

Treharris Library, Treharris

Design/Proposal Statement

Location & Site/Building Analysis

The application site/building comprises of a listed building which is currently a library. The library is a single storey structure that fronts onto Perrot Street, Treharris. The floor level is raised above the public footpath and is accessed via steps from the public footpath. The footpath slopes across the frontage of the building. The site is substantially lower at the rear which contains a partial lower ground floor, a small single storey porch /wc entrance is located at the rear lower level. To the rear of the site is a public car park which is accessed from Perrot Street by a sloping access road to the side of the library. The site is located in a residential area in both use and character, with most properties, being terraced two / three storey dwelling houses, predominately of stone, render and slate appearance. However directly opposite the site is a larger property which is currently an office. Perrott Street which is a one way system has a few properties which at ground level front onto the public footpath, some of which are retail uses. The Library, known as Treharris Public Free Library was officially opened in October 1909, it is rectangular in shape approximately 19.5 x 10.5 metres in the English Renaissance style.

Treharris Public Library has a high heritage value, evidenced by its Grade II listing. A desire to restore and preserve the historic value of the library is at the core of the development proposals. There will be a clear beneficial impact on both the interior and exterior aesthetics of the building, with cleaning and repair of architectural details. There will be some loss of original material where it is not possible to make repairs, such as to the roof and ceiling. This is considered to have a low impact on the evidential value of the building as these elements are common to buildings of this period and do not represent unique features of the structure. The work will also enhance the building's communal value, allowing it to return to use as a public library and community hub.

Aerial view of site and surrounding area.



Existing Building

The building consists of two large symmetrical red brick gables with stone features that front directly onto the street, the entrance is access by recessed steps which includes protruding clock feature. The rear and side elevations are stone walls with an external render finish. The roof consists of a timber pitched roof structure which has a slate covering. The feature windows to the front elevation contain stained glass leaded windows which are protected by external metal grills. The building is currently being used as a neighbourhood library, which takes up the whole of the ground floor entrance level. The lower ground level is used for storage and has a meeting room for community groups. The works proposed to be carried out by the Council are substantially the same as those that were proposed and approved in 2014 planning application ref P/14/1004.

Proposed Development

The building has fallen into disrepair over many years with water ingress causing damage particularly to the roof structure and internally to the two gables on the front elevation. The fabric of the building is in need of repair including a new slate roof covering, stone repairs, and window refurbishment. The scope of the proposed works also include replacing a poor quality canopy structure that provides level threshold access to the side elevation with a more appropriate and sympathetic covered entrance. The newer lower ground rear porch structure is to be removed as it is structurally defective and an incongruous addition to the original building. The external areas will benefit from new hard and soft landscaping to provide security to the building, improve its appearance/setting, and provide cycle and bin storage areas.

Internally the building is being reconfigured to provide a children's learning/library section, a DDA compliant disabled wc, and staff kitchen/staff room. It is a requirement of the owner of the building - Merthyr County Borough Council that all of their public buildings transition to near net carbon use. As part of the works the mechanical and electrical installations will be renewed, to include skirting recessed heating via an air source heat pump with back up hybrid gas boiler, the existing cast iron radiators are to be retained.

In addition to these repairs and alterations the intention of the proposals is to enhance the appearance of this Listed building within the wider setting of Perrot Street by preserving and where possible enhancing the historic character and features of the building. To do so will only enhance the street scene and the central area of Treharris. The building has retained the majority of its original features and character, however a number of the stained glass windows are damaged or replaced. The work proposes to repair and reinstate these using traditional materials and techniques. The current security grilles, which protect the windows are necessary but heavy and unsympathetic in their appearance. These will be replaced with light weight powder coated grills.

The stone and brickwork will be cleaned and repaired in order to ensure the future integrity of the building and to revitalise the tired appearance. The replacement of the corrugated canopy over the side entrance will further help to reinstate the original character of the building.

Accessibility

The refurbishment proposals include the inclusion of a disabled wc which will be accessible to the public that visit the library. Also due to the street levels across the site frontage it is not practical to create a level or ramped access to the front entrance, however a new roof canopy and level access is proposed to the side elevation which will give level access to visitors.

General photographs of the building and the immediate surround buildings.



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Clients Brief & Vision.

The clients brief and vision for the redevelopment and regeneration of the building was to preserve the listed building and prevent any further deterioration of the structure and fabric, and also make the necessary adaptation so that it could continue to provide a library hub and community facility that was suitable for current and future needs, allow access to all and reduce the carbon foot print of the building in use. The client is commissioning a suitably qualified person to provide a detailed Heritage Impact Statement which will further inform the detailed design proposals.

To summarise we are aiming to carry out the follow works;

- New kitchen to replace existing
- New DDA Compliant WC in lieu of store room and single WC
- New reception desk with DDA compliant access, located in existing position
- Removal of existing walkway shelter, replacement to either be timber or metal, depending what CADW advise
- New staff room near rear stairwell
- Demolition of DDA WC extension to the rear – unsafe structure.
- Upgrading external works are with, fencing, bin store, cycle store, hard and soft landscaping.
- Lower ground floor to be completely reconfigured to form two training rooms

Building Fabric

- Repaired slate roof covering, including all lead work and timber structural repairs where necessary.
- Cleaning /repair to stone features.
- Replace/ redecoration of external render.
- Specialist repair of stained glass windows.
- Installation of internal secondary glazing.
- Complete new electrical services, including, lighting and power.
- Replacement of gas boiler and heating system with new heat pumps, with underfloor heating, possibly retaining existing radiators as well.
- Removal of dry lining to allow external walls to be assessed and likely new ventilated linings applied where necessary.

Planning History

Historical planning applications on the Council's mapping database include:

P/96/0153 Change of use of Police house from residential dwelling unit to office accommodation - Approved

P/03/0600 Erection of rear extension - Approved

P/04/0001 Erection of rear extension (Listed Building consent) - Approved

P/14/1004 External renovations including window replacement, re-render and reinstatement of decorative cupola Erection of rear extension (Listed Building consent) - Approved

INV 14/0038 External works to Treharris Library - Application invalid on Receipt