justify the reproduction of worn or missing parts".*
 - **Complement not parody:** *"New work should express modern needs in a modern language. These are the only terms in which new can relate to old in a way which is positive and responsive at the same time. If an addition proves essential, it should not be made to out-do or out-last the original".*
 - **Essential work:** *"The only work that is unquestionably necessary (whether it be repair, renewal or addition) is that essential to a building's survival".*
 - **Fit new to old:** *"When repairs are made, new material should always be fitted to the old and not the old adapted to accept the new. In this way, more ancient fabric will survive".*
 - **Respect for age:** *"Bulging, bowing, sagging and leaning are signs of age that deserve respect. Good repair will not officiously iron them out, smarten them or hide the imperfections. Age can confer a beauty of its own. These are qualities to care for, not blemishes to be eradicated".*
 3. Conservation is defined as the *"process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains, and where appropriate, enhances its significance"*. Conservation of our historic places does not therefore mean preventing all change, preserving a place as if frozen in time. Nor is conservation about restoring a place to how it appeared at one period in time. Implicit in the term conservation is an acceptance of appropriate change, these reflecting society's changing requirements for buildings or places over the years.

Left: The winning competition entry submitted by Ivor Jones and Percy Thomas. Note the Shops and Cafe originally proposed within the ground floor, and the ornament intended at high level within the side gables of the Front Building.

4.2 Movement & Access

- 1 Within the Wales Spatial Plan, the Welsh Assembly's objectives with regards to access and transport are set out as follows:
 - Accessibility is an important factor in improving quality of life and prosperity;
 - Access to essential facilities, services and employment is an important determinant of social inclusion.

Policy BW7 of the LDP supports these objectives, amongst other criteria it seeking to ensure all buildings are accessible.
- 2 Existing vehicular access to the site is from Park Terrace at the rear, to an informal car park, the constrained brownfield nature of the site preventing this being enlarged. Given the visibility available at this junction exceeds current standards, the intention is therefore to simply formalise this arrangement: 8 car parking spaces are therefore provided and including 2 disabled spaces. The demand for such parking is however minimised by measures also being adopted within the proposals to encourage more sustainable forms of transport e.g. dedicated external covered cycle parking and showers within the building.
- 3 The parking restrictions on Pontmporlais West and Pennydarren Road currently prevent delivery vehicles from stopping on these streets. Servicing of the building is therefore proposed from Park Terrace and the adjacent footpath, this road already being used to service existing commercial properties.
- 4 Pedestrian access to the building was originally provided from:
 - The Promenade via the original entrances to the Shops, central Lobby and Cafe. With the exception of the Cafe, all these entrances incorporate steps accessing the interior, due to the sloping topography of the adjacent street.
 - The rear car park, direct to the original Lounge at first floor level via a (now missing) bridge.

Part M of the Building Regulations confirms the owners legal requirement to make reasonable provision for people to gain access to and use the building and its facilities. Accordingly the existing external approach to the YMCA is adjusted as follows:

 1. The stepped entrance to the original Cafe providing the new entrance, automatic opening doors being provided to access a Reception Area within. The existing entrances will be retained and restored, though being secondary entrances.
 2. The existing access from the 'upper plateau' into the original Lounge replaced with a new access, this enabling:
 - the new route to arrive immediately adjacent to the new lift, and
 - the grandeur of the original first floor Lounge, the grandest room within the building, to be reinstated and as a single room.
- 5 In addition to being in accord with Part M of the Building Regulations, movement within the buildings interior has also to comply with Part B ~ 'means of escape'. Utilising the main stair as the principal escape route mitigates the potential negative affect upon the existing listed building of providing an additional stair, whilst also maximising the available net lettable area. This approach however also requires:
 1. Fire lobbies to be provided between this principal escape route and all adjacent lettable areas.
 2. An additional 'means-of-escape' direct to the outside to be provided at 1st floor level, this being connected to the main stair via a direct and 'protected' route.
 3. The size, going and rise of the new stair required to access the new top floor being in accord with current regulations, it being located so as all parts of this floor are within 18m of its protected lobby, and it being connected to the main stair via a direct and 'protected' route.
- 6 Vertical circulation throughout the building is consequently proposed via:
 1. The Principal Escape Route: This staircase is the central and finest feature of the buildings interior, the Conservation Statement confirming it as highly significant and with low

capacity for change. The proposals therefore retain it as the main means of vertical circulation and escape throughout the building and suitably protected by 'fire lobbies' at each floor. It is extended to the new 3rd floor via a new stair and which:

- a) is positioned in the location of the original 'domestic' stair to the Caretakers flat (all now missing), this location enabling it to meet the requirements of Part L of the Building Regulations.
 - b) references the main stair in arrangement, though subservient in scale and detail, its open nature simultaneously and similarly being used to passively ventilate the building as a whole.
 - c) meets Part M of the Building Regulations requirement for an 'ambulant' stair.
2. A Lift: Various locations for a lift were considered within a previous Options Appraisal, in order of primacy this being determined by:
- a) The external appearance of the building, the Conservation Statement confirming:
 - the exterior as more significant than the internal fabric.
 - The side and rear elevations are less significant than the front.
 - b) Maintaining the legibility of the existing internal floor layouts, the Conservation Statement confirming their significance as one of the few surviving internal features.
 - c) Ensuring all potential individual offices are accessible from the lift and via level circulation routes.
 - d) Legibility of its location for visitors to the building, ideally adjacent to potential Reception areas.

In response to these constraints, the lift is therefore positioned:

- within the building rather than in an external extension.
 - to the rear in response to the relative significance and capacity for change of the buildings different components.
 - within an original (missing) stair, to minimise its impact upon the original and existing floor plans.
 - adjacent to the proposed Reception areas provided at Ground and First Floor levels.
- Such a location however necessitates the lift projecting above the surrounding new roof, this also being a modern element.

- 7 From these vertical circulation routes, horizontal circulation is via existing corridors to the lettable areas, toilets and showers. The building will therefore be used much as it was originally, the legibility and layout of the original building being virtually unchanged, the



Above: The 'imperial staircase' prior to the temporary roof recently being added over. This originally provided vertical access from the ground floor main entrance to the 2nd floor.

Conservation Statement confirming this as one of the buildings most significant historic features.

- 8 In conclusion the proposals enable the building to fully comply with current 'Movement & Access' and 'Fire Escape' legislation. Fully accessible toilets are provided to all floors, further unisex toilets and showers provided at both Mezzanine and 3rd floor levels and all in an entirely non-discriminatory manner. A C21st building is thereby provided, notwithstanding its listed nature and with little impact upon either its historic fabric or setting.

4.3 Character and Context

4.3.1 Amount

- 1 The proposals potentially provide some 900 sq/m of commercial lettable space and in a flexible variety of individual units plus associated Wc's, Showers, Plant and Storage space, etc.
- 2 The proposed development is comfortably incorporated into the existing building, only minor and single storey extensions being proposed.

4.3.2 Exterior

- 1 The YMCA is a unique building at contrast with the character of the surrounding Conservation Area generally. Its character is determined primarily by the terracotta incorporated within the front facade, the scale of the building dominating the town below. The Conservation Statement confirms it as the most significant element in a group of Edwardian buildings that are an especially important part of the townscape of this part of Merthyr Tydfil
- 2 In terms of the site itself:
1. The Promenade provides the main approach to the building, being adjacent to the A4102. All the original character of this prominent historic feature has however been removed by late C20th improvements. The Conservation Statement confirms this public realm as significant and with high capacity for change;
 2. The adjacent buildings are set-back behind the Front Building. This further emphasises the prominence of the front elevation which, notwithstanding its poor state of repair, remains as originally constructed with the exception of the missing roof, central pediment and the majority of the windows and doors. The Conservation Statement confirms this elevation as highly significant and with low capacity for change;
 3. Both side elevations of the Front Building are similarly prominent, they remaining as originally constructed with the exception of the missing chimneys. The Conservation Statement confirms these elevations as significant, with low and moderate capacity for change respectively. The side elevations to the Middle Building are less visible, especially from the west, both also being in a poor condition: the roof, parts the walls and all windows are missing. The Conservation Statement confirms these elevations as moderately significant, with moderate capacity for change;
 4. Only the top half of the Front Building rear elevation is visible generally, due to the topography of the sloping site. This remains largely as originally constructed, though the roof, top of the wall and all windows are missing. The Conservation Statement confirms this elevation as moderately significant, with moderate capacity for change;
 5. The majority of the Middle Building rear elevation is visible from Park Terrace to the rear, above the upper plateau. However this elevation:
 - was never intended to be seen, it being hidden by an intended Rear Building;

Right: Horizontal circulation was originally via a corridor at the rear of the Front Building, the openings between this and the main stair being emphasised by arches over. This arrangement is replicated in these proposals, the lift being positioned accordingly.

Far Right: Images of the YMCA in 1990, the front pediment, chimneys, windows and roof all now missing. The proposals include the reinstatement of these missing historic features within the front elevation, this enhancing and preserving the buildings special architectural character.

- has been faced in an entirely inappropriate and incongruous sand:cement render, the junctions with the adjoining side elevations being particularly unsympathetic in appearance;
- has been significantly altered over the years, parts of the wall also being unstable. The terracotta chimney's and wall copings are the only extant items of quality, the Conservation Statement confirming the moderate significance of this elevation, with high capacity for change;

6. The Upper Plateau provides the main approach to the building from Park Terrace at the rear, being an informal car park screened by semi-mature trees. The Conservation Statement confirms this area is of low significant and with high capacity for change.

3 The 'Quality of Place' of this part of the Conservation Area is consequently far less distinctive than the remainder and further diluted by the loss of historic finishes and details within the public realm generally. To promote a successful relationship between the public and private space, whilst simultaneously enhancing the character of the Conservation Area and ensuring equality of access for all, the proposed design is based upon:

1. Using the existing entrances from The Promenade, this remaining the formal front facade;
2. Landscaping the 'upper plateau' around the delineated car park, the existing trees along Park Terrace being retained;
3. Providing a new bridge linking the rear car park with the main internal circulation routes.

4.3.3 Interior

1 The character of the YMCA's interior is provided by the generous and tall spaces, the large windows located within the front elevation flooding the interior with light (top right). With regard to finishes, these have mostly been removed with those that remain being in very poor condition. The Conservation Statement highlights the particular significance of:

1. The first floor Lounge: intended as the climax of the route through the building prior to entering the proposed (though never built) Function Room, its importance is illustrated by:
 - the structural 'gymnastics' used to form the cantilevered oriel windows, upstand beams also being incorporated above so as to maintain the rooms defined ceiling plan notwithstanding the walls over.
 - its relative ornateness, remnants of the original decorative mouldings and columns now being loosely stored on the floor.
2. The main staircase: the grandest space in the building and within which elements of the original decorative tiling and painting scheme still remain.



- 2 The Conservation Statement also highlights the context of the interior, it being a dedicated solution to the requirements of the YMCA movement generally in the early C20th. This significance is evident within the layout of each floor, the original plan and function of each space still being legible.

4.3.4 Scale & Massing

- 1 The scale of the YMCA provides its distinctive quality, it dominating this part of the Conservation Area in spite of it being set into its sloping site. Any alterations required to enable the building to accommodate a new use should respect these characteristics, their scale and mass accordingly being deferential to the original building:
 1. **New Lift:** Required to enable the building to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations, its location is determined by the relative significance of various elements. The Conservation Statement confirms this position is of moderate significance and capacity for change. Its overall mass and consequent projection above the proposed general roof line is therefore unavoidable, due to the internal headroom required to facilitate its installation and regular maintenance.
 2. **New 'Rifle Range':** The missing roof and top floor will be replaced in exactly the same location as the original. To maximise internal lettable floor space however, flat roofed dormer windows are proposed within this modern element as follows:
 1. Front: This location is confirmed by the Conservation Statement as being of high significance and moderate capacity for change. The scale and massing of the new windows has been limited accordingly, and follows the precedent of the original dormer windows within the Middle Building.
 2. Rear: The Conservation Statement confirms this location as being of moderate significance and capacity for change, it also being 'bookended' by the new Lift Shaft to the west. Its scale and mass has consequently been increased accordingly, its height being determined by the need to provide appropriate headroom within.
 3. **New Rear Lobby:** Required to enable the building to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations, its size is as small as possible whilst enabling circulation for wheelchair users. Its apparent scale is minimised by recessing it into the sloping site and utilising a flat roof over.

4.3.5 External Appearance

- 1 The extent of terracotta incorporated within the front and side elevations of the Front Building, these being the most visible, defines the appearance of the YMCA. This use of terracotta clearly diminishes from front to rear, brick predominantly being used in lieu. The render to the northwest (rear) elevation is a modern addition. The intention generally is to sympathetically repair the original building accordingly, 'respecting its age' and 'fitting new to old' in the process and thereby retaining as much of the original historic fabric as possible.
- 2 To ensure its survival, the YMCA unquestionably requires additional essential work beyond repair and/or renewal to enable it to accommodate an appropriate new use i.e. alteration and addition. In accord with SPAB principles, these new works should also complement not parody the original: *"New work should express modern needs in a modern language. These are the only terms in which new can relate to old in a way which is positive and responsive at the same time"*.
 1. **The Lift:** Clearly a modern 'need' and located in a position with medium capacity for change, this is clad in terracotta.
 2. **The 'Rifle Range':** The existing roof is entirely missing, the new roof being finished in slate in deference to its prominence and significance. New dormer windows are proposed within the rear elevation, to maximise the lettable area within.

3. **The Rear Lobby:** A simple flat roof hovering above double glazed walls upon a solid facing brick plinth, the transparency of this minimalist pavilion again lucidly contrasting with the solidity of the existing building alongside. It will minimally impact upon:
1. the original fabric of the listed building, the majority of the adjacent oriel window having recently been demolished. Silicone 'butt-jointed' glass is proposed at the junction between the existing and the new, the new landing within being 'set-back' to highlight the cantilevered nature of the existing oriel window.
 2. the appearance of the original building in general and the curved bay in particular, due to its small size and predominantly transparent nature.
 3. the adjacent property, the walls being 'set-back' from the existing boundary wall.
- The bridge linking this Lobby with the adjacent car park is:

- Physically and visually lightweight, this reducing its visual impact upon the existing listed building.
- Provided with screens to prevent people upon it having views over the adjoining property.

The required balustrades/screening are proposed in terracotta, low-maintenance soft landscaping beneath covering the new bat roost provided with a range of 'below-ground' existing buildings.

4. **The Middle Building:** The Conservation Statement confirms the low significance and high capacity for change of this building generally, the following alterations being proposed:
1. **Roof:** The existing roof is entirely missing, its new replacement being finished with slate so as to match the Front Building. Similarly, the missing dormer windows will be reinstated and again clad in zinc and powder coated aluminium. Roof lights are introduced to enable natural light to penetrate the heart of the building, located directly over the new stair within.
 2. **Northwest (rear) Elevation:** This is currently a visual jumble of elements and materials due to the failure to complete the building in accord with the original design, together with subsequent piecemeal repair. This entire elevation is therefore reordered as follows and incorporating additional insulation:
 - The chimneys rebuilt in their current location, panels of self-coloured render and powder coated aluminium windows also introduced to enhance the overall appearance.
 - Terracotta cladding introduced, the junction with the walls incorporating reinstated brick quoins.

- 3 The extant fabric will generally therefore be conserved to the highest standards, only small alterations to the buildings external appearance being proposed. These alterations are all in areas the Conservation Statement confirms as having the capacity to accommodate such change, the limited palette of contemporary materials suggested for these new extensions similarly reflecting the YMCA's new, modern function.

4.3.6 Internal Appearance

- 1 The Conservation Statement confirms the main internal items of significance are:
1. the buildings layout and proportions generally, and
 2. in terms of individual rooms, the Ground Floor, the main staircase, and the original 1st floor Lounge.

It also confirms the Front building as being more significant than the Middle, the latter also having higher capacity for change generally. It should also be noted that all internal finishes throughout the building are also either missing or require wholesale replacement.

- 2 Consequently:
1. New uses are adapted to fit within the existing Front Building and not vice versa, modern extensions only being added where this doesn't affect the integrity of the extant interior e.g. the modern 'Rifle Range' created by restoring the mass of the original building.

2. The original layout of the building is fundamentally therefore retained, the majority of alterations being located within the Middle Building and carefully planned to retain the majority of the original windows e.g:
 - The Mezzanine level is altered to accommodate the majority of the required new toilets and showers, all in unisex facilities to avoid any potential discrimination.
 - A new stair, additional toilets and showers are added at 2nd and 3rd floors, where the original fabric has already been lost or compromised by required repair.
- 3 Providing a lift is clearly the greatest compromise necessary to enable the YMCA to accommodate the proposed new use, this also having to be located to serve all floors and be immediately obvious when entering the building. A discrete location within an existing stair void in the Front Building is considered the most appropriate, this enabling the legibility of the buildings original layout to be primarily retained.
- 4 In conclusion those internal areas that are of any significance will be conserved and/or repaired. New uses are tailored to suit the existing building and not vice versa, the original layout thereby remaining legible, all new walls being finished in modern materials. A subtle difference between the new and the old is simultaneously created and which, together with the exposed service aesthetic, again compliments and enhances the character of the original building.

4.3.7 Landscaping

- 1 A simple palette of materials is similarly chosen for the new hard landscaping:
 1. Rear Car Park: Tarmac finish with concrete kerbs, it being a modern element and at the rear of the site. Paths within this area will be finished in terracotta paving, to match the new terracotta cladding generally;
 2. Retaining and Boundary walls will be brickwork, to match the existing building generally.
- 2 Soft landscaping is limited to the sloping ground around the Middle Building, a variety of low-maintenance planting being proposed.

4.4 Community Safety

- 1 The layout of the site (i.e. a multi-storey building overlooking the front public Promenade and rear car park with housing beyond, ensures that the development positively contributes towards the creation of a safe and secure environment via natural surveillance of these external spaces. Additional security is provided via security shutters located within the building and in the following locations:
 1. the ground floor front doors and windows generally;
 2. the new first floor Rear Lobby.

4.5 Environmental Sustainability

- 1 In light of the cancellation of TAN 22, consideration has been given to TAN 12, which specifies that:
 - “Good practice in mitigating the causes of climate change is to apply the energy hierarchy, which details a series of steps that should be taken to minimise the carbon emissions associated with a new development in the most efficient and cost effective way.”
 - In satisfying this hierarchical approach, there are a range of “low and zero carbon design solutions” that can be employed. “These should follow a sequential approach against their ability to reduce carbon and deliver cost effectiveness in reducing carbon emissions.”
- 2 Additional consideration to addressing climate change has also been given, as set out within Paragraph 4.11.6 of PPW, as follows: “Good design should ensure that development

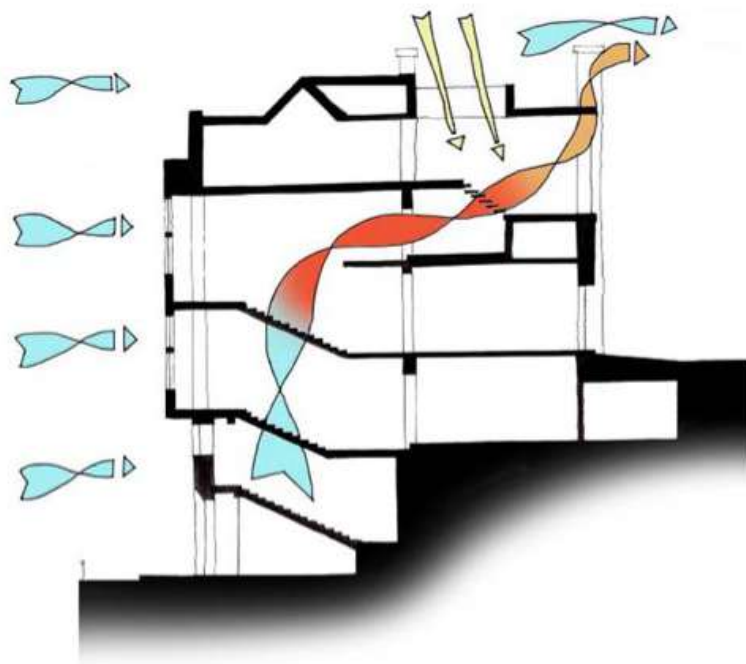
contributes to tackling the causes of climate change (by reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and to effective adaptation to the consequences of climate change.

- 3 With regard to these proposals, the integrated and flexible overall approach to function, density, layout and built form adopted provides an appropriate way of contributing to climate responsive development. Re-use of this redundant building will minimise land-take and urban sprawl to provide a similar function elsewhere and which will avoid development on greenfield sites generally. Consideration of the 'energy hierarchy' has similarly informed the proposals, the following steps ensuring as far as possible that the completed development will have low carbon emissions:

- All existing trees will be retained and therefore protected during construction;
- The use of walking and cycling as the main means of transport is encouraged via the provision of dedicated covered external storage and showers within the building. Conversely the use of motor cars is discouraged by limiting available spaces;
- All new elements are insulated in accord with current legislation e.g. the walls and roof to the restored 'Rifle Range';
- The insulation of all existing components is improved as far as is possible/practicable, with the proviso that the historic character of the building remains unaffected e.g. insulation introduced to the rear elevation and existing windows, the latter via double glazing;
- Roof lights are introduced where possible, natural light thereby being used rather than artificial and with the consequent reduction in energy use;
- High-performance gas fired condensing boilers are used to heat the building and 'shared' water generally. 'Point-of-use' heaters are used for individual Teas Stations, this using less energy;
- Electric and heating use is independently metered for all separate lettable areas, to encourage economy of energy use;
- The 'shared' toilets and showers are ventilated via a combined, ducted system with a single extract fan, this being more energy efficient than individual fans provided in each space. The Tea Stations however will be used more intermittently and require a higher 'peak' extract rate to remove potential smells. Individual fans are consequently provided to each, the consequent external grilles being located on the rear elevation to mitigate their affect upon the buildings historic character,
- Traditional, natural and recyclable materials are predominantly incorporated within the design;

- 4 Whilst the the large windows lighting the generous and tall spaces within the Front Building provide the YMCA with its essential internal character, it also causes the building to 'overheat'. This problem will be exacerbated if the buildings new use requires a significant amount of IT equipment. A combination of ventilation techniques are therefore incorporated within the proposals to address this fundamental issue:

1. Ventilation grilles: these already exist within the front elevation, face the prevailing wind and are located immediately above each floor slab. They are consequently reused to provide 'cool' intake air generally, this being ducted to each adjacent office via the new 'raised-floor' voids.
2. Windows: these contain opening casements and which will be reinstated generally to provide ventilation to the tenants within as and when required. However, given the exposed nature of the site and the wet local climate, these cannot be relied upon as being sufficient and especially given C21st users demands.
3. Chimneys: the building contains numerous chimneys, these being used to exhaust 'hot' air from each space via motorised extract fans. These fans will be controlled from within each adjacent tenancy, a centrally controlled override device being incorporated to prevent their continuous operation.



The main proposed means of ventilating the building is however via a natural and passive 'stack' system, the building being ideally orientated for such an approach. The alterations to the Middle Building promote this strategy via:

- the 'open' stair and roof lights over encouraging hot air and enabling it to rise through the building, and
- the existing rear chimneys being adapted to incorporate grilles at high level to exhaust this air, encouraged by the negative pressure created by the prevailing wind.

This combination of cross ventilation, buoyancy (warm air rising) and the venturi (wind passing over the terminals causing suction) effect enables the building to meet C21st standards of comfort but without affecting its historic significance.

- 5 In conclusion, holistic consideration of the building and how it is likely to be used helps to ensure that its energy use is minimised. It also being designed to be future-proofed in terms of energy performance as far as is possible, this further enhancing the flexibility of the building and thereby contributing to ensuring its long-term future.



Left: Examples of contemporary use of terracotta cladding, both in an historic setting. Terracotta is used as a rain screen cladding in such situations and enabling a high level of insulation to be introduced behind.



Left: When designing the YMCA, the Conservation Statement highlights that 'Jones & Thomas' were clearly influenced by the many artistic movements that were emerging at the beginning of the C20th, including Art Deco. This period has consequently similarly influenced the appearance of the proposed C21st extensions, fundamentally solid roofs 'hovering' over glass walls beneath.

5.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The YMCA has a distinctive architectural style and which is at odds with the historic character of Pontmorlais generally. Designed to accommodate a bespoke use and which is no longer required, the building has been empty for some considerable time and resulting in a significant loss of original historic fabric. In addition to judicious repair and to ensure a sustainable long-term future, this early C20th building has therefore to be significantly altered to accommodate a suitable new use.
- 5.2 Policies BW1 and BW4 of the LDP support the principles of the beneficial use proposed: a sensitive redevelopment of an otherwise derelict building that will simultaneously improve the attractiveness of the town centre and conservation area. Consequently the proposals also comply with AS19 and BW6 of the LDP.
- 5.3 The roof of the building is completely missing, including the terracotta central pediment, both side gables and all chimney's. The Conservation Statement confirms the capacity for change of these roofs as moderate, primarily due to their prominence. They are therefore proposed to be reinstated to their original profile and (slate) finish, the pediment, gables and chimneys being reinstated, but with the following alterations:
1. Dormer windows introduced within the rear roof slopes, to maximise the useable space internally.
 2. Roof lights and louvres introduced within the ridge of the Middle Building, this being the least prominent, to enable the buildings energy use to be reduced.
- The intention is that all the proposed alterations are constructed in a limited and uniform palette of materials, these being sympathetic to the buildings original character though used in a more contemporary manner. Hence these alterations are all clad in a combination of metal, glass and terracotta, these early C21st alterations clearly therefore being seen as a single phase in the buildings development.
- 5.4 In addition to replacing external joinery generally (and incorporating double-glazed units), alterations to the elevations can be generally summarised as:
- FRONT BUILDING:
- Front: The original Cafe entrance now becoming the buildings main entrance. The other doorways, whilst retained, will become secondary entrances and exits.
 - Sides: The introduction of 'slit' windows to light the ends of the 3rd floor offices, in the position of similar intended decoration.
 - Rear: Small 'infill' extensions to facilitate 'access for all' and maximise the size of the Cafe respectively. Both located in areas considered to have high capacity for change.
- REAR BUILDING:
- Northeast: The conversion of a range of below-ground outbuildings, to provide retired ecological mitigation. A small and primarily glass extension is provided, this enabling the building to accord with current means-of-escape legislation and also provide required Plant Room space. This new extension is linked to the rear car park by a new bridge. Its impact is mitigated through its small scale and transparency, the adjacent historic fabric also having been partly demolished, it also being located in an area considered to have medium-high capacity for change.
- The modern nature of these extensions is again expressed through the consistent use of the same 'modern' palette of materials.
- 5.5 The internal rearrangement of the building has been informed by the need to:
- ensure the legibility of the original plan remains.
 - minimally affect existing structural features such as arches, walls, ceilings, oriel windows, window openings and the central staircase.
- This has been achieved by sympathetically locating all alterations either within areas that are entirely new, or where the existing building is considered to have high capacity for change. Constructed with modern techniques and finishes, these alterations will therefore clearly be seen as a different phase in the buildings development and supplemented by revealing the

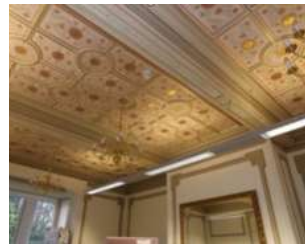


The adopted philosophy for this latest phase in the YMCA's history is that 'new work should express modern needs in a modern language'. The new services required to enable the YMCA to become a fully C21st building will be used to most evidently demonstrate this philosophy internally.



In a typical commercial office (top left), services are distributed horizontally via voids below the floor slab and hidden by suspended ceilings. This approach however is entirely inappropriate for the YMCA, due to its negative impact upon the buildings historic character. Also, all the original floor finishes have either already been removed or need to be, due to their condition. Consequently it is proposed that they be replaced with a new raised floor void above the slab (top right), this enabling:

1. primary horizontal service routes to be hidden, and
2. extant ceilings and walls to simply be repaired, where required.



Vertical distribution of services is similarly discrete, within new continuous risers introduced from Mezzanine to 3rd floor levels.



A great deal more of the buildings original finishes remain within the 'imperial stair', though in very poor condition, this also being a much more ornate space. The intent is to conserve all where possible, they being repaired on a 'like-for-like' basis where not, all services being hidden with the new light fittings that respect the original historic character.

This approach retains the buildings intrinsic qualities, these simultaneously being enhanced through the contrast offered by the clearly contemporary services and fit-out.

new services and the contemporary fit-out.

- 5.6 The above alterations ensure access into the building is enabled for all, in conjunction with the provision of dedicated disabled parking in the rear car park. 'Access for all' is similarly ensured within the building and provided by:
- The addition of a new handrail to the 'imperial' stair, its existing rise and going according with current 'ambulant stair' standards.
 - The new stair accessing the new 3rd floor being designed to similarly accord with 'ambulant stair' standards.
 - A new lift located to be clearly visible from both the proposed Reception and the new Rear Lobby.
- 5.7 The re-use of this redundant building will minimise land take elsewhere and thereby avoid development on greenfield sites generally. The proposals have also been designed to ensure carbon emissions from the building are minimised by:
- ensuring all individual tenants are responsible for controlling their own energy use.
 - incorporating a passive ventilation strategy that addresses overheating within the building, an inherent problem caused by its original design.
 - utilising high performance boilers to provide heating and hot water.
 - increasing insulation within the building where possible, though not where this impacts upon its appearance or historic character.
 - encouraging walking and cycling, showers being included within the building and only limited car parking provided.

This holistic consideration of the building and how it is likely to be used ensures that its energy use is minimised. The alterations have also been designed to ensure the building is as flexible as possible, its proposed use currently being undefined, and which further contributes to ensuring its long-term future.

- 5.8 The encouragement of walking and cycling also ensures noise and disturbance generated by staff visiting the site should not be excessive. All new dormers include obscure glass to avoid overlooking of the adjacent properties, a terracotta screen similarly being incorporated within the bridge accessing the new Rear Lobby. The impact of the proposals upon the amenity of the existing residential properties along Park Terrace is consequently minimal.
- 5.9 The Ecological Report confirms the ecological mitigation required, this being provided:
- a) Within a range of existing buildings, suitably altered.
 - b) By mitigating the sequence in which construction can take place.
- 5.10 The site's location:
- is accessible for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and
 - provides convenient access to the strategic highway network, additional car parking being available in the nearby existing town centre car parks.
 - The building can be adequately serviced from Park Terrace, which is currently used to service the football club and Treganna Hotel.

Consequently it is considered that the proposed development is in an appropriate location where it is accessible by non-car modes of transport. Safe access is provided and the impact of the development's traffic on the surrounding highway network is not significant.

- 5.12 The grade 2 listed YMCA's extant original fabric is therefore retained and repaired and, where accurate evidence of the original appearance survives, reinstated. The building clearly requires a beneficial new use to ensure its long-term future however, the YMCA movement's bespoke design necessarily having to be altered accordingly. The significance of the asset is articulated within the Conservation Statement, this informing the proposed alterations and which consequently avoid detracting from the buildings historic significance and special character. In terms of appearance these alterations use the same materials as the existing, albeit in a more contemporary style ~ *"new work expressing modern needs in a modern language"*. Providing such a sympathetic but lucid contrast between 'the old and the new' is well recognised as a method of enhancing the original fabric.

- 5.13 The proposals have followed a process of identifying where change to this heritage asset can be made in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance. These changes will be completed without affecting the amenity of existing residents, potential harm to existing ecology also being mitigated. This is in accord with current planning legislation within the UK, this explicitly encouraging the appropriate enhancement of heritage assets and not merely the limitation of damage. As a result, the YMCA will not therefore be 'frozen in time' or restored to how it appeared at one period in its history, but rather reflect the changes required to enable it to fulfil societies requirements of it in the early C21st.