

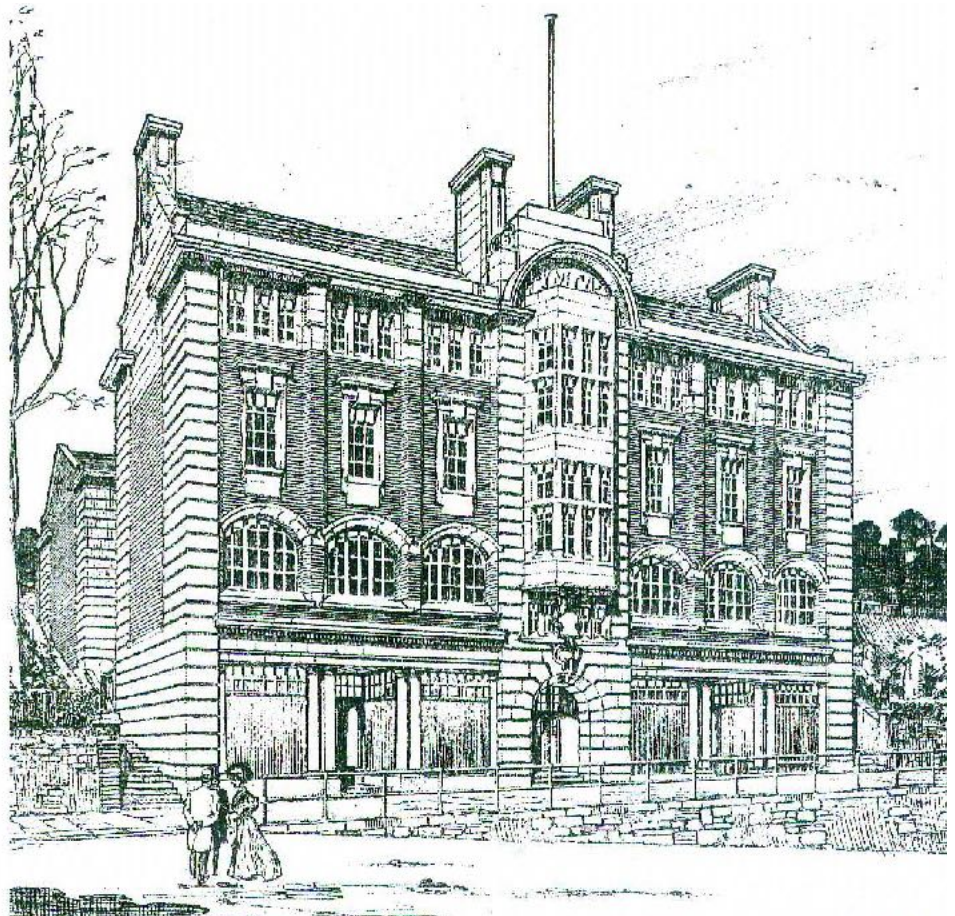
A HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT
in support of a
RETROSPECTIVE LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION
for
EMERGENCY WORKS

at
THE YMCA, MERTHYR TYDFIL

Pontmorlais West,
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8UU

on behalf of:

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council



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Issue Date	Revision	by	Comments
5th March 2024	None	KS	To accompany LBC application.

1. Foreword

In 2013, Cambrian Heritage Regeneration Trust (CHRT) acquired the YMCA and became the key delivery partner to undertake the implementation of this regeneration scheme. CHRT confirmed, as part of the application process, that match funding for the re-development of the building would come from National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Wales' Heritage Enterprise Scheme.

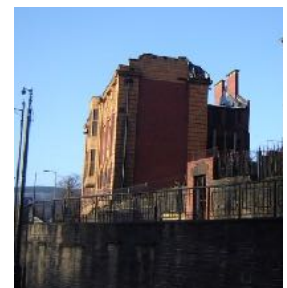
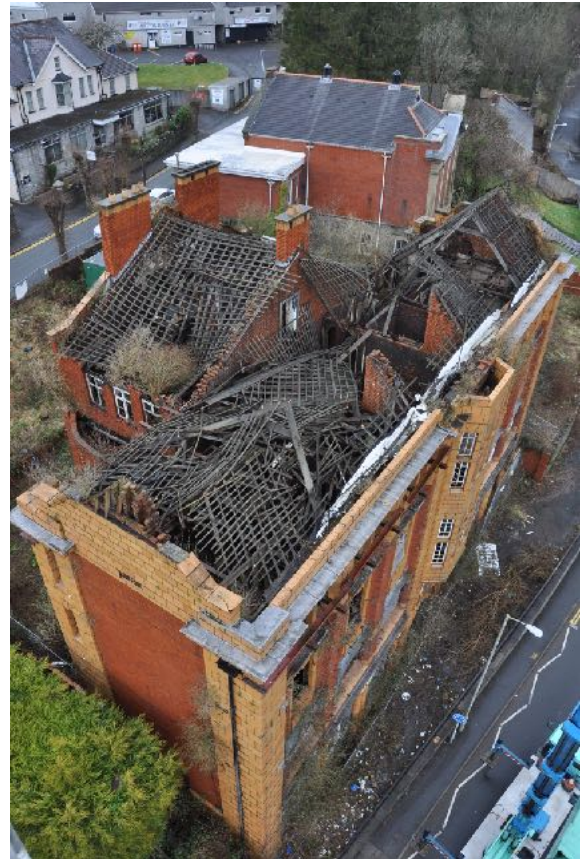
In September 2016, CHRT was informed that their Stage 2 application to NLHF was unsuccessful. This impacted on the Welsh Government (WG) funding that had also been ring-fenced towards the project. CHRT were therefore unable to re-develop the building. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) however identified that although CHRT's opportunity was lost, the potential for the buildings regeneration via the creation of commercial units remained.

In early 2018, MTCBC consequently held discussions with:

- WG regarding the opportunity to apply to the Building for the Future (BFF) Programme, a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded scheme administered by WG.
- NLHF, CHRT's previously approved Stage 1 application subsequently being resubmitted by MTCBC in August 2018. This application also being successful, a Stage 2 application was submitted by MTCBC and approved in September 2019.

A professional team led by Davies Sutton Architects were appointed in September 2019. MTCBC bought the YMCA from CHRT in November 2021, for one pound.

John Weaver Contractors were appointed in October 2021, whereupon construction works commenced. Safe survey of the entire building, particularly at high level, could only then be completed. This revealed a number of unexpected issues, all impacting negatively upon the programme. As a consequence BFF funding had to be de-committed, the NLHF funding being lost also as a result. Remaining as the owner and funder, MTCBC therefore reduced the projects scope from full re-development to stabilisation of the buildings envelope.



2. Introduction & Objectives

- 1.1 This Assessment refers to, supports and supplements an application for retrospective listed building consent for ongoing emergency repairs. This application is to be considered in conjunction with a previous consent (ref. P/20/0220 dated 24th August 2021); various alterations authorised by this consent have simultaneously been completed.
- 1.2 Emergency repairs were last completed to the building in January 2015. These included a new temporary roof, designed with a lifespan of some 18 months. Given this projected lifespan and the sound condition of various upstanding components at that time (e.g. chimneys perimeter walls, etc.), this roof abutted rather than over-sailed these high-level components. Gradual failure of this temporary roof in the intervening 8 years, particularly the abutment details within, has resulted in the buildings high-level masonry and upper floors becoming increasingly exposed to the elements. Serious deterioration of the fabric has occurred, most evidently requiring the closure of the adjacent main highway to enable the urgent removal of the unstable south oriel window.
- 1.3 The objectives of this application are:
 1. DEMOLITION: The removal of all dangerous or insecure fabric, to ensure the buildings structural stability.
 2. ROOF: The replacement of the existing temporary roof, this being well beyond its designed lifespan.
 3. EXTERNAL WALLS (in addition to the 'like-for-like' repair of the most prominent facades):
 1. Over-cladding of secondary elevations and infilling of existing window and door openings, to economically ensure the buildings weather tightness and security.
 2. The replacement of bespoke artwork within the south facade openings, to mitigate any potential negative impact upon the buildings setting and surroundings.
 4. INTERIOR: The repair and making-safe of the remaining structure, sufficient to enable regular inspection of the building.
 5. LANDSCAPING:
 1. North: Alterations to the existing modern boundary wall.
 2. East:
 1. The replacement of existing boundary retaining walls with more robust structures, designed to compliment adjacent re-contouring (see 1.3.5.2.2).
 2. Re-landscaping and re-contouring of the adjacent Masonic Temple grounds, as required to construct the required retaining wall (see 1.3.5.2.1 above).
 3. Re-landscaping and re-contouring of the area between the new east boundary wall and YMCA.
 4. The provision of railings to the sites' east and west boundary's generally, to provide required security.

Opposite (clockwise from top-left):

- *An early view of the YMCA, with The Promenade in the foreground.*
- *A view of the building prior to commencing the emergency repairs completed in 2015, the building having been roofless for decades.*
- *The buildings exterior, following completion of the earlier 2015 emergency repairs.*
- *A diagram illustrating the arrangement of the YMCA's component parts. The text descriptions follow this arrangement.*



Above right and middle: Various views of the original temporary roof, prior to commencing the current emergency works. Abutment flashings had failed generally, high-level masonry collapsing and vegetation thriving.

Above right: The 2015 temporary roof structure, built-up upon the original concrete floor slab generally..



Above: The internal face of the steelwork beams and columns forming the ground floor colonnade. Terracotta components encase both, the voids between infilled with ash-mortar.

Above right: The exterior of a typical beam and column junction. Note the:

- *Failed or splitting terracotta generally. Though clearly intended to be freestanding, settlement of the building has resulted in the terracotta now being under compression (from the loads above). A cement-rich mortar has previously been used to repair the damage caused.*
- *Render finish between exterior terracotta columns, applied directly to the steelwork.*

Little resistance has historically been provided to water penetration, with the consequent substantial corrosion of the primary load-bearing steel frame within, particularly to the connections.



Above: The steel structure supporting the east and west oriel windows were originally encased in concrete (above left), with a render coating. Subsequent water penetration has caused substantial corrosion of this steelwork, its structural capacity significantly weakened (above middle and right).



Left: The Front Building's south-west corner, with typical 'long and short' terracotta quoins. These quoins are just a veneer generally, applied over the load-bearing brickwork behind (with no ties between each); only the 'short' are built into the brickwork. A fundamental weakness was thereby created from the outset, with a lack of structural continuity between adjacent elevations. Note:

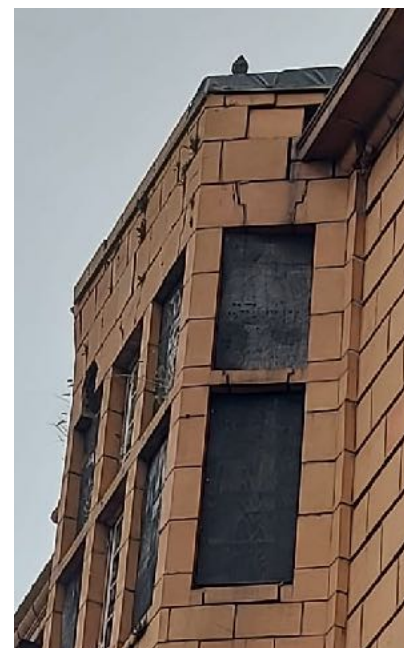
- *The tapering gap between the brickwork side elevation and terracotta quoin, caused by the front and side elevations 'peeling apart' from each other.*
- *Cracks within the terracotta facing, this enabling water penetration to the voids behind.*
- *Repointing previously carried out using a sand:cement mortar.*

3. South: The making good of the existing pavement finish.
4. West:
 1. Re-landscaping and re-contouring of the area immediately to the east of the existing boundary wall, to ensure its stability.
 2. Minor alterations to the existing boundary wall, with new security railings added behind.

1.4 In summary, the prime objective of this application is to seek retrospective consent for emergency works necessarily completed. These alterations were required to ensure the structural stability of this vulnerable and disused listed building, simultaneously:

1. Removing the risk of falling masonry; and
2. 'Mothballing' the building (for the next 7 ~ 10 years), to enable a new beneficial use to be sought.

The contractors appointment enabled detailed inspection of the high-level masonry, via a crane and basket. This revealed the parlous condition of the south oriel window: individual terracotta components separating and/or de-laminating, all at risk of imminent collapse. The adjacent main road was immediately closed and emergency demolition of this dangerous structure carefully progressed.



Below: The terracotta cladding is fundamentally a decorative veneer of hollow blocks, the void within filled with black-ash mortar. This cladding is not tied to the brickwork behind. Water penetration and poor maintenance has resulted in vegetation growing within the voids, this:

- *Forcing the cladding apart, both between adjacent components and from the brickwork behind.*
- *Causing cracks within and de-lamination of the facing of individual terracotta units.*



Below: Temporary propping (via the scaffold) provided during the current emergency works, to prevent the large cantilevered projecting cornice units falling. This support will be removed in conjunction with the scaffold, requiring any remaining cornice units to become self-supporting.



Below: The extent of masonry above the terracotta cornice to the Front Building north (rear) elevation was far less than to the south; no additional metal restraint was also provided. These units had consequently 'overturned' far more than the front. They were also in far worse condition (presumably as a result of the failing temporary roof), with many cracks within individual blocks. The consequent water penetration has caused the mortar infill to wash-out, resulting in a lack of structural continuity between adjacent units.

Below: The terracotta projecting cornice to the Front Building south (front) elevation was originally prevented from overturning by:

- *The substantial weight of the masonry over;*
And
- *A continuous metal angle along its rear face, anchored into the masonry beneath via metal rods.*

Water penetration had resulted in:

- *The integrity of the masonry over being lost;*
- *The corrosion of all metalwork, the rods mostly rusted through; And*
- *Failure of the pointing between individual units.*

As a result, the large cantilevered projecting cornice units were all 'overturning', and at risk of falling.



2.1 DEMOLITION: To avoid the risk of falling masonry and make the building safe, required the removal of all:

1. Chimney's.
 2. Remaining high-level gable and perimeter walls.
 3. Oriel windows, to the south, east and west elevations.
 4. Projecting cornice, to the north elevation of the Front Building (see 2.3.1.2 below).
- All demolished material was set-aside for re-use. Terracotta cladding was catalogued, removed and stored in accord with a pre-agreed methodology (see Appendix).

2.2 ROOF:

1. **TEMPORARY ROOF:** The existing temporary roof was well beyond its designed lifespan:
 - Flashings to surrounding abutments were failing, water increasingly penetrating the surrounding fabric and interior beneath.
 - It was supported on an internal scaffold structure, primarily propped off the existing floor slab beneath. Water penetration has caused this floors condition to deteriorate significantly, the existing scaffold support system preventing its repair. Its consequently been replaced with a more robust design, over-sailing the walls beneath to provide greater protection. The new roof is supported via timber joists bearing on:

Externally: New masonry cavity walls, built-up upon the existing.
 Internally: A combination of existing and/or new walls, either concrete blockwork or timber-frame as appropriate, located directly above existing (and suitably repaired) respective structural cross-walls or steel beams.

This new arrangement enabled the existing internal scaffold to be removed and the floor slab consequently repaired.
2. **LIGHTNING PROTECTION:** A surface-mounted installation, to provide the building with required protection

2.3 EXTERNAL WALLS:

1. **FRONT BUILDING (STRUCTURE):** The corner junction between each facade was poorly constructed from the outset ~ due to a lack of integration between the terracotta quoins and adjacent brickwork, individual elevations were 'peeling-apart' generally. Joints within had opened-up, water penetration (and the freeze/thaw cycle) causing further progressive deterioration. To address this and thereby ensure the buildings structural stability, various reinforcing rods/anchors were inserted to tie the corners together. Also:
 - Anchors were terminated externally with bolts bearing on stainless steel patress plates, strategically located to respect the pattern of the existing terracotta. In conjunction with new terracotta cladding, these plates can be recessed behind the terracotta at a later date, should the desire be to hide the current 'honest-repair'.
 - Gaps in the masonry were infilled, then repointed.
2. **FRONT BUILDING (CORNICE):** Water penetration within the high-level masonry above the main projecting cornice has resulted in the complete loss of structural integrity within this masonry generally. This failure of the wall above has enabled the substantial cantilevered components forming the projecting cornice to 'rotate/droop';

Left: Images of the rear projecting cornice, prior to commencing the emergency works completed in 2015. These illustrate the same problems currently visible within the buildings fabric generally, particularly within the high-level masonry. The fabric's condition has increasingly deteriorated for at least 35 years (since the building became roofless following a fire), and resulting in the current unavoidable demolition.



Above: Images of the Front Building south (front) elevation, prior to commencing the emergency works completed in 2015. Alterations within the current emergency works include:

- Removing the modern steel bracing, introduced following the 1990's fire. This was providing no structural support to the building, though was eroding the decorative terracotta facade.
- Introducing temporary weather-protection to the decorative projecting terracotta mouldings generally, in the same location as the original lead weatherings/flashings (removed during the previous emergency works).



Above: Various trial's were carried out upon the salvaged terracotta, to confirm the methodology proposed for the new temporary weather-protection.

Left: Terracotta repairs within the high-level projecting cornice. Note also the original metal strap that tied-down the inner edge of this cornice, along the front elevation. This strap, together with the rods that anchored it to the masonry below, were all highly corroded and with all structural integrity lost.



Left: The temporary weathering applied to the high-level projecting cornice; large sheets butted together, narrow strips applied over to cover the joint beneath.

all were at risk of falling. Additionally:

- Front (south) elevation (and the adjacent corners): Individual components within were in good condition, the reinforcement/infill between being structurally sound.
- Rear (north) elevation (and the adjacent corners): Individual components within were in poor condition; many were split and/or damaged. Gaps between components had also opened-up, the structural integrity within the reinforcement/infill being lost.

The design of the new temporary roof over addressed this dangerous situation, the resulting mono-pitch solution:

1. Incorporating sufficient dead-weight within the south elevation to counter-act the existing rotation of the cornice components. With supplementary strapping, this enabled the cornice within the buildings most significant facade main to be retained in-situ.
 2. Accepting the removal of the cornice within one of the YMCA's secondary facades, being the only pragmatic solution.
2. FRONT BUILDING (PROJECTING MOULDINGS): All were originally protected by lead sheet weatherings, dressed behind cover flashings inserted into the elevations. This protection now missing, water has penetrated into the terracotta and joints between. The freeze/thaw cycle has caused the usual damage, plants also bedding within. To address this issue, temporary weatherings have consequently been introduced. These have been completed in a manner that replicates the position of the original flashings, and which can be left in-situ as an undercloak to future flashings if required.
3. FRONT BUILDING (ORIEL WINDOW): The majority the terracotta forming the arched feature over the central bay had previously been removed (and stored within the building). Failure of the temporary roof over had enabled water penetration, this causing:
- Substantial corrosion of the major steel beams supporting the remaining high-level masonry of the original arched-feature. L
 - Assisted by the freeze/thaw cycle, the joints between adjacent terracotta components to open-up generally, particularly to the upper-levels.
- As a result the structural integrity of all walls was lost, resulting in the dangerous instability of the high-level masonry. All was urgently (though carefully) removed. A new temporary roof was added over, supported on timber stud work external walls (in the approximate position of the original external walls).
4. FRONT BUILDING (GROUND FLOOR ~ SOUTH): This entire facade is primarily supported by steel columns within the ground floor colonnade. Corrosion of the steelwork, particularly the baseplate and beam junctions, has substantially reduced their structural capacity. 2 options to address this defect were considered:
1. Replacement of the columns complete. This required larger columns (to meet modern structural standards) and damage to the terracotta cladding to the beams (to provide temporary 'needling' support).
 2. Supplementing the existing columns with new adjacent steelwork. This option could be completed without any invasive temporary support.
- Both options required the removal of the existing terracotta columns. Though these were originally intended as purely decorative external cladding to the structure behind, settlement over the years has resulted in these increasingly becoming load-bearing. This probably explained the majority of damage evident within. To minimise loss of historic fabric, option 2 was completed.
5. MIDDLE BUILDING (ORIEL WINDOWS): The curved steel beams supporting the external face of these projecting windows was poorly detailed and maintained from the outset: original concrete infill had subsequently been lost, the ends built into surrounding external solid-masonry walls corroding. The roof over both projecting bays had been missing for decades. The brickwork mullions between the many tall window openings were also extremely slim and in very poor condition; the windows had previously been removed, temporary strengthening applied to the mullions in 2015. Continuing water penetration had caused increasing deterioration/deflection of the cantilevered steel and concrete floor supporting the projecting bays and external walls, the external face of both oriels becoming unstable as a result. To address this dangerous situation:

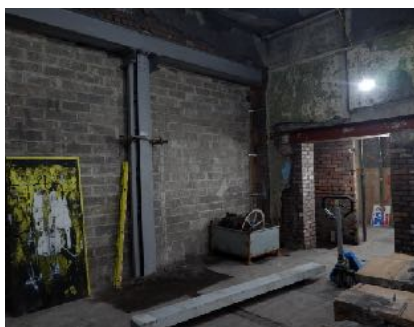
1. All beams, floors and walls within both oriels were removed. The beams were stored within the building (to provide templates for future replacement).
2. The beams ends were left within the wall (their removal requiring significant damage to the existing historic fabric), adjacent brickwork being made-good.
3. The resulting large gaps within the east and west facades were infilled with new timber-frame panels, supported on new steelwork beams. This new structure also provided required restraint to the otherwise free-standing Middle Building north elevation.
4. A new suspended floor was added internally, this structure also tying the surrounding walls together.

Internal alterations have been carried out to simultaneously:

- *Retain as much of the existing fabric as possible; and*
- *Enable this phase in the buildings development to be self-evident.*



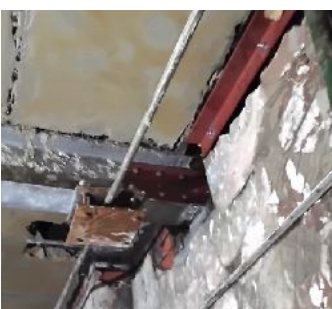
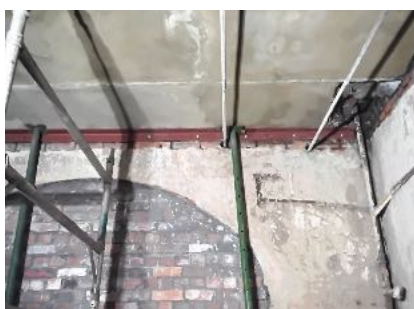
Left: The concrete repairs completed to the the exposed edge of the main central staircase were finished slightly proud of the existing surface.



Below left and below: The ground floor steelwork supporting the Front Building, eastern colonnade:



- *Existing steel columns and beams have been blasted clean and repainted, gaps between the beams grouted with concrete.*
- *New steel columns (with spreader channels to the top of each) added to each side of the retained existing columns.*



Left: The load-bearing capacity of various existing steel beams has been compromised (by corrosion and consequent loss of section). Additional steelwork has been added to compliment (rather than replace) the existing.



Left: Various internal repairs and alterations:

- *Existing steelwork blasted clean and repainted.*
- *Existing concrete floors have been 'patch repaired'.*
- *External openings infilled (using salvaged brick generally).*
- *New steel lintels used over new openings within existing internal walls.*

6. MIDDLE BUILDING (NORTH ELEVATION): Various problems within this facade required the following:
 1. Removal of all chimneys and gable walls (see 2.1 above), together with loose external render. The position of stable walls dictated the remaining wall height, the new temporary roof being located immediately over. Retention of extant historic fabric was consequently maximised.
 2. Replacement of various lintels and beams over existing openings (supporting quoins also being rebuilt), to ensure this elevations structural stability.
7. NEW EXTERNAL CLADDING: The alterations carried out to the south oriel window and the Middle Building generally, presented a combination of different materials. To provide a uniform external appearance, all have been clad in a bespoke rainscreen system. This system incorporates stainless steel mesh retained with treated timber battens, over a black, vapour permeable waterproof membrane. This simultaneously ensures the buildings weather-tightness and security.
8. APPLIED ARTWORK (SOUTH ELEVATION): Temporary partitions infilled the existing window and door openings, with applied artwork to the upper floors. These partitions have been replaced with masonry infill, new artwork added externally.

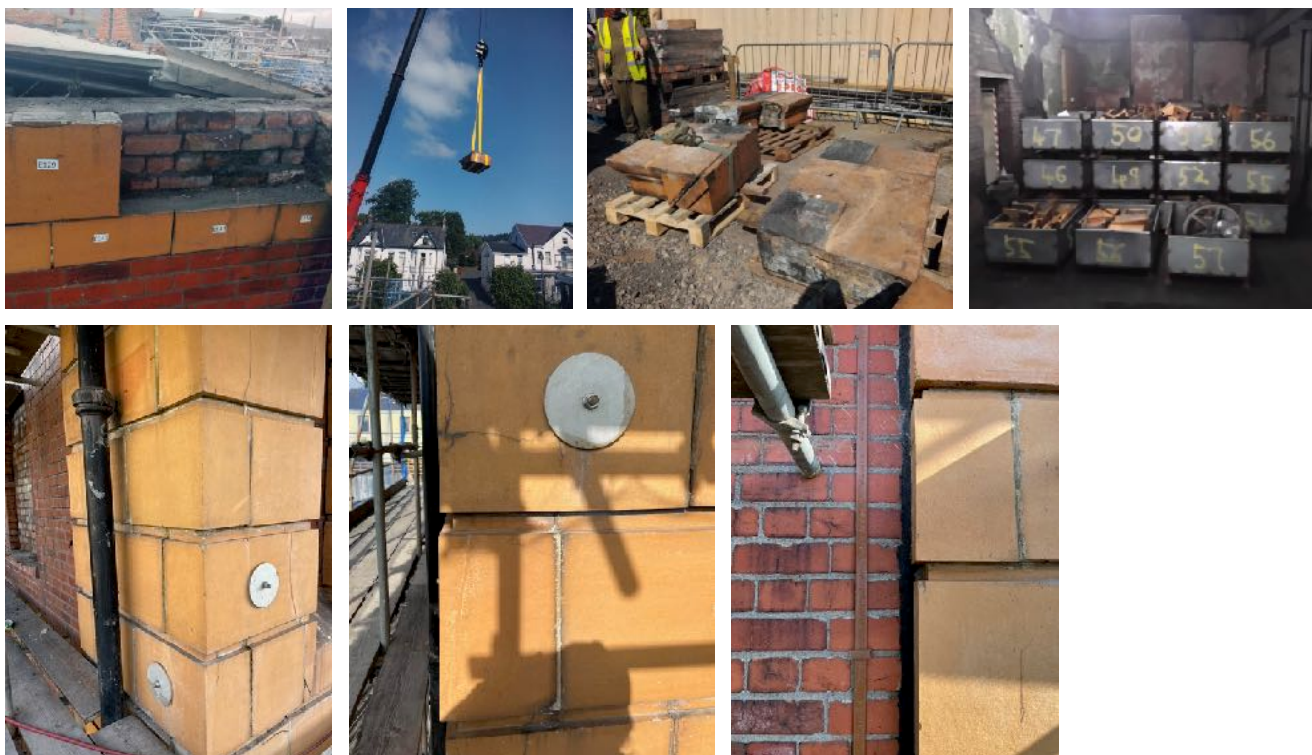
- 2.4 INTERIOR:** The existing floors are constructed of clinker concrete reinforced with steelwork secondary joists, supported on a combination of primary steelwork and load-bearing brickwork walls. Internal lintels are timber generally, various additional openings also having been introduced within existing walls. Penetrating water has substantially affected the integrity of this existing structure, it being in progressively worse condition from ground to roof levels. Various alterations have been completed to ensure the buildings structural stability:
1. STEEL STRUCTURE: Cleaning and repainting of the existing, supplementary new steelwork added where required by the condition of the existing.
 2. CONCRETE FLOOR SLABS: Where their load-bearing capacity has been lost, spalling concrete has been removed and the reinforcement within cleaned. The resultant holes have been 'patch-repaired' using new concrete.
 3. LINTELS: Replacement in concrete generally. New steel beams have been introduced where spans dictate.
 4. WALLS: Various new concrete block piers introduced to buttress existing walls, where required by to ensure the buildings structural integrity.
 5. CONCRETE STAIRS:
 1. Junction with adjacent floors: All the main beams supporting this junction are in poor condition, significant removal of extant finishes required to precisely establish required repairs. To minimise loss of this fabric (whilst a new use is sought), temporary propping to support the evident deflection has been introduced.
 2. Concrete Edge Repair: Removal of concrete where in poor condition, cleaning of the reinforcement within, and replacement with new concrete.

2.5 LANDSCAPING:

1. NORTH: Making good of the extant ground finish, to match the existing.
2. EAST:
 1. Lower Boundary Wall: The structural capacity of the existing boundary wall is minimal, it having been originally constructed on top of existing steps (with no foundation). There is no option but to replace this wall, with a new reinforced concrete wall faced with brickwork (to match the existing). In conjunction with this new wall:
 1. A low brickwork infill wall (between the YMCA and the new boundary wall) enables the required length of the new retaining wall to be minimised, the ground behind recontoured to merge with and be finished to match the adjacent Masonic Temple site. This new wall is set-back behind the YMCA's existing south facade.
 2. A new brick pier and ornamental capital (based on the existing located to this elevations west end) introduced, to mask the junction of the new retaining wall and the existing stone wall facing the Promenade.

3. Security: Bespoke metal fencing is proposed along various lower site boundaries:
 1. South: A 1m high fence along the Masonic Temple boundary, its design matching the fence to the adjacent Memorial Garden.
 2. East: A 1.8m high fence along the boundary generally, arranged to follow its slope.
2. Upper Boundary Walls: The existing boundary wall will be repaired and slightly lowered, to ensure its structural stability. In conjunction with this alteration:
 1. Mid Boundary Wall: An existing low brickwork wall is failing, being incapable of resisting the loads imposed upon it by adjacent raised ground levels. A new facing brick retaining wall will replace it, designed to better withstand imposed loads.
 2. Security: 1.8m high bespoke metal fencing is proposed along the upper site boundary:
 1. Above the mid-boundary wall, between the rear of the Front Building and the Bat Roost.
 2. To extend the existing upper boundary wall to abut the Bat Roost, its location being determined by the ground re-contouring. Facing brickwork piers/walls are proposed to 'book-end' this fence (the southernmost being capable of supporting the bridge required to provide future essential rear-access to the YMCA).
 3. Masonic Temple: Significant excavation of this site is required to construct the required new retaining walls. This site will subsequently be re-contoured generally and provided with a new gravel finish (as chosen by its owners).
3. SOUTH: Making good of the extant ground finish to match the existing, incorporating new covers to provide access to the existing (partial) culvert and drainage system.
4. WEST: The existing brickwork boundary/retaining wall is failing, being incapable of resisting the loads imposed upon it by adjacent raised ground levels. To address this issue:
 1. The ground levels within the YMCA site have been re-contoured.
 2. The levels of the existing brickwork wall have been adjusted (to accord with the extent of available salvaged bricks and structural considerations).
 3. Bespoke metal fencing is proposed behind the altered existing wall, to provide the site with security.

Below: Prior to their removal, individual terracotta components were individually labelled and their position recorded. They were then removed and stored within the building, in a combination of palettes and stillage bins (depending upon their individual weight). All can therefore be repositioned in their original position, during future reconstruction.



4. Impact Upon Existing Heritage Values

- 3.1 **Heritage Values:** These are already compromised, either by previous alterations or to ensure structural stability/safety:
1. Roof: The original roof structure entirely removed and replaced with a temporary roof.
 2. Elevations: Though the most prominent facades remain primarily as originally constructed, significant high-level masonry has been removed. The remaining are in poor and rapidly deteriorating condition. All high-level masonry (gables, parapet walls and chimney's) and oriel windows have become unstable.
 3. Windows & Doors: No original external timber joinery remains within the facades (windows or doors). Metal casements within the south oriel window were removed in conjunction with its emergency demolition.
 4. Interior: With the exception of the main central staircase, the majority of extant internal finishes have been removed. The existing floor structure is in very poor condition, various supporting steelwork requiring isolated repairs. All decorative elements (doors, plaster mouldings, etc.) have been removed and stored internally.
 5. Setting:
 1. North: An early building removed, this area now primarily a car park. The wall delineating the north boundary is modern.
 2. East: Alterations to the east boundary are required, to ensure the ongoing stability and security of the YMCA generally. Cooperation of the Masonic Temple owners was required to enable the eastern works, they consequently dictating the finished levels and appearance of their site (together with the requirement for a new south fence to address security issues within their site).
 3. South: This remains much altered from the original.
 4. West: Alterations to the west boundary are required, to ensure its ongoing stability and security of the YMCA generally.
 6. Summary: The extent of previous demolitions, current demolitions and loss of all windows and doors, finishes, etc. have all unavoidably negatively impacted upon the YMCA's heritage values.
- 3.2 **Evidential Value:** *This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric.*
The YMCA's evidential value was previously considered to be minimal. The emergency-works will have little affect upon this value.
- 3.3 **Historical Value:** *This is the combination of the illustrative or associative values of an historic asset which connect past people, events and aspects of life with the present.*
The YMCA's historical value was previously considered to be medium. The emergency-works will negatively impact upon this value.
- 3.4 **Aesthetic Value:** *This derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset. This might include the form of an historic asset, its external appearance and how it lies within its setting. It can be the result of conscious design, or it might be a seemingly fortuitous outcome of the way in which an historic asset has evolved and been used over time or it may be a combination of both.*

Far left: Cintech anchors installed to the south-west corner, coordinated with the terracotta pattern wherever possible.

Middle: Repairs were completed to individual terracotta blocks (bottom left), where the face was considered at imminent risk of spalling. No such repair was completed to other cracks (where no such risk was considered present).

Near left: The repaired gap between the terracotta quoin and west gable, infilled with strips of quarry tiles and repointed.

The YMCA's aesthetic value was previously considered to be medium. The emergency-works will negatively impact upon this value.

- 3.5 **Communal Value:** *This derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal value might be commemorative or symbolic.*

The YMCA's existing communal value was previously considered to be medium, primarily for the contribution its front elevation can potentially make to the Conservation Area generally. Though the emergency-works negatively impact upon this value, they enable the building to be retained for the foreseeable future (and a beneficial new use sought).

- 3.6 **Summary:** The emergency-works have resulted in the YMCA being made safe, a major risk to public safety being removed. Though negatively impacting upon current heritage values, the alterations have all been completed in a manner that:
- Are entirely reversible.
 - In conjunction with the cataloguing/storing of removed fabric and the introduction of appropriate new materials, enable the buildings exterior to be entirely reconstructed to match the existing, at some future date.

Additionally:

- Externally: the existing main facades have been sympathetically repaired, these remaining largely as originally constructed (except at high-level).
- Internally: the central staircase, main structural walls and floors have all been sympathetically repaired, they remaining largely as originally constructed, the original plan-form of the building also remaining evident.

The building is now structurally stable, its future in the short-term ensured. All removed fabric has been catalogued and stored internally for reuse, 'like-for-like' reconstruction of the buildings main facades and features consequently being entirely feasible, at some future date.



- Above-left: In the late 1980's, the building retaining much of its original appearance.
- Above-right: In the 1990's, various high-level masonry having been removed (to the Front Building side elevation's and the feature arch over the central south oriel window).
- Below-left: Circa 2013, following a devastating fire.
- Below-right: In 2015, following an initial programme of emergency repairs.



4.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Alterations and repairs were last completed to the YMCA in 2015, the intended life-span of which was some 18 months. Recent implementation of the scheme granted consent (ref. P/20/0220 dated 24th August 2021) revealed the unexpected extent of deterioration in the meantime, parts of the building being at risk of immediate collapse (most lucidly highlighted by the unexpected closure of the adjacent main highway, to enable emergency demolition of the south oriel window). This dangerous condition resulted in the increased costs exceeding available funding. MTCBC (the owners) consequently undertook a fundamental reconsideration of the buildings immediate future.
- 4.2 A revised 'emergency-works' scheme was consequently implemented, the building effectively being 'mothballed' for the next 7 ~ 10 year. This would enable a proposed new use to be considered in the meantime. This revised scheme comprised:
 1. The repair of the building generally, to ensure it was structurally stable.
 2. The replacement of the existing temporary roof, with a more robust structure.
 3. Alterations to the building to be limited to those required to enable 1 and 2.
 4. Alterations to the surrounding landscape, the minimum necessary to make this safe. These works required the cooperation of the adjacent landowner, the Masonic Temple. Their requirements in lieu were necessarily taken into consideration, this informing proposed landscaping and security.
- 4.3 Current alterations can be summarised as:
 1. The removal of all high-level masonry generally, this being unstable. A new temporary roof has been added over, modern brickwork infill being introduced beneath. A layer of concrete paving slabs have been introduced at the junction of the new and old masonry, this simultaneously:
 1. Spreading the load of the new structures evenly onto the wider existing walls beneath.
 2. Providing a clear visual demarkation between the old and the new.
 2. The removal of all oriel windows, the resultant various gaps in the facades infilled with timber-framing.
 3. The re-cladding of the elevations to the south oriel window and the Middle Building generally, to simultaneously weatherproof these walls and provide required security.
 4. The infilling of existing window and door openings, to provide required security. Existing salvaged brickwork has been used generally (as far as extant quantities allowed). Within these openings:
 1. To provide access to the interior generally, new steel doors have been strategically located.
 2. To mitigate potential negative impact upon the surroundings, within the:
 1. Main south elevation: Existing artwork has been replaced, artwork added within new ground floor openings.
 2. Secondary rear elevations: The building has been over-clad, to provide a uniform appearance.
- 4.4 Alterations to the surrounding landscape can be summarised as:
 1. North: The removal of the existing modern boundary wall, to enable the:
 1. Repair of the existing adjacent footpath.
 2. Provision of a taller fence (with entrance gates within), to provide added security.
 2. East:
 1. Front Building:
 1. The removal and replacement of the existing unstable boundary wall (the new

Left: Various recent images of the YMCA. These illustrating the regular changes required to its appearance in response to its gradually deteriorating condition.

wall being shorter than the existing ~ see 4.4.2.2.1 below).

2. The removal of the existing steps and infill between the YMCA and the adjacent boundary wall. All will be replaced with:
 1. A low retaining wall facing the Promenade. This wall enables the ground levels behind to be raised, shortening the required length of the adjacent new east boundary retaining wall.
 2. A re-contoured slope finished with stone chipping's, to merge with the Masonic Lodge site.
2. Middle Building: The removal and replacement of the existing unstable boundary wall, the area behind being re-contoured and landscaped.
3. Upper Plateau:
 1. The repair and lowering of the existing unstable east boundary wall.
 2. The addition of new piers, to visually 'bookend' new adjacent security fencing.
3. West. To ensure the structural stability of this wall, alterations to the:
 1. Landscaping levels immediately to the east of the existing wall, to reduce the surcharge upon it.
 2. Levels of the existing wall.
4. Masonic Temple Site: The re-contouring this site generally, and refinishing with stone chipping's.

Within the proposed face brickwork walls:

- Existing: Salvaged existing bricks have been reused throughout, including all copings.
- New: These incorporate bricks and lime mortar that match the existing in colour, texture and size, as far as is practical given the limitations of modern suppliers. Existing bond patterns have been replicated.

4.5 Site Security:

1. East, South and West Boundaries. Bespoke ornamental railings have been added, these following the profile of the walls and/or ground upon which they are located.
2. North Boundary: A temporary fence has been provided, including gates to access the car park located at the north of the site.

4.6 The majority of these alterations were:

1. Urgently necessary in the interest of safety or health (removing a significant risk to both the public and construction workforce), and for the preservation of the building.
2. Completed following written notice to and discussion with both the Council and Cadw, these justifying all proposed works in detail and as soon as reasonably practicable.

It was impossible to complete these without any negative impact upon the buildings heritage values or its setting. The only alternative was the building (or its boundary walls) potentially collapsing, with far greater adverse impact.

4.7 The benefits of the proposals are the YMCA now being:

- Structurally stable, in conjunction with the sympathetic repair of the main external features within its prime elevations. Internally, this has required some temporary support works (to ensure public safety or health or preserve the building). Primarily secure, wind and watertight, the previous temporary roof being replaced with a more robust replacement.
- Capable of being restored, the majority of extant terracotta and brickwork has been carefully demolished and salvaged. All terracotta components were individually recorded and catalogued prior to removal, in conjunction with careful storage enabling each to be incorporated within any future restoration (or used as a template for required replacement components).

In conclusion therefore, the YMCA is effectively 'mothballed' ~ its lifespan is extended (for the next 7 ~ 10 years), to enable an appropriate new beneficial use to be sought in the meantime. It must be noted however that, to maintain this situation whilst the building remains empty and unheated, regular future inspection is required to identify any ongoing deterioration of the building generally.

6. Contacts

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