

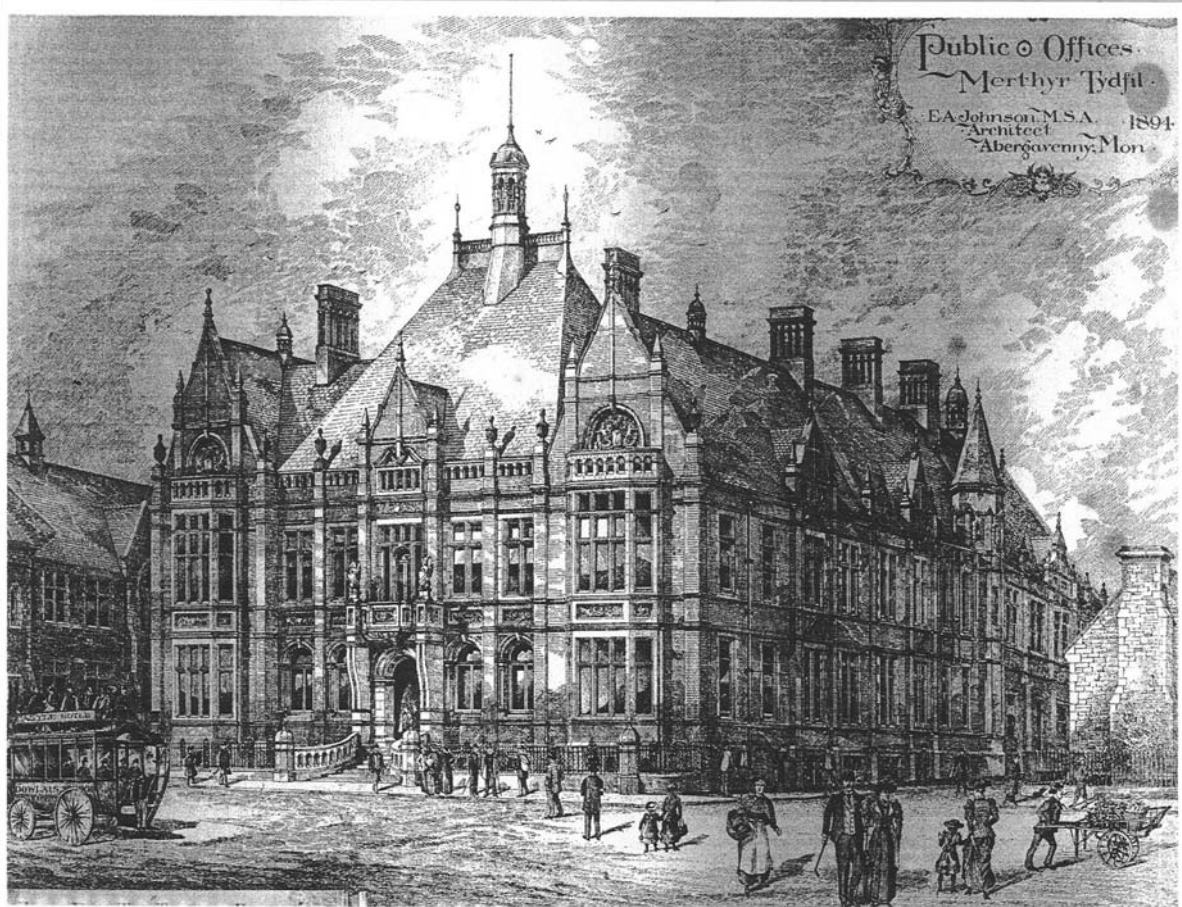
**Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association**

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Merthyr Old Town Hall  
Conservation Management Plan

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We have prepared this Conservation Management Plan to accompany the second round application of the Heritage Lottery Submission for the restoration of Merthyr Tydfil Old Town Hall. This accompanies the documentation required for the submission but critically it is a document which is considered from the very outset of the whole process of restoring a listed building. The Conservation Management plan is at the core of establishing the significance of the building, and therefore is a point of guidance through the whole design process.

The CMP is written in accordance with the guidelines from the HLF, and with the generous help and assistance of the people of Merthyr Tydfil.

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## **1.0 Executive Summary**

- This Conservation Management Plan for the Merthyr Tydfil Old Town Hall has been written in large part by The Heritage, Creative Industries and Arts Consultant employed by MTHA and by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association staff. Together with the knowledge and assistance of Colin King at the BRE and also by Austin-Smith:Lord Architects.
- The CMP was written by a team of people each giving differing aspects of their knowledge to the document and who have ensured that their expertise is used to its best advantage. The close work that the Heritage, Creative Industries and Arts Consultant has done with the community has benefitted the CMP immeasurably.
- The plan is written solely about the building of the Merthyr Tydfil Old Town Hall, which is situated physically and emotionally at the heart of Merthyr Tydfil Town. Many matters could be discussed about the state of the conservation area which surrounds the site and the neglect of the other listed buildings in the area, but this is worthy of another publication. The site is a compact area, surrounded by other buildings and thus this Conservation Management Plan is limited to the immediate areas of the building.
- The Building of the Merthyr Tydfil Town Hall is a Grade II\* Late Victorian edifice, built and now still representing the triumphs and tribulations of Merthyr Tydfil Town. It is a beautifully crafted piece of bespoke piece of civic Architecture, created in celebration of the Merthyr Tydfil's new status as a Town. When it was built the Architect employed many of the innovative crafts and industries of the day in its wonderfully rich details and flourishes.
- Although Merthyr Tydfil was a haven of work and riches due to the industrial revolution, the building's conception and construction was created under the shadow of rioting, wage disputes and starvation. The Old Town Hall has survived the highs and lows of the industrial revolution and then later deprivations of the town through various job losses, recessions and Miners strikes. Like Town Hall itself, Merthyr Tydfil has seen its ups and downs and the building seems to represent and embodies the spirit of the town in so many ways. As such the people of Merthyr Tydfil and the wider area have a great passion to see their building restored. They wish to see it brought from rack and ruin, back to its former glory.
- This document should be read in conjunction with the other plans created to accompany the Merthyr Tydfil Town Hall submission: the access plan, the drawings, the business plan, maintenance plan and the activity plan.

## **2.0 Merthyr Town Hall.**

- 2.1** For 33 years from 1865 -1898 formal meetings were held exploring the merit of having a Town Hall in the Merthyr Tydfil. A number of different locations were considered: Market Square and its current location referred to as the 'Castle Site'– opposite the old Castle Inn. The 'Old Town Hall' Merthyr Tydfil is located at the heart of the town. It is built on land previously occupied by a temporary 'Board of Health' building, and the Bunch of Grapes Inn, both of which were demolished to accommodate the Old Town Hall. The land had been purchased some years previously with the intent of eventually erecting a Town Hall for the town. To safe guard the land the 'Board of Health' built a temporary office building, which was later demolished, making way for the Town Hall.



(The large light building is the 'Board of Health' offices. The Bunch of Grapes Inn was located to the rear of this)

'In a public meeting on 4 October 1833 there was a discussion to consider 'erecting a Town Hall and such other buildings as may be useful'. (A Mr.) Guest put up £1,000 for its construction, but then that was forgotten. Crawshay had land in the Glebeland where it was proposed to build the Town Hall but again there were objections. '

Extract from Joe England, Chairman of the Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Trust. If this is all correct, it would mean that the discussion to have a Town Hall spanned over 63 years.

The Old Town Hall was built during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, in 1898, when Merthyr Tydfil was the largest town in Wales, Merthyr Tydfil was an important seat of the Industrial Revolution and its economic importance as a producer of coal, iron and steel was global. The Old Town Hall was an important symbol of civic pride, contributing to the town gaining County Borough status, and its ambitious design reflects the aspirations of the age. Construction started in 1896 and was completed two years later in 1898. It originally housed both the council offices and the law courts and police cells. A powerful and colourful late Victorian composition of mixed features, its style is generally described as French Renaissance.

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Reading the Royal Charter at the Town Hall  
1905 incorporating Merthyr Tydfil as a  
borough



The last Committee Meeting in the  
Town Hall; Council Chamber, 1989

The building is of great historical importance to the town. Kier Hardie, who was elected to the constituency of Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare in 1900 as the first independent labour Member of Parliament, seven years before the founding conference of the Labour Party, delivered a number of notable speeches from its balcony as the fledging party gained ground and eventually won power in 1924. Kier Hardy also campaigned for women's votes developing a close friendship with Sylvia Pankhurst.

The Old Town Hall is therefore symbolic of the importance of Merthyr Tydfil to the history of Wales, the UK and the British Empire, and it also bears witness to the lives and the sufferings of local people in former, harsher times. The historic social and political associations of the building and of the project as a whole cannot and should not be underestimated in considering options for future development. Its loss would undoubtedly tear the heart from the town at a time when other new developments such as out of town retail parks, call centres and the new Welsh Government Offices, though hugely successful and much welcomed, could easily transform Merthyr Tydfil into one of the many faceless town centres which now threaten the intrinsic character of the nation

### 3.0 Description of the Site and Premises

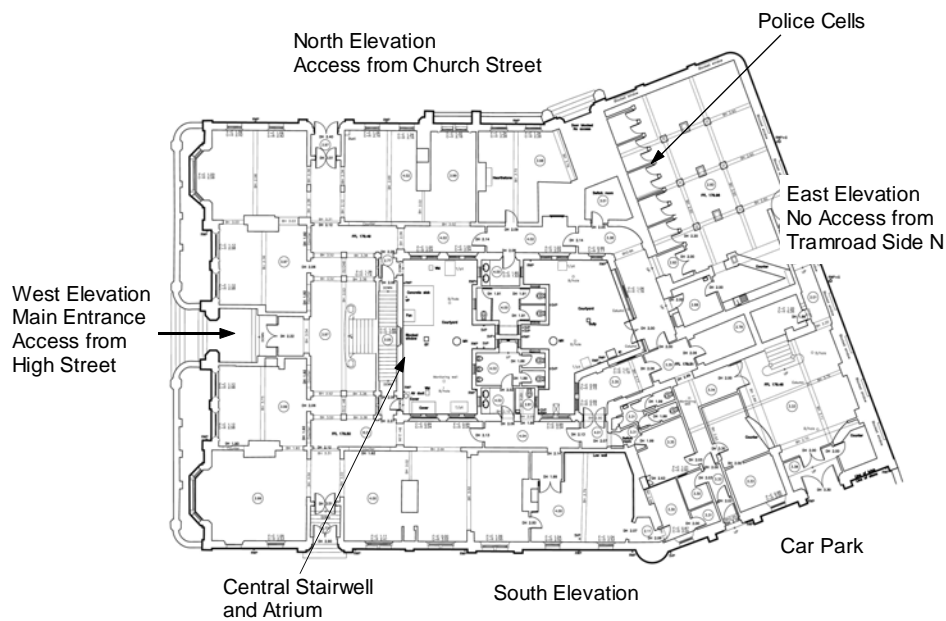


Front Elevation (High Street)



Rear Elevation (Tramroad Side N)

- 3.1** The Old Town Hall is a substantial civic building located in Town Hall Square in the historic centre of Merthyr Tydfil. With a footprint of approximately 1380 m<sup>2</sup> (14,854 ft<sup>2</sup>), the existing premises consist of two integrated but almost discreet areas on two floors with additional basement and attic space. The area at the front of the building (West elevation) is a square structure approximately 30m (100 ft) x 30m which originally housed the town hall whilst a rectangular annexe approximately 30m x 16m (52 ft) at the rear housed the town's law courts and police cells. The annexe is offset at an angle of approximately 30° to the main area.



Ground Floor Plan Existing

- 3.2** The town hall area consists of a number of rooms arranged around a central atrium and stairwell. Access is gained from the main entrance foyer on the west elevation which fronts the town square and leads to the main shopping area. There is secondary access from the north and south elevations which both lead to a common corridor, effectively separating the main building from the annexe. The east elevation to the rear of the building is partly subterranean as the ground rises increasingly and fairly steeply to the road which skirts the rear of the building. There is no access into the building from this elevation.

The basement extends roughly half way across the town hall area from the front (West) entrance, and is bounded by a retaining wall at the rear of the main stairwell, although there is some additional basement space on the south side of the building. This arrangement follows the natural contours of the ground which rises steeply to the north and rear elevations.

Subterranean conditions at the rear of the site have not been fully investigated, and the extent and condition of foundations to the rear walls remains unclear.

The curtilage of the site, which is bounded by the building walls on the north, east and west elevations includes an open area of approximately 1000 m<sup>2</sup> (10,750 ft<sup>2</sup>) adjacent to the south elevation at the rear of the existing town library. This area currently serves as an informal car park for the town library which will continue to have a right of access as a vehicular turning point. It also allows vehicular access to the building's south elevation. Because of the difficulty of roadside parking and loading at other access points, this area assumes significant importance for potential building works, car parking and commercial loading



North Elevation (Church Street)



South Elevation (Car Parking Area)

The building remains largely unchanged from when it was first designed and constructed; with only minor alterations such as the construction of partition walls to subdivide large rooms.

The building has been vacant for almost 20 years, is deteriorating and is at a critical stage – it is considered to be in poor condition and at risk (see CADW listing report and assessment)

#### **4.0 Understanding the Heritage**

- 4.1** The building was designed by a local architect, E. A. Johnson, whose offices were located in St Mary's Chambers, Monk Street Abergavenny, which he also designed; Glebeland House, Glebeland Street Merthyr Tydfil and Newport. He contributed significantly to the architectural development in the Town and there is evidence of an architectural trail of his work throughout the borough of Merthyr Tydfil specifically but not exclusively: the infirmary; Dowlais Church; Dowlais Library and the first Masonic Temple in Merthyr Tydfil and adjoining First Club in Merthyr.



- 4.2** The plan to build a Town Hall was first discussed, publicly, by Merthyr Tydfil 'Board of Health' in 1865. Mr Robert Crawshay paid for Architect E. Robinson from Cardiff to draw up plans for the Town Hall. The suggested materials to realise the design were: 'Pentrebach Stone', with external walls cased in red and white brick, main staircase in forest of dean stone; all ornamental work to be in Casterton colite limestone, columns Peterhead; roof granite'. The estimated cost for such a building at that time was £7,864, and the proposed location was Market Square. To gather public opinion, the plans for the Town Hall were placed in a shop window. This proposal was dependant of securing confirmation by the mortgagees of the Court Estate': C.H. James for Richard Thomas and J.W. Russell, Clerk to the Local Board. The proposal did not move forward until 1886, 21 years later, when a competition was held to design a Town Hall for Merthyr Tydfil; this was won by Mr E.A. Johnson, who was 31 at the time. He received the prize money of 50 guineas, 3 years later in 1889; a clause was included with the prize money stipulating that if the design was constructed then the prize money would have to be refunded. There are minutes of lengthy discussions which took place on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1899, concerning the refund but they failed to resolve contract clauses from 1897.



Mr. E. A. Johnson's design for the Town Hall

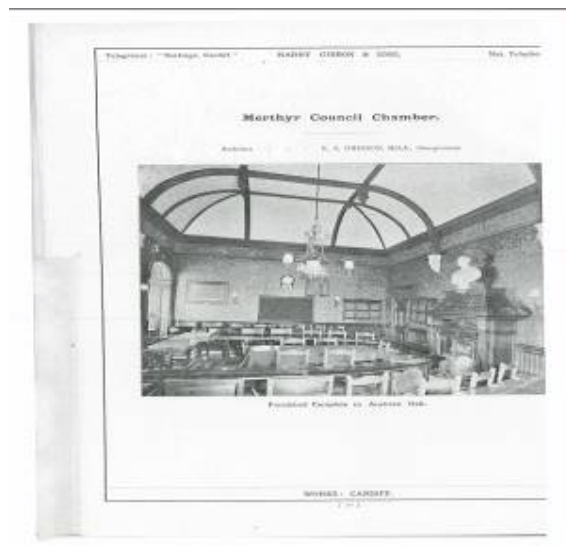
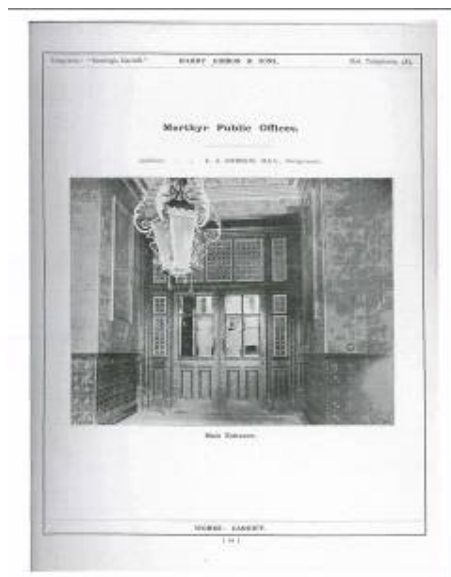
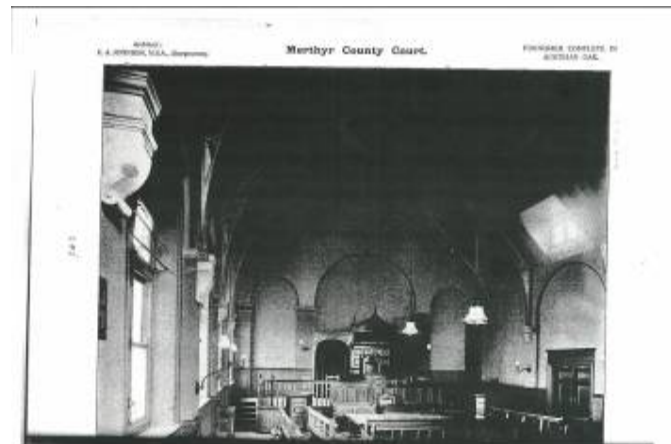
- 4.3** The Town Hall design remained a paper exercise until 1895 when the 'New Urban District Council' came into being and voted to proceed with the Town Hall, referring to it then as the 'New Public Offices'. The estimated cost was £11,668. It was not until 16<sup>th</sup> January 1899, after completion of the building, that the 'Urban District Council' made a decision to change the name from 'New Public Offices' to the Town Hall.

The builder engaged to work with Mr E.A Johnson, in 1896 was Mr Harry Gibbon of Cardiff, who used photographs of the Town Hall in a catalogue of the time promoting his work:

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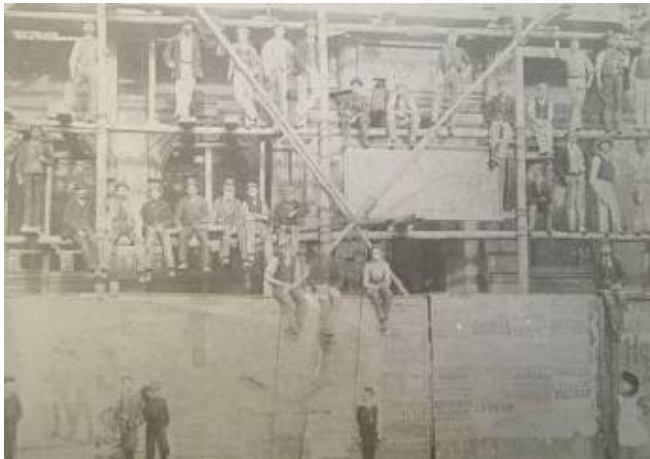


Mr Harry Gibbon catalogue 1896

Such was the prestige surrounding this building development that in 1896, 31 years after the first formal discussion, there was an important formal ceremony held for laying the foundation stone. Within one of the foundation stones, laid by Mr Daniel William Jones, was placed a time capsule, 'a sealed bottle containing a copy of the Merthyr Express; Merthyr Almanack, the Standard Time Table, the Merthyr Times, and a copy of the day's programme, together with a

small parchment on which was detailed the day's proceedings'

It is the intention of MTHA to uncover this time capsule and place on display the contents, replacing the time capsule with a new one reflecting current times.



Building the Old Town Hall 1896-1898

Mr. E. A. Johnson saw the old Town Hall as part of a wider concept in urban planning and at a later date produced designs for a library, connected to the old Town Hall by a decorative, enclosed bridge. It echoed the old Town Hall's grandeur, affording extra space at the rear of it to accommodate the expanding council roles. Had Mr. E. A. Johnson's vision come to fruition then the combined vista of the old Town Hall, library, St. David's Church and Lloyds Bank would have been a most impressive sight to behold reflecting aspiration, respect for knowledge and wealth. Unfortunately the plans were rejected, but the intent and vision is clear in Mr. E. A. Johnson's drawings.

- 4.4** Of particular interest in construction terms, are the recorded discussions concerning installation of services in the Old Town Hall. In 1897 the council agreed that speaking tubes and telephonic communication; gas mains should be included in the building. The Gas was installed by Merthyr Gas Company, laying main supplies to the council offices, County Court and Registrar's Office.

The decorative features within the building are significant; illustrating that Mr. E.A. Johnson was a man of vision, sympathetic to art movements of that time, particularly Art Nouveau. Minutes from the 'Urban District Council' between 1896- 1898 clearly show how Mr E. A. Johnson cut through bureaucracy of the day gaining authorisation for these ambitious decorative features to be executed.

Completion of building- No Official Opening:

The building was finished in April 1898, and in direct contrast to the pomp and circumstance

surrounding of the ceremony for laying of the stones in 1896, there was no official opening. In the Merthyr Express, Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup> 1989, it was reported that:

‘The committee reported that they discussed the advisability of a formal opening and now recommended that the Council take possession of the building when complete and that the question of an formal opening remain in abeyance’

The absence of this formal official opening is more significant than if one had occurred as it reflects the very serious social issues of the time. The completion of the building coincided with the ‘great coal strike’. There was rioting and looting on the streets of Merthyr Tydfil, families were starving. Unemployment was high and the Urban District Council could not collect the rates. This led to a mass demonstration to the poor house with families asking to be taken in as they were starving. Soldiers were enlisted to keep law and order. The ‘Merthyr Guardians’ gave food to the desperate families but later this kind action was challenged leading to the ‘Merthyr Judgment’.

## **5.0 Local context**

### **5.1** The Town Hall is situated at the heart of the historic town centre of Merthyr, positioned next to the listed library to the South and to Church to the North

Referring to the Merthyr Tydfil ‘Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal’, the context of the building is clearly defined in the document, showing the sheer volume of quality buildings in the heart of Merthyr and how vulnerable they are to neglect through the socio-economic circumstances of Merthyr.

“The key characteristics of the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area are:

- A town centre developed from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as a result of rapid and massive industrial development and population growth, continuing to function as the district’s main high street shopping area into the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- The concentration of 23 listed buildings and numerous other locally listed buildings and street frontages, creating an area of high architectural interest;
- The concentration of commercial, civic, social and spiritual uses relating to the development of Merthyr Tydfil as an industrial town of international importance between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries;
- Landmark buildings of particular architectural quality, which emphasise each of the above historic functions of the area;
- Dense urban development of mainly narrow frontages on the backs of pavements, creating varied elevations and a noticeable sense of enclosure;
- A strong linear form created by the long axis of Penydarren Road, Pontmorlais High Street, and High Street, with numerous short side streets providing ready access to and from surrounding areas;
- Attractive views along street lines to focal points, landmark buildings and out to mountain scenery;
- A variety of architectural styles and materials, with details relating to the late Classical,

Gothic Revival and Edwardian Baroque movements.”

- 5.2** “The town centre serves as the main high street shopping area for the County Borough, as well as preserving spiritual and social functions. The historic importance of this area as the administrative centre of the district has now been diminished as a result of the development of the modern Civic Centre, which lies directly to the west. The majority of buildings in the town centre continue to serve as shops, including a high proportion of locally-owned businesses, with a growing number of cafés. Shops in the Pontmorlais area in the north of the conservation area include a large number of hot-food takeaways which normally remain closed until the early evening, creating a quieter sub-area during the day. In recent years the development of out-of town shopping developments and supermarkets has put considerable pressure on the economy of the town centre. A number of commercial premises in the town centre were vacant at the time of the survey in February 2009. A number of national banks and building societies have premises within the High Street, which continue to form hubs of activity. Churches and chapels are focused on High Street and High Street, Pontmorlais, including St Tydfil’s Anglican Church, the High Street Baptist Chapel, St David’s Roman Catholic Church and the Hope and Market Street United Church, which all continue to host religious services. The former Zoar \* 1 Congregationalist Chapel at High Street, Pontmorlais has been converted into a Welsh Language Cultural Centre.”

“Preserving the special historic and architectural interest of the area, conserving its character and exploiting opportunities to enhance its character and appearance will all be important factors in considering the suitability of proposals for such new development. Careful planning will be required to ensure that regeneration and conservation work together to ensure the preservation and improvement of the town centre’s abundant but fragile heritage assets.”

Excerpt from Conservation Area Character Appraisal

1. Zoar \* 1 Congregationalist Chapel at High Street, Pontmorlais now re-named Soar.



Merthyr Tydfil High Street Conservation area, with the Town hall shown in red at the heart.

## **6.0 The Wider Heritage Context**

- 6.1** In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the Industrial revolution was driven and centred around places such as Merthyr Tydfil due to its abundant iron ore and coal seams, this was exploited by the Iron masters notably the Crawshays and the wealth of the processes had an immediate knock on effect to the development of Merthyr Tydfil Town centre.
- 6.2** Wales was well equipped with raw materials for the developing Industrial Revolution. Abundant supplies are available locally to meet the new demand for iron (particularly for railway lines) and for coal (to fuel the furnaces of iron works, railway engines and steamships).

The Welsh supply of coal outlasted the iron, so from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century new iron and steel works were established near the harbours of the south coast, round Swansea, Cardiff and Newport. Thus diminishing the power exerted by Merthyr Tydfil. At the coast foreign ore was be imported, while coal to fuel the furnaces was fetched the short distance from the mining valleys which run up into the hills.

The mining valleys, with their tight-knit communities centred on the chapel, became the prevailing image of Wales. Yet they are just one specific part of the country, in the south. Elsewhere much of the principality remains entirely agricultural, exporting mainly wool. In the north there is another region of industrial enterprise, quarrying slate to roof new houses for a rapidly expanding national population.

Even so, the valleys are in a real sense the heart of modern Wales. They suffer grievously in the depression of the 1930s, and in the subsequent slackening of demand for high-cost British coal. And they play a correspondingly important part in the development of left-wing Welsh politics.

Excerpt By Tim Lambert

Welsh Labour and nationalism: AD 1900-1999

The Welsh mining town of Merthyr Tydfil plays a significant role in the story of Labour in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Britain. The founding father of the Labour party, Keir Hardie, lost his first parliamentary seat (London's West Ham) in the election of 1895. For five years he is out of parliament, campaigning incessantly to establish trades union and Labour solidarity. Then, in 1900, he won Merthyr Tydfil as the candidate of the new Labour Representation Committee.

For most of the next six years he is the only Labour member in the commons until a sudden change, in the 1906 election, swells the Labour representation in parliament to twenty-nine.

A decisive corner has been turned, and the member for Merthyr Tydfil is now at the head of a strongly developing political movement (Hardie retains the Welsh seat until his death in 1915).

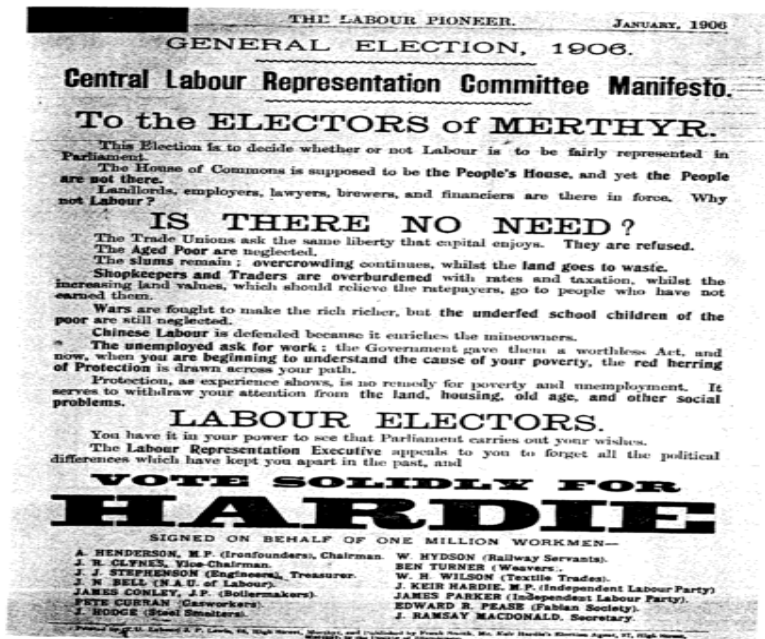
Excerpt by Tim Lambert

## **7.0 Significance**

### **7.1 Overview - Statement of Significance: A Historical Perspective**

Key historical events associated with the Town Hall of both local and wider significance:

- The development of Urban Planning – the documented discussion spanning over 40 years regarding the development of the Old Town Hall, illustrates the complexities of developing a town and the battle of power between the developing local government, the people it represents and other power brokers with in the town such as the Iron Masters.
- Structural development of local government from 'Board of Health' to 'Urban District Council' to current council.
- Development from a small town to Incorporation and County Borough Status.
- Industrial Revolution and its economic importance to the development of the town, reflected in the aspirational building.
- E. A. Johnson - Architect. There is a substantial architectural trail of his work throughout the borough of Merthyr Tydfil, unique for one architect to have such influence on a town development.
- Laying the foundation stones ceremony and the time capsule contained within one.
- The significance of refraining from having an official opening is in direct contrast to the laying of the foundation stones ceremony. The absence of this opening is due to the great coal strike.
- 1900 Kier Hardy was elected first labour MP for Merthyr Tydfil and was one of only two Labour MP's in Parliament. This is significant as the founding speech for the Labour Party was made from the balcony of the Town Hall. In 1906 he ran and won again, the general election:



- 1908: Women's Vote, Sylvia Pankhurst and the link with Kier Hardy - spending the rest of his life campaigning for votes for women and developing a closer relationship with Sylvia Pankhurst.
- In 1905 Elections for the new County Borough Council (Incorporated by Royal Charter) gave the Labour Party a clear victory. Former colliery worker Enoch Morrell became the first Mayor of Merthyr Tydfil. MTHA have properties names after him.
- Decorative features:
  - Art Nouveau – reflected in the stained glass and the tiles
  - Tiles – by Doulton before they became Royal Doulton. Identification of the specific Doulton Artist and exploration of the technique used.
  - Stairs
  - Stained Glass from both the perspective of identifying the Artist, technique used and historic significance of the commemorative window to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
  - Mosaic Floor – design and symbolism.
- Symbolism used in the decorative features :
  - Dragon Motif and Motto.
  - Angels
- Masonic symbols used in both the decoration and architectural design, the use of vines; rope; oak leaves; fleur de lys; cupola; pillars; arches; and octagrams, symbol for Knights Templar. For example:



The inclusion of these symbols reflects the development of the masons within Merthyr Tydfil.

## **7.2 Statement of Significance**

The heritage as a whole is examined in both the prior and following chapters, in this chapter we will state why the building and its features are significant as a whole collection and its constituent parts.

The building was examined and evaluated as a desk based exercise, on site, in the archives and with the Client team, Conservation Officer and Cadw in order to understand the significance of the asset we find today. We prepared significance drawings to simply show how significant each element was in the context of its listing and its status within the community. These form an easy to see guide of the relative areas of the building, although they are limited to the plan form and therefore the external features are discussed in detail here.



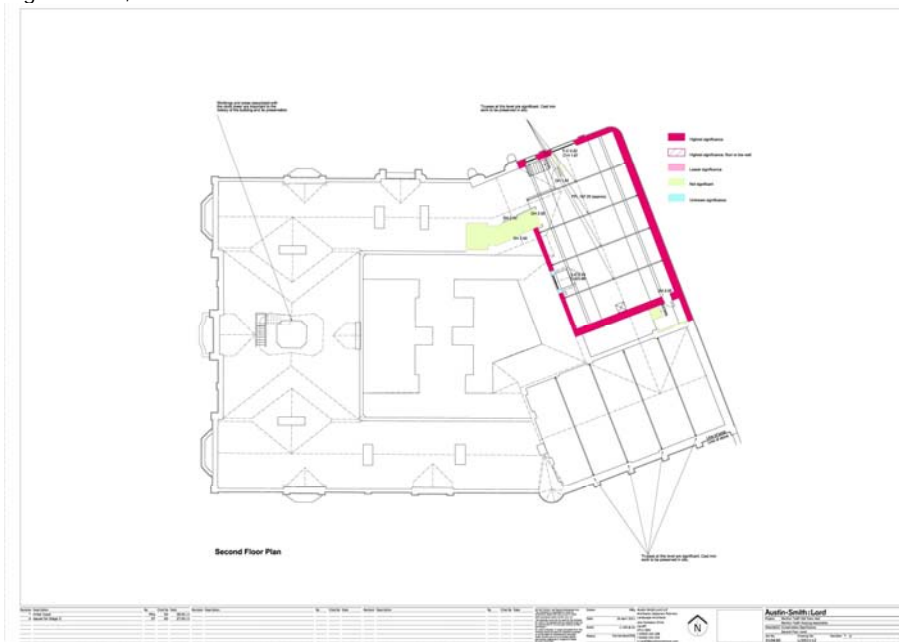
Significance, Basement level



Significance, Ground floor level



Significance, First floor level



Significance, Second floor level

## **8.0 Significance Gazetteer.**

Further to these drawings we have indicated with an illustration, the significance of individual elements of the building and its features at Merthyr. We have examined each notable feature individually which is indicated here below in a simple gazetteer format.

### **8.1 Terracotta façade and features**



#### **8.1.1. Description**

Pink/buff terracotta units with some elaborate detail, creating what has been described as a French renaissance façade. The façade as a whole is most impressive and forms an elegant and imposing statement at this corner of the High Street. Finials that were once present are now removed.

#### **8.1.2. Level of preservation**

The terracotta used on the facades was subject to cleaning with acid in the early 1980's which has caused some damage, removing the equivalent of the fire skin from the face of the units.

This is irreparable and has caused porosity which has led to some severe freeze thaw erosion at high and low levels where most water is present.

The areas of spalling and breaking have been filled with cement pointing, exacerbating the problem of water trapping. Some new units would be required to give long term durability to some areas.

#### **8.1.3. Vulnerability**

The freeze thaw action at high at low level is only likely to get worse if the porous units are retained.

#### **8.1.4. Restoration required**

The whole façade should be removed of cement pointing and repairs, and re pointed in an appropriate hydraulic lime mortar, some areas of matching new terracotta elements should be used to repair the highly porous areas which have failed, coping areas could be checked to see whether a lead DPC would be beneficial to the whole design.

### **8.2 Wrought iron railings and gates**



### **8.2.1. Description**

These are very well made elaborate railings of a typical ornate Art Nouveau style in keeping with the rich symbolism and ornament of the other areas of decorative work. Some areas such as the gates shown here are in good condition as they are in a sheltered area away from the worst of the rain. Although some areas of the wrought iron railings are rusting and the consequent jacking is causing damage to the work it is embedded into, which in the main is the terracotta masonry.

### **8.2.2. Restoration required**

The areas of rust need removing through deep cleaning of the iron work until all rust is removed and bright metal is found beneath. The railings can then be re coated with a traditional paint build up to protect them for the long term. Due to the damage done to the terracotta copings, it would be advisable that the rust removal and re shaping of any bent units be done off site in a specialists workshop.

## **8.3 Glazed Internal Tiles**

### **8.3.1. Description**

On the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1896 the architect, Mr. E. A. Johnson, submitted a proposal to the 'Urban District Council to change the finish in the lobby and hall area from a basic plaster and woodwork specification to a glazed tiles area. There is no doubt that this change was fortuitous as it has ensured that the lobby and the hallway have been preserved and protected from the decimation evident in other areas of the building. Mr E.A. Johnson used rich and highly decorative Art Nouveau tiles, made by Doulton & Co before they became Royal Doulton. The tile patterns echo the ornate organic designs reflected in the wrought iron work of lights, window catches and stained glass. The most noteworthy feature being the four angels constructed from the tiles which adorn either side of the lobby area, watching over people as they enter and exit the building. These angels are symbols with a number of possible interpretations:

- It is noted in biblical history that 4 angels protected the 'Ark of the Covenant', which contained the 10 commandments on tablets of stone. Parallels can be drawn between this and the function of the Town Hall, the seat of local government, enforcing the laws by which the town's people lived. There is also a further reference here to Masonic symbolism specifically to the 'Ark of the Covenant', which signifies: Eternal life; Authority; Religious and Moral Imperatives.
- There are 4 main Archangels named as: Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Uriel. These in turn represent the four seasons and offering constant protection.

These tiles are of particular interest with regard to style and manufacturing as Doulton & Co stopped tile production in 1905. Their current condition is remarkably good condition although there is visible evidence of chips and cracks.



Archangels by Doulton & Co

## **8.4 Mosaic Floor**

### **8.4.1. Description**

The public Office Committee on 24th August 1897 requested that a crest with a suitable motto be laid in the mosaic work in the entrance hall. This resulted in a Welsh dragon being placed along side the motto:

**'Y DDRAIG GOCH A DDYRY CYCHWYN'** An approximate translation is, "**THE RED DRAGON INSPIRES ACTION'**

This is a very clever motto as it reflects the very reason for the Town Hall's existence - a direct reference to the red brick Town Hall building, a public building, the magnitude of the aspirations and the role it would fulfil in society. In 1901 the dragon became the official flag in Wales and in 1953 it was announced that a new Royal Badge containing the motto 'Y Ddraid goch a ddyry cychwyn'. The mosaic floor is damaged, with a large crack slicing through the main image of the dragon. In 1987 this was used in the lyric of a song, written by Godfrey Birtill comparing the crack in the dragon to symbolise the deterioration of Merthyr Tydfil town. Other sections of mosaic floor have been damaged due to carpet grips being nailed into them.



The mosaic tiles used to create the dragon were by a company called Craven Dunnill Jackfield, who have commenced trading again after the works closed in 1951. Not only did the company produce the red dragon but they produced the mosaic floor which can be found throughout the Old Town Hall. The imprint of the trademark on the back of the tile was found at the 'New Castle Street' entrance the trademark depicts chimneys typical of china works of the industrial revolution.



## 8.5 Windows

### 8.5.1. Description

Further decorative features of note are the windows. There are 131 leaded windows, 77 etched panels, 1 commemorative stained glass window; the windows have deteriorated considerably.

The windows form an essential component in the comprehensive restoration of this building, as evidenced in historical photographs, clearly documenting their importance in the over all design

concept of the building. The commemorative window, celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, is situated in a prominent position, directly in front of the main entrance, centrally placed, between a double headed open-plan Victorian grand staircase. It is a beautiful example of painted and stained glass, typical of that time period. The art nouveau design predominately uses organic shapes, echoed in the tiles. The palette used is a muted pastel colour scheme which give beautiful luminescent colours, surrounding the distinctive figure head of Queen Victoria.



Stained Glass Window, central stairwell  
in good condition 1989



Stained Glass Window, central stairwell in current  
condition

It is evident from old photographic records that the original front windows, included engraved and etched sections on the lower half of the window, some of which remain, in addition to the leaded top half of the window. Over the years the lower section was removed and replaced by clear glass.

**Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association**

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Town Hall 1899 – note windows



Town Hall 1989 –note windows

It is unknown who the stained glass Artist is for the windows and particularly the commemorative window, although some of the organic shapes are echoed in the design work of Frank Brangwyn.

Sadly due to severe neglect, suffered before MTHA purchased it, many of these windows, including the commemorative window, are now in an exceptionally fragile state.

Damage has been caused by a number of factors:

- Vandalism.
- Pigeons, which were nesting in the building and flew at the windows.
- Adverse weather conditions.

#### **8.5.2. Vulnerability**

Most areas are now boarded up to prevent further damage although not all areas. Pigeons do use the leaded openings to get into the building, thus causing some further damage. It is recommended that all windows are protected with either plywood or sturdy mesh to prevent further damage.

### **8.6 Cupola**

#### **8.6.1. Description**

Another distinctive feature is the Cupola which was situated on top of the Clock Tower. On 5<sup>th</sup> August 1896 Mr. E.A. Johnson submitted to the Urban District Council' a sketch showing an enlargement of the turret.



E. A. Johnson's drawing of the cupola



The amended cupola in the background



Cupola removed

At some point the cupola was removed due to structural strain on the building:  
The original clock which adorned the tower was scrapped in 1966 and replaced by a synchronous clock, costing £315, converting to electricity.

## **8.7 Stairs**

### **8.7.1. Description**

A number of artefacts described in the listing, most notably the central staircase, in addition to the tiled pillars and stained glass windows are in danger of severe damage. On 18<sup>th</sup> October 1897, the Urban District Council approved drawings by E. A. Johnson for marble standards for lighting, two to be placed at the top of the stairs and two at the bottom. These lights were in working order up to the decommissioning of the building from council use. Now the bases of these lights remain intact but the lights have been ripped from their bases and will have to be re- made from historical photographs.



Central Stairwell, condition 1989



Central Stairwell, current condition

## 8.8 Lights

### 8.8.1. Description

The original lighting embraced the new innovation at the time Electricity. It was decided on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1896 to install electric lights in the Town Hall. In February 1897 this decision was changed to install electricity to part of the building and the remaining section to be lit using gas. Once installed there was discussion about the quality of the light omitted. This is of interest as it reflects the developing technologies of the time but also in the visual aspect of design of the lights. Continuity is given as the organic structures reflected in the tiles are also present in the lighting design to the entrance of the building and more angular design sympathetic to the marble pillar structures.



Examples of lighting from Mr. Gibbons Catalogue and archive photographs from 1989

## 8.9 Masonic Connections and Symbolism.

Mr. E.A. Johnson became a Mason in 1881, when he was 26; belonging to a Lodge in Abergavenny called the Philanthropic Lodge, which later was renamed as St John's Lodge. On the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1881 it is documented in 'The History of The Loyal Cambrian Lodge, Merthyr Tydfil 1810- 1914' that he was also the architect for the first Masonic Lodge in Merthyr Tydfil. The Worshipful Deputy stated to E.A. Johnson:

'I have great pleasure in returning you the plans of this building, feeling assured that you will carry them out to satisfaction, not only of yourself but of the lodge. I am sorry that I cannot congratulate you as a Brother on this occasion'.

Three months later, November 1881, Mr. E. A. Johnson was initiated as a mason. The 'Old Town Hall' is full of both architectural and decorative features such as tiles and windows, which hold Masonic significance: 4 Angels – Ark of Covenant; vines; rope; oak leaves; fleur de lys; cupola; pillars; arches and octagrams (symbol for Knights Templar) which in turn is symbolic of Philanthropic order of which Mr. E. A. Johnson was a member.

### **8.10 Ceiling and wall paper**



The Old Council Chamber Finished with Austrian Oak.

#### **8.10.1. Description**

The paper or paper maché to the first floor areas is probably a type of Anaglypta or Lincrusta, which are heavily embossed paper glued to the substrate. The ceilings and walls down to the picture rail are finished with these products giving a rich finish to the spaces. Due to the water ingress that the building is currently and has been suffering, the walls and ceilings are starting to deteriorate. There is a continuation of the design theme with a fan embossed in the wallpaper, a shape which is etched in the tiles and windows, this is an organic shape reminiscent of acanthus foliage – a symbol of immortality.

#### **8.10.2. Restoration requirements:**

The paper has fallen from the ceiling in a few areas and in order to preserve this feature of note, the water ingress needs to be dealt with early in the restoration works.

### **8.11 Items of council chamber furniture**



#### **8.11.1. Description**

There are in the building some areas of the works which appear to be historic remnants of the old council chamber furniture, in particular sections of the council chamber which were made out of steamed Austrian oak by the contractor Mr. Harry Gibbons in 1898. These have been dismantled years ago and re used as later fixtures and fittings

#### **8.11.2. Vulnerability**

These areas of furniture are in a mediocre state having been cut up and painted but could be re used again to ensure that they are not simply thrown out. This will have to be considered in the designs and use patterns of the building.

## 8.12 Panelled doors



The Majors Office with Balcony windows.

### 8.12.1. Description

There are few remaining doors in the whole of the Merthyr Town Hall, most have been lost or discarded through time. Some areas of doors do remain but are in the most part vulnerable to decay and disregard. Two notable doors are those in the main foyer serving as front doors, and the doors to the balcony, these are both Mahogany panelled doors, which although appear to be in a sorry state, could be easily repaired with good quality materials and craftsmanship to give a door that will last for years to come.

### **8.12.2. Restoration Requirements:**

The weather sealing of the areas surrounding the doors is poor, lead work to parapets is leaking, and that ingress is rotting any areas of timber below. The balconies and window parapets have no weather proofing at all and are causing the rot in the floors and collapse of the ceilings below, thus the doors are currently vulnerable to secondary issues which should be addressed during restoration works.

### **8.13 Decorative features and panelling**



Front elevation windows showing plaster architraves.

#### **8.13.1. Description**

There are several areas of both decorative features and panelling which are grouped together for ease of reference. The decorative features, which include dado rails, picture rails, cornices skirting and architraves are a mixture of softwood and or plaster features, all original to the building when it was first completed. These areas are fundamental to the character to the building as many of the original features still remain and are integral to feel of the place.

### **8.13.2. Condition**

The small area of Mahogany or oak panelling that remains in the Mayors office is a minor part of what constituted the originally lavish scheme to the Mayors office. Much of this has been lost to previous owners or the rot from the lack of maintenance. The desire to restore the panelling in the Mayors room which has been lost is a welcome return to the areas that have been ravaged in the past.

### **8.13.3. Vulnerability**

There are many areas of water ingress and these are facilitating the ongoing problem of rot to the building. Dry and wet rots have taken hold and their pernicious nature will continue until the moisture sources have been controlled and the relative humidity is within the limits required by the built fabric.

## **8.14 Composite trusses**



Second floor offices.

### **8.14.1. Description**

The cast iron and milled trusses at high level in the roofs to the east wing of the Old Town Hall are a small detail which shows that the building was created in the heart of the Industrial town of Merthyr Tydfil. As the town was founded on the money from the iron and steel industries it would have been very remiss to find that there were no details in the building of cast

construction. There is further documented evidence, from minutes of the day, of using this material to construct and install a spiral cast in the stair case to fit into the turret.

#### **8.14.2. Condition**

The trusses are partly cast and subject to verification appear to be partly milled steel forming a simple A frame structure with small but intricate detailing. The bearing ends will require investigation to ensure that the iron work has not undergone excessive corrosion or deformation over the years, but at first glance the trusses appear in good condition and could be appreciated as they were first conceived.

#### **8.15 Change of Street Structure:**

At a later, unconfirmed date, the buildings situated directly in front of the Town Hall were demolished, opening up the space, creating a better vista to the Town Hall, from Castle Street, making it more imposing.

### **9.0 Conservation & Management**

The building is listed Grade II\* which means that the building is deemed to be of regional significance to society. The significance of a building can be measured in a number of ways, but the emotional significance that the Old Town Hall has for the public is immeasurable. On standing in front of the building members of the general public will approach members of the design team, either saying that it was a 'disgrace that the building was left to rack and ruin', or hoping that the building will be 'brought back to it's former glory'. It is these sentiments amongst other things which we bear in mind when considering the policies, together with the more categorical measuring of the buildings significance, the listed building extract, enclosed below.

Copy of the listed building extract.

Draft

## Detail Report

Authority	<b>Merthyr Tydfil</b>	Record No	<b>11444</b>
Community	<b>Town</b>	Date Listed	<b>22/08/1975</b>
Locality		Date Amended	
		Date Delisted	
		Grid Ref	<b>30497 206330</b>
		Grade	<b>II*</b>
Name	<b>Town Hall</b>		
Street No, Name	<b>High Street</b>		

### Location

Prominently sited in the town centre, opposite the junction with Castle Street.

### History

The building is dated on a foundation stone, May 1896, was designed by E.A. Johnson of Abergavenny and Merthyr, and built by Harry Gibbon. Although Merthyr was for a time the largest town in Wales (its population was two and a half times that of Cardiff in 1851), it did not attain formal urban status until 1894, when an urban district council was established. The town hall is an immediate expression of that status, and quickly became the focal point for civic and political life in the town. It became customary for the results of parliamentary elections to be announced from its steps, and it was here in 1900 that the victory of J. Keir Hardie as the first Labour Member of Parliament in Britain is said to have been announced. His increased majority in the subsequent elections of 1906 and 1910 was announced from the balcony.

### Exterior

Renaissance style with some European influences. Symmetrical entrance front of two storeys with attics and basement; red brick with orange terracotta dressings on rusticated Pennant sandstone basement. Steep slate roof with painted clock turret originally crowned by a cupola (removed).

Seven bay façade with advanced outer and central bays surmounted by shaped pedimented gables and linked by arcaded balustrading which continues in the parapets of the full-height canted bay windows of the outer gables. The whole elevation is articulated by full-height pilasters rising through the balustrades, continuous sill bands and string courses, and is enriched with decorated capitals, spandrels, brackets and cartouche panels. Central round-arched entrance up steps with curved balustrades and pedestals carrying ironwork lamp-brackets; ironwork double gates to entrance. The entrance is flanked by elongated brackets carrying pedestals topped with heraldic lions, to either side of a cantilevered balcony over the door, opening from a Shaw-style window at first floor. Outer gables have full-height canted bays with mullioned and transomed windows (three tiers and stained glass to principal chambers on first floor). Between these gables and the entrance bay, round-arched ground-floor windows give an arcaded effect, with narrow 2-light mullioned and transomed windows above.

Similar detailing to long right-hand return elevation, with corbelled bay window over arched doorway, bowed turret with pyramidal roof at angle. Elevation to New Castle Street to left steps uphill with similar detailing, and splays forward at entrance to County Court (dated 1896); tall gable-end with curved angle to rear on Tramroad Side North.

### Interior

The building was designed to house the council offices and also the county court. The building was planned around a long internal courtyard, with council offices occupying the front block, and the court and council chamber the rear range. A perimeter corridor linked all areas. The main front block has central entrance hall leading to spacious stair hall at the rear: both are richly decorated with faience and glazed tiles, and

exceptionally fine imperial staircase has ironwork balustrading incorporating cartouches, with lamp pedestals to the base. Stained glass stair window onto internal courtyard. Good interior detail including arched and pedimented door heads, panelled dados and low relief friezes. Main chamber at first floor level has curved ceiling divided by ribs sprung from corbels and with central pendants. Mayor's parlour at centre, with leaded lights in doorway to balcony.

Rear range housed court room and council chamber at first floor: original layout damaged in later alterations, but unusual cast-iron roof trusses with decorated spandrels survive, as do the cells beneath the court room.

**Listed**

The building was designed to house the council offices and also the county court. The building was planned around a long internal courtyard, with council offices occupying the front block, and the court and council chamber the rear range. A perimeter corridor linked all areas. The main front block has central entrance hall leading to spacious stair hall at the rear: both are richly decorated with faience and glazed tiles, and exceptionally fine imperial staircase has ironwork balustrading incorporating cartouches, with lamp pedestals to the base. Stained glass stair window onto internal courtyard. Good interior detail including arched and pedimented door heads, panelled dados and low relief friezes. Main chamber at first floor level has curved ceiling divided by ribs sprung from corbels and with central pendants. Mayor's parlour at centre, with leaded lights in doorway to balcony.

Rear range housed court room and council chamber at first floor: original layout damaged in later alterations, but unusual cast-iron roof trusses with decorated spandrels survive, as do the cells beneath the court room.

**Reference**

C.Cunningham, *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls* (London 1981), pp 290-292;  
Merthyr Teachers Centre Group, *Merthyr Tydfil: Valley Community* (Cowbridge, 1981), pp243-5, 251-2;  
John Newman, *The Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan* (London, 1995), p440  
Information from local history librarian, Merthyr Tydfil Library

## **9.1 Recent Events**

The building's development history in recent years has seen a far less salubrious sequence of events which will certainly have affected the attitudes of local people in relation to its future development and usage. Merthyr Tydfil Council operated from there until 1989. There are many stories from ex employees of Merthyr Tydfil Council, who were based at the old town hall at that time, of lax security at the point of transfer and decommissioning of the 'Old Town Hall'. Opportunists ripped out the grand fireplaces. These fireplaces were substantial, designed by E. A. Johnson and built out of Austrian Oak by Harry Gibbon. The barbaric removal of these features marked the beginning of the Town Hall desecration. Paintings by Rolf Harris's grandfather, George Frederick Harris were rescued along with 18th Centenary maps of the town, after being found discarded in skips.

Following its demise as the seat of local government in 1989, the building housed the privately owned Zone nightclub for a considerable period, a highly unpopular choice for most of the townspeople reflected in news paper reporting of the time: 'You are selling your people down the river'(Merthyr Express 27/08/92).

The interior was adorned in garish colours: purples, pinks, oranges and turquoise, which jarred with the delicate decoration. No attempt was made during this time to conserve and protect the heritage. The maintenance schedule was non existent, leaving the building to fall rapidly into disrepair. Many of the building's historic fixtures and fittings were lost or damaged during its tenure and are impossible to replace. It was associated with late night revelry and anti social behaviour reported in headlines such as 'Man jailed for biting off ear' Merthyr Express 28/3/00

A private sector consortium which subsequently purchased the property raised expectations in the local community with an ambitious plan for its restoration. However, its failure to deliver any results because of financial difficulties intensified doubts about future development and highlighted the importance of commercial viability over well intentioned but highly fanciful altruism. The financial collapse of the company, which was directly linked to many of the same issues which still face the building, serves as a reminder of the dangers of attempting to renovate large period structures without a financially viable and sustainable plan for their subsequent usage.

## **10.0 Current Situation – how the building is managed today**

The freehold interest in the site was acquired by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association in August 2007 for £650,000 with financial assistance from the Heads of the Valley programme, a 15 year regeneration strategy developed by the Welsh Assembly Government within the context of the Wales Spatial Plan, in partnership with five local authorities, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau-Gwent and Torfaen and other local stakeholders.

The building was already in a derelict condition, and its interior has rapidly become a cause for serious concern, with further deterioration inevitable without costly remedial works. Despite a structurally sound external façade, surveys show that the roof of the building and related surface water drainage channels are in immediate need of repair and will require replacement in the foreseeable future. This has led to significant ingress of water resulting in the normal

associated water damage. Subsequent damage to all floors, ceilings, fixtures and fittings is extensive, and it is highly likely that the recently observed spread of dry rot spores, which have infested both timber fittings and behind brick and stone structures, will accelerate rapidly, rendering essential remedial works extremely difficult. It is suggested that emergency works be undertaken to protect all areas of parapet or balcony as these appear to be the area where water ingress is most severe. It is worth noting in this context that *Serpula lacrymans*, the fungus which causes dry rot is likely to be at its most active in the summer period, and the potential for severe structural damage by the autumn is therefore significant.



The building is currently listed as a Grade II\* structure under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which is administered by Cadw, a division of the Welsh Assembly Government. The listing report is attached as Appendix A. Grade II\* buildings are those of special architectural or historic interest and may not be demolished, extended or altered without special permission from the local planning authority. The owners of listed buildings may be compelled to repair and maintain them and can face criminal prosecution if they fail to do so or if they perform unauthorised alterations.

## **11.0 Risks, Vulnerability and the way forward**

- 11.1** The general deterioration of floor and roof timbers may soon lead to the development of an unsafe building structure which has significant implications for health and safety and other legal issues. To date, MTHA have undertaken a number of surveys of the building in order to ascertain the extent of works required.

Comprehensive Surveys have been completed which include:

- Austin- Smith :Lord, Design Access Statement
- Full Building Survey and Plans developed (Powell Dobson Architects) – the Design and Access Statement developed for the Planning Application is attached as a separate document Appendix 03.
- Structural Survey (HCD)
- Bat Survey ( David Clements Ecology Ltd)
- Asbestos Survey (PHH Environmental)
- Drainage Survey ( Environmental Cleaning Solutions)
- Damp & Timber Condition survey (Peter Cox)
- Leaded, stained and etched glass (Alan Adams, SMU)
- Clock Tower ( J B Joyce)

The building was acquired by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association from the previous owners with existing plans to renovate the external and internal structures, creating a mix of offices and social enterprises, including a cafeteria, crèche and small retail units. However, the preliminary estimates for this project proved to be highly unrealistic, and the Association has been forced to reconsider the plans in the light of more recent estimates of capital cost. These are described below in greater detail.

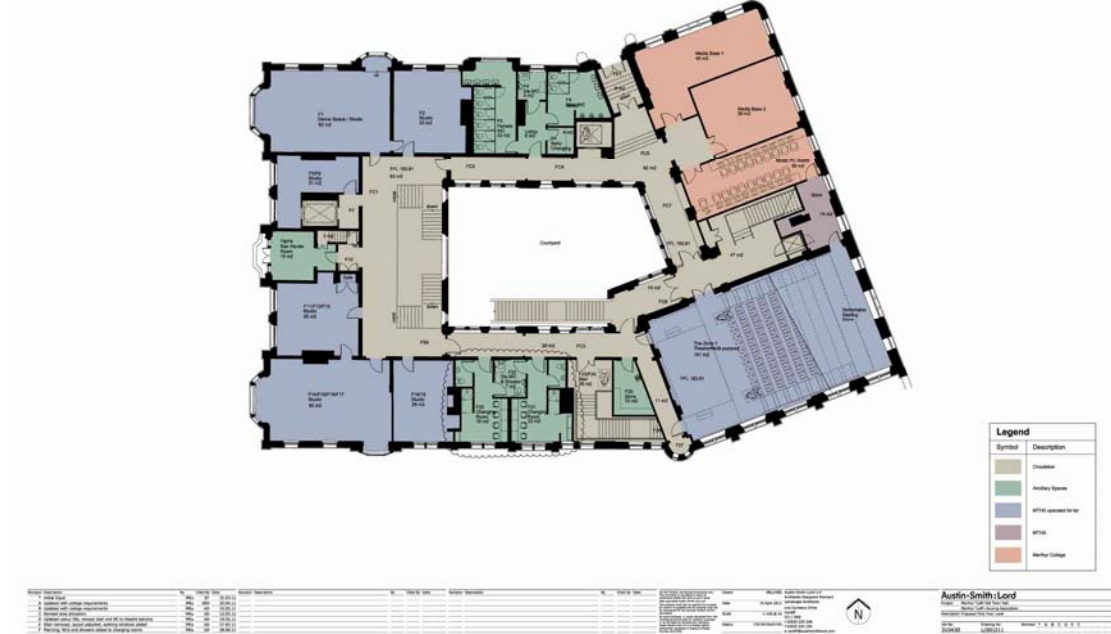
As a result of these factors, a feasibility study was commissioned by the Housing Association, both in relation to options for possible building works and prospective usages. Although these two broad considerations are interlinked, they are essentially different and are not mutually exclusive i.e. some of the potential building options might be adapted for different usages and it is felt crucial that any space created within the building should be flexible enough its design to cater for a range of activities, rather than specifically for one end usage.

The project that is to be taken forward is to refurbish and restore the 'Old Town Hall' to provide an art and creative industries centre. Essentially the original spaces will remain, however in order to achieve accessibility into and through out the building, proposals include the creation of new, level access entry off Library Lane via a lift, the fabrication and installation of a steel framework to raise floor levels at the rear of the building to enable level access on the First floor.

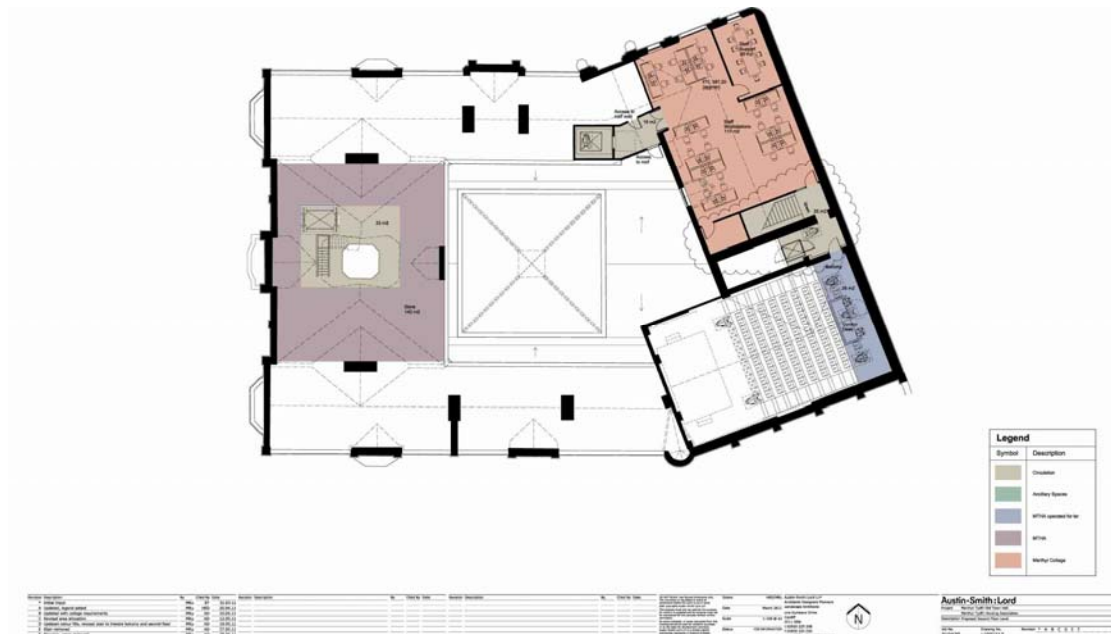
A courtyard café will be created by replacing the toilet block with a modern, eye catching design constructed with a glazed roof, sufficiently sympathetic not to detract from the heritage architectural features, but enhance and maximise their impact and distinctiveness.

The management of the building today focuses on security and prevention of any further deterioration of the structure and its features whilst options are being explored for its future restoration and use. This includes weekly inspections by MTHA surveyors.





First floor Proposed plan



Second floor Proposed plan

- 11.2** Currently the 'Old Town Hall' is in a very sorry state: the businesses which once surrounded the Old Town Hall, sustaining the town, have disappeared one by one, leaving the derelict 'Old Town Hall' surrounded by a sea of transient take-a-ways, encased in cold metal shutters during the day, only coming to life in the evening.

As the Local Authority's 2003 Regeneration Strategy observes, The Old Town Hall is the focal point of four buildings in the town centre - St David's Church, The Library and Castle Cinema (now demolished) are the other three - which holds the key to maintaining a critical balance between old and new. The strategic plan adopted for its reinstatement as the town centre's most important building therefore assumes nothing less than a critical role in the future development of Merthyr Tydfil itself.

In order to develop a better future we need to focus on what was best from the past - the 'Old Town Hall' should be used as a town centre, focal point that can sign post people to other areas / buildings / activities of historical significance within the borough. The objective of this would be to support and encourage heritage and tourism to work in partnership.

The wider regeneration initiative is underway, leading from the 'Old Town Hall'. Reverting the facades, of the premises which are dominated by take- a-ways, to their former glory. The Old Town Hall is central to this as the heart of the regeneration initiative.

The local authority is particularly anxious to see the building restored to a usage more in keeping with its original purpose as an important civic resource. Public response to recent press coverage suggests that feelings are running high in the town about the future of the building, and it is likely that much of this sentiment will surface if and when project planning develops. It is the intention of Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association to ensure the views and feelings of the people of Merthyr Tydfil are fully considered and consulted on in the process. Considerable apprehension about the current condition of the premises was noted during preliminary investigations around project feasibility, and initial consultations with a wide range of interested parties have revealed widespread concern about the future of the building and other structures in the vicinity.

## **12.0 Skills Requirements**

- 12.1** When a building such as the Old Town Hall is restored, it can boost the local community in more ways than just through the finished business. Throughout the process the restoration is providing jobs and more importantly skills to the craftsmen of the area.

Within a project such as this, the contractor would be asked specifically to recruit any new staff or trainees from the local skills market. Ensuring some of the immediate population have an opportunity to work on the building. Furthermore, with a heritage project, the differing trades can offer training and apprenticeships for the heritage skills sector, the skills required on such a building are being boosted by projects such as this and thus give a more economic labour

market for projects in the future, thus helping to sustain the heritage sector.

### **13.0 Heritage design specification - aims and objectives for conservation**

In accordance with the grant offer from Cadw, we have prepared this outline specification with reference to the conditions set out. The conditions which relate to building fabric are listed below and we have responded to the conditions in the same order for ease of reference:

- Provision of scaffolding to execute the works.
- Protection work associated with the repairs.
- Removal of growth to the exterior stonework.
- Re-pointing of the masonry using lime mortar.
- The restoration / replacement of the stained glass windows.
- The overhaul or renewal of the rainwater goods with cast iron.
- Masonry repairs or renewal.
- Repairs and timber treatment of roof structure.
- Repairs / renewal of external joinery
- Repairs / renewal of roof finish using natural slate.

Specification with reference to: -

#### **13.1 Provision of scaffolding to execute the works.**

Scaffolding will not be built into the facade or to be braced onto the facade, otherwise known as putlog scaffold, this would cause too much damage to the facades.

To remove all roof slates and re roof, a temporary roof will be required over the whole building. This will need to be weighed down from wind uplift and this may not be anchored off the building. Kentilage will be required.

The scaffold will be generally ground bearing, but with protection required to finishes to the ground and the abutments to the walls will not be fixed to provide kentilage, except where a specific condition requires bracing. Normally, bracing is taken through the opened or carefully removed windows, glass will not be broken to use as a bracing position.

#### **13.2 Protection work associated with the repairs.**

Many of the features are fragile and on repairing some items of structure the rooms and corridors will be heavily trafficked giving rise to the risk of damage. All items which if damaged would reduce the significance of the building will be protected throughout the works, the protection will be robust, but will be required to be removed from time to time to provide access for surveying the item itself.

**13.3** Removal of growth to the exterior stonework.

Removals of growth from the exterior stonework is essential to ensure the continued infestation does not continue to cause damage to the facades. The inner courtyard, gutters valleys and ledges have all been subject to considerable buddleia growth both historically and currently. Some of the growths are a simple case of removal, while others are pernicious growths which have forced their way into the masonry. Generally the difficult areas will require a cut back and the stump treated with a biocide, after the stump has shrivelled the roots are carefully removed, this sometimes requires partial take down of an area of masonry and re build to the exact replica of the original layout.

**13.4** Re-pointing of the masonry using lime mortar.

All internal and external mortars will use solely lime based products, the external elevations and the internal walls that they abut are subject to considerable quantities of rain and due to the solid construction of the walls it is essential that evaporation is facilitated through the walls and the facade. The bricks in the facade are in relatively good condition, with little spalling and thus the removal of the pointing must be delicate and the reinstated pointing strength should be less strong than the brick in order to ensure water and salt movement travels through the mortar rather than the brick, thus reducing freeze thaw and other water related problems.

Lime mortar using possibly NHL 2.5, which is feebly hydraulic or 3 which is moderately hydraulic would be considered and would be based upon tests undertaken of the existing historic mortars. The aggregate in the current mortar is coal ash or blast furnace slag which would also require testing. The new mortar should replicate the old without some of the risks associated with high pozzolan content or alumina content mixes.

**13.5** The restoration / replacement of the stained glass windows.

In order to undertake the restoration of the stained glass we would ensure that there was an expert on the team to advise and consider solutions. Simply put the stained glass would be restored to its original form using all the historic glass types that are available to the market today. There are some types of glass in the original schemes that are no longer produced. If some repairs can be undertaken in situ, then this is preferred as this causes the least likelihood of damage to the original forms.

Many of the windows require extensive repair and these would be taken to the historic glass repair workshop and dealt with flat on the bench. The lead over time can sag, but this is not universal, so this would only be repaired if required. New lead will be the same gauge as the old to ensure the patterns remain the same. The ferramenta work to each of the lead windows generally will need looking at to ensure a firm background for the windows, the lead will be tied to cross bars with copper wire.

The timber casements of the windows would each be looked at to check their condition. Windows, will fall into the categories of beyond economic repair, to be repaired, or new to be replaced with a replica. The type of timber used to repair the windows will depend on what is present in the original windows, these are perhaps a yellow pine thus douglas fir or other equivalent tough softwood would be considered. Cills would be replaced with hardwood such as

oak when required. No epoxy repairs will be used.

**13.6** External Windows, Doors and Louvres.

Feature stained glass windows repaired as set out in report from the Architectural Glass Centre, Swansea University, the glass types and lead gauges will be matched as closely as possible within the limits of the glass types that are produced now. All glass that is broken will be salvaged in case it is useable.

**13.7** External and Internal Doors

Where feasible, existing doors to be repaired and reconditioned, whilst any missing doors to be re-instated with a replica. Where additional doors are within new partitions these should be in keeping with the existing historical context.

**13.8** Shutters or louvres

Internally will probably be used to shut out light and reduce acoustic break out from the theatre and performance spaces.

- The overhaul and complete renewal of the rainwater goods will be with cast iron.
- All rain water good are to be refurbished or new cast iron, where the goods are currently aluminium, they will be replaced. The outlets will be taken into drains to be created at the base of all rain water pipes, in order that there is no surface run off which can cause dampness in the walls.
- Masonry repairs or renewal.
- Stone - the Pennant rustication at the base will be re pointed in a moderate or feebly hydraulic lime mortar, there appears little structurally compromised in the stone. Some areas will be washed with a biocide to inhibit Algal growth.
- Brick - The brick is in good condition but has been re pointed in cement which is starting to give signs of damage. The pointing will be removed by a stone mason or well qualified person using a Brick and stone saw to give a clean cut to the joints.
- Terracotta - The finials that are missing will be reinstated with patterns created from the existing finial found on site ( there are two, one on New Castle Street, one on Tram road street)There will also need to be some repairs to any severely deteriorated blocks. These can be replaced with like for like.
- Pointing - The pointing generally will be feebly or moderately hydraulic lime mortar, with slag deposits and coal ash within the mix. This mix will be carefully formulated with analysis of the existing Lime mortar.
- Insulation of walls will be achieved using a wood wool board, this specification and thickness will be decided in close consultation with the B.R.E. Sufficient heat will be required to be transferred into the walls in order to control moisture migration to reduce the risk of freeze thaw in the walls.
- Repairs and timber treatment of roof structure and finishes.
- The timber trusses and sarking will have some rot and this will be removed and re- instated with timber as required. The rot may only be wet rot in parts and thus will only require isolated areas of repair. New ventilation at the eaves and through the new instated cupolas

will ensure a through draft to the re finished works.

- The existing slates will be carefully removed and set aside and all good slates will be re used in the roof works. New slates will be reclaimed Welsh slate and will need to be sourced from the appropriate quarry to ensure a colour and texture match.
- Repairs / renewal of external joinery.
- All new joinery will be created to an exact replica of the parts found on site, and most windows will be retained in situ and any areas of rot, cut into the existing windows.
- Railing repair will be done by experts who are still found in the locality, they will be taken from site and straightened, new parts let into the whole, and re bedded into the terracotta coping which will need repair.
- Single Ply Membrane – this will be used upon the newly created flat roof area in the courtyard, the decking could be pre cast plank sufficient to take the plant load. The single ply membrane would have a walking route laid out on the areas that would receive foot traffic.
- Courtyard Gutter – To the perimeter of the new glass pitched roof would most likely be an insulated aluminium gutter with trace heating in the winter.
- Mansafe System – The mansafe system would be required from areas of flat roof and within the walkable gutter to prevent falling through the glass roof.

### **13.9 Internal Finishes**

#### Floors

- Basement  
Existing flags to be carefully removed in order to lay an appropriate tanking system (likely to be a lath system with base drain and sump) with a new floor build up and finish to suit room function. Salvaged flags to be re-used elsewhere in the building.
- Ground Floor
- Entrance Lobbies  
Main entrance to have re-conditioned existing mosaic to inner lobby, while the external lobby has dragon mosaic to be carefully removed and preserved for display.

New flooring to the external lobby to be natural stone to the top of the new ramp with dragon feature carved into stone.

All other secondary lobbies, to have re-conditioned existing clay tile either restored or reinstated where missing. Clay tile has mosaic style patterning and smooth patterning.

- Foyer flooring at Ground floor level  
Re-conditioned existing mosaic at the thresholds between rooms and the terrazzo of the main hall.  
Re-conditioned existing terrazzo sections, where cracked, remove whole panel and replace with exact replica terrazzo to area.

- Grand Staircase  
Stone planks with levelling screed repairs to be retained and a new finish laid over to protect.
- Courtyard Foyer  
End grain timber block flooring, laid on new screed finish with under-floor heating M&E to confirm.
- Reception/Shop  
Remove all floor board to access joist areas, fill voids with dense insulation and place isolators on every joist before re-laying. Re-conditioned existing or new in parts (up to 50%) timber floorboards to be re positioned. Floor finish to be new hard wood Parquet laid on top of floor boards, these will require sanded finish in situ, and water stain with wax finish.  
  
Salvaged timber floorboards to match where existing needs replacing due to rot damage.
- Studio space flooring at Ground floor level  
Remove all floor board to access joist areas, fill voids with dense insulation and place isolators on every joist before re-laying. Re-conditioned existing or new in parts (up to 50%) timber floorboards to be re positioned. Floor finish to be new hard wood Parquet laid on top of floor boards, these will require sanded finish in situ, and water stain with wax finish.  
  
Salvaged timber floorboards to match where existing needs replacing due to rot damage.
- Kitchen/Servery and Kitchen support  
Tiled flooring/rubber sheet flooring on top of re conditioned and acoustic build up tongue and groove timber floorboards.
- Cells  
Existing flags to be carefully removed in order to lay an appropriate tanking system (likely to be a lath system with base drain and sump) with a new floor build up and finish to suit room function. Salvaged flags to be re-used in the cell stalls, and elsewhere in the building.
- Library Lane Entrance  
Existing flags to be re used in this area, floor levels to be altered as there is a step up from road level to ground floor.
- First Floor
- The Zone 1
- Suspended floor with secondary structure required beneath, plywood performance floor with painted finish. Acoustic treatment required beneath floor finish, dense insulation and isolators required beneath each joist.

- The Zone 2  
Suspended floor with secondary structure required beneath, plywood structural subfloor with carpet tile finish.
- Studio space flooring at First floor level  
Remove all floor board to access joist areas, fill voids with dense insulation and place isolators on every joist before re-laying. Re-conditioned existing or new in parts (up to 50%) timber floorboards to be re positioned. Floor finish to be new hard wood Parquet laid on top of floor boards, these will require sanded finish in situ, and water stain with wax finish.

Salvaged timber floorboards to match where existing needs replacing due to rot damage.

- Administration areas  
Carpet tile  
Linoleum /rubber sheet flooring
- Changing room  
Linoleum /rubber sheet flooring
- Toilets  
Linoleum /rubber sheet flooring
- Second Floor
- Administration space/ workstations and The Zone 1, balcony  
Suspended floor with secondary structure required beneath, plywood structural subfloor with carpet tile finish.

### **Walls**

- Basement  
Existing walls to be lined with an appropriate tanking system (likely to be a lath system with base drain and sump) with a new wall build up and finish to suit room function.
- Ground Floor
- Entrance Lobbies  
Re-conditioned existing glazed ceramic tiles and mural, where broken, new tiles to be commissioned and set into the scheme.
- Foyer at Ground floor level  
Re-conditioned existing glazed ceramic tiles.  
Re-conditioned existing timber panelling and mouldings generally.
- Courtyard Foyer  
Existing bricks walls to be treated with a suitable biocide and cleaned and rubbed down with

a non abrasive method.

- Internal face of the external walls in Studios, Reception and Library Lane Entrance  
Wood wool Insulation and a lime plaster finish with lime paints to wall areas.
- Cells  
Existing walls to be lined with an appropriate tanking system (likely to be a lath system with base drain and sump) with a new wall build up and finish to suit room function.
- Kitchen/Servery  
Tiled walls, White rock or other similar system to hygiene requirement areas.

#### **First Floor**

- The Zone 1  
Acoustic treatment(absorption and reflection) and blackout, acoustic and blackout shutters to windows and acoustic louver to air vent in ceiling.  
Wood wool Insulation and a lime plaster finish with lime paints to wall areas.
- The Zone 2  
Wood wool Insulation and a lime plaster finish with lime paints to wall areas.
- Foyer  
Paper lined walls with high level Lincrusta / embossed border to be re-instated.
- Studio F1  
Re-instate the timber panelling to lower section of wall.  
Wood wool Insulation and a lime plaster finish with lime paints to upper wall areas.
- Kier Hardy Room F8/F9  
Re-instate the timber oak raised and fielded panelling to full height.
- Studio's  
Wood wool Insulation and a lime plaster finish with lime paints to wall areas.
- Second Floor
- Administration space/ workstations  
Wood wool Insulation and a lime plaster finish with lime paints to wall areas.

#### **Ceilings**

- Basement  
Music Practice and recording studio, Gypsum plaster acoustic suspended ceiling, specification appropriate to the space requirements.
- Ground Floor

- Entrance Lobbies  
Painted existing plastered ceilings and cornice.
- Foyer  
Re-instate the existing formed Lincrusta / papier-mâché ceiling tiles.
- Reception/Shop  
Painted existing lath and plaster plastered ceilings repaired or reinstated and any missing cornice re cast and fixed in place.
- Studio space flooring at Ground floor level  
Painted existing lath and plaster plastered ceilings repaired or reinstated and any missing cornice re cast and fixed in place.
- Kitchen/Servery  
Painted existing lath and plaster plastered ceilings repaired or reinstated and any missing cornice re cast and fixed in place.
- Cells  
Painted gypsum plasterboard ceiling
- Library Lane Entrance  
Painted gypsum plasterboard ceiling and cornice retained or reinstated and fixed in situ.
- First Floor
- Foyer  
Re-instate the existing formed Lincrusta / papier-mâché ceiling tiles
- Studio F1  
Re-instate the ornate vaulted ceiling and embossed papier-mâché ceiling features
- Studios  
Painted existing plastered ceilings and cornice
- Corridor and Zone 1 lobby  
New wood wool board and lime plaster ceiling to underside of flat roof and cornices cut out, set aside and re-instated where existing cornice are to be retained.
- The Zone 1  
Painted decorative cast iron trusses  
Timber decorative panels to be re-coated with a Fire Rated surface spread of flame treatment.  
Suspended acoustic ceiling panels

- The Zone 2, teaching spaces  
Gypsum plaster acoustic suspended ceiling, specification appropriate to the space requirements. Changing room  
Accessible ceilings tile suitable for humid areas
- Toilets  
Accessible ceilings tile suitable for humid areas
- Second Floor
- Administration areas  
Painted decorative cast iron trusses  
Timber panels to be re-coated with an FR surface spread of flame treatment  
Acoustic ceiling panels

#### **Underlay**

Recycled acoustic underlay suitable for carpet tiles

#### **Screed**

- Lime screed with insulation as Structural Engineer's requirements.

#### **Internal Staircases**

- Courtyard /Accommodation Stair  
Steel structure / Timber flooring, end grain timber to match courtyard floor.
- Back of house Stair  
1no. Precast Concrete units with steel balustrade and handrail.  
1no. Timber construction with a timber handrail fixed to enclosure walls

#### **Lifts**

- 16 person passenger lift to BS8300 recommendations

#### **Sanitaryware**

- Water efficient WCs
- Wash Hand Basins with sensor/water efficient taps
- Waterless Urinals with the requisite Air extract
- Cleaners Sinks to cleaners cupboards, shelves and hooks on walls

#### **Toilet Cubicles**

- 2.1m height laminated cubicles, with colour contrasting posts to door.  
Furniture Fixtures and Fittings
- Reception/Shop counter

Existing glazed ceramic tiling with a hardwood top

- Servery counters  
Salvaged bricks from demolished Courtyard toilet blocks used in a different format within a metal carrier frame with a recycled glass composite top
- Dressing Room furniture  
Painted timber framework with laminate worktop and lighting to mirrors.

#### **Fire Protection**

All lath and plaster ceilings, fire paint will be required to upgrade the ceilings.  
Cast iron columns which are exposed metalwork are to have a fine intumescent paint finish.  
Whilst all steelwork which is not decorative will be covered in fire rated build-up.

#### **Acoustic Encasement**

- Will be required to all floors and ceilings to ensure a good performance to the structure, the areas above and below the theatre spaces and the recording studios will require a particular level of requirements.

#### **Sundry Insulation**

- All lofts to be insulated at ceiling level, thus creating a cold roof. In order to create sufficient ventilation for the loft timbers, eaves ventilation will be installed when re fixing the slates to the roofs, and the space will be ventilated at high level through the newly reinstated vent cowls.

#### **Signage**

- All signage will be designed in accordance with the branding strategy and physical requirements of the building strategy. All designed to BS. 8300 recommendations.

#### **Paint**

- Organic based low VOC breathable paints, lime based paints where lime plaster is used.

#### **Protective Finishes**

- Intumescent seals and coatings to all fire doors and to mechanical and electrical penetrations through fire compartments. Lofts will have some fire compartmentation due to the rooms below requiring protection.

#### **Tanking**

- Cavity draining lath tanking system, will require a sump point and pumped drain at a low level. The walls drain freely and the water is then drained by gravity or by the pump system.

#### **14.0 Policies for Conservation**

Maintaining and enhancing the quality the economic and social fabric of Merthyr Old Town Hall is vital if it is to be conserved and thereafter passed to future generations. Identifying a sustainable, vibrant use for the heritage asset is always the first step in and conservation proposals.

With care and design expertise it should be possible to do this in a manner which retains the form, important detailing, and historic interest of the Old Town Hall. This may not be the most economically advantageous; the aim should be to identify the best viable use that is compatible with the fabric, setting, and character of the site.

It is recommended that, as far as is reasonably possible, that the use of the Old Town Hall be to maintain unrestricted public access to the place as it is a significant part of Merthyr Tydfil's heritage.

**Policy 1** Identify a sustainable, new use for the building which minimises the level of intervention required and is compatible with the fabric, setting, and character.

**Policy 2** The proposed use should maintain a substantive degree of public access to the Old Town Hall.

The Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association are an appropriately resourced and skilled owner for The Old Town Hall and civic guardianship is an important element of the site's history, although suitable arm-length single-building preservation trust with charitable status and community representation might also be a viable way forward.

Whichever route is selected, it is important to realise that the conservation will be an onerous undertaking which will require significant project-specific staff resourcing and expertise. It is therefore recommended that the Housing Association put in place suitable full-time, qualified member(s) of staff (whether internally or externally) in order to manage the project. These individuals should have a suitable conservation qualification and experience (for example IHBC, AABC, IFA, or similar) and an understanding of listed building fabric, financial/grant funding and business plan issues.

**Policy 3** Put in place dedicated, suitably skilled staff resources to manage the project and thereafter the running of the Old Town Hall.

The Old Town Hall is in a largely structurally secure, wind and watertight, condition although there is evidence of defects and leaks. Nevertheless there are some major concerns about water ingress and rot around window heads and parapets, which are causing dry rot. There is movement around the first floor overhanging bay windows, and concerns about conditions of the windows and lead work. These require to be attended to in the short term in order to avoid potential damage to surviving historic fabric.

**Policy 4** The following sections of the building are a priority and must be addressed in the immediate to short term:

- Water ingress and timber deterioration at window heads and parapets
- Structural movement at bay windows to first floor
- Remedial works to roof areas
- General high level maintenance/repairs and improve ventilation to the whole place
- Cover any vulnerable lead window work from vandalism

Some of the previous repairs employ techniques which are not appropriate for historic buildings and in the medium to long term will require replacement; examples include the dense cement scratch coats internally to external walls, which will trap moisture within the building and is already failing in areas.

**Policy 5** As soon as practicable, and certainly within the next 5 years, remove and replace poor quality modern repairs including impervious cement based render coatings.

The dilapidated and incomplete condition of the historic rooms to the West face of the building has a severe impact on the character of the historic property and should be repaired; the rooms on the West are of particular historical and architectural importance, previously serving as the principal council rooms, and should be fully restored. There may be scope for a more flexible approach to the East, where rooms are of less interest.

**Policy 6** Historic finishes should be restored or reinstated as part of any wider programme of repair and re-use.

Any new build elements proposed for the scheme should be designed to be physically sympathetic to the building, whilst enhancing its character and use. New build elements can be designed in a number of ways but the most successful are simple structures with features that unify the existing building.

## **15.0 Policies for New work**

**Policy 7** Any proposals of new build elements should be simple structures and sympathetic to the building, enhancing the existing qualities of the building as it stands.

A more strategic approach is required to landscaping in and around the Old Town Hall and its entrances. Problems include the dilapidated buildings and neglect of historic properties in the high street area of Merthyr Town centre which has a significant conservation area. The Old town Hall entrance could be greatly enhanced by traffic management, slowing of traffic, improving the approach to the entrance for pedestrians.

**Policy 8** Consideration should be given to upgrading of the surrounding townscape as part of a linked, overall redevelopment strategy. A Townscape Heritage Initiative would be appropriate as the building is at the heart of a large Conservation area. THIs have been seen to be successful in other areas of significant heritage assets which now fall into areas of

deprivation.

## **16.0 Access**

We want to create an Arts Centre in the Town Hall which everyone can enjoy. It follows therefore, that all key parts of the building must have level access, or be accessible by lift. The implications are assessed this aspiration in terms of external approach, and internal configuration, below.

Austin-Smith:Lord have award winning experience from projects with similar constraints. At Leeds City Museum the rise at the front steps and the forecourt needed to be addressed with great sensitivity with a considered ramp design. At the Llanyrafon Manor Rural Heritage Centre, a disabled lift was inserted in the House as the floor through which it is breaking is the one new floor within the House.

The Town Hall was originally designed to be a building which you could enter from various points, making it a thoroughly permeable building. In current times, where accessibility for all is so much better, we would like to retain that 'permeability' which the architect envisaged, albeit with far better provision for all users to access each entrance. At the Town Hall, the building is built into a steep hillside, with steep gradients along Newcastle Street and Library Lane. It is impractical to look to modify these gradients for visitors, nor might such modifications significantly improve internal accessibility in fact. However, each entrance should be made accessible, which would require modifications to three entrances. It is our view that where steps exist or are installed at an entrance lower than the floor that it serves, it is an essential part of fulfilling the above aim to provide access to the accommodation floor by lift. In this respect, our views differ from the design proposal submitted for planning approval.

The Main Entrance in its current form is a significant impediment to this aim, with ten steps up to the main Ground Floor level. Lowering the floor level across the building at this level is impractical, and a simpler alternative would be modify the Main Entrance to provide a ramped access up to the external doorway, with a new through-car passenger lift inserted adjacent to the reconfigured stair within the main entrance vestibule. The same applies to the south west entrance from Library Lane, and the eastern entrance from Newcastle Street only, as the two remaining entrances are level with external grade. All main entrances will have sensor activated, power-assisted doors with large vision panels, or be made in glass. The reception will have induction-loops, as will each of the venues.

In the case of the Town Hall, it is fortunate that the majority of publicly accessible accommodation is on a single floor (Ground Floor), meaning that with minor adjustments made at some entrances a barrier-free design can be executed bringing the building up to current standards.

The proposal to level floors to the 'venues' within the Court House is the final aspect of the internal reconfiguration of the building. Whilst an involved and somewhat costly operation, it is necessary to carry out this alteration to ensure that all parts of the Arts Centre are completely

accessible for all.

In terms of internal layouts, legibility of the centre can be improved through using sensitive finishes and clear way-finding.

Contrasting colours between walls and floors are desirable. In terms of meeting this requirement within the context of a Listed Building, it is useful to assess finishes in terms of understanding colour choices which were prevalent in the late Victorian period. Although paint technology continued to develop during the Victorian period, there was still considerably less choice of paint finish than is available today. The finishes remained basically oil-based paints and water-based distempers, with the former being used on woodwork and some plaster surfaces, and the latter almost totally restricted to plaster surfaces such as ceilings. Resin-based varnishes were also often applied to timber, or as a protective coat over painted imitations of marble or woodgrain.

Signage will be clear, well positioned, and made in contrasting colours and with raised Braille surfaces, to aide visitors to the different activities on offer within the building. Signage could take many forms, and will be part of an overall wayfinding aesthetic. Although not strictly from the Victorian period, a good well-known, sans-serif typeface is Eric Gill's Gill Sans, which is often associated with the London Underground, and might strike a nice balance if trying to portray a contemporary feel for the new insertions within a historic context.

## **16.1 Access to the Development**

### **16.1.1.Public Transport**

The Merthyr Tydfil bus station is situated less than 300m to the south west of the Town Hall, off Castle Street. Buses depart regularly from the bus station to outlying areas and major towns and Cities including Swansea, Cardiff and Newport.

The main train station is situated less than 400m to the south of the Town Hall, between High Street and Tramroad Side North. Trains depart to Cardiff Central Station every 30 minutes between the hours of 06.38 and 22.38 on Monday to Saturday, or every 2 hours between the hours of 09.38 and 21.38 on Sundays.

### **16.1.2.Private Transport**

The Town Hall is easily accessible and is situated in the centre of Merthyr Tydfil, approximately 19 miles or 30 minutes north of Cardiff and Junction 32 of the M4 motorway.

Access to the Town Hall is via High Street from the north or Castle Street from the west. There are a number of public car parks serving the town centre, including Castle Car Park, Abermorlais Car Park (only available on Saturdays), Tramroad Car Park and Swan Street Car

Park which are all within 400 metres of the Town Hall. The car parks all offer accessible parking bays. The site is within 300 m of two access points to the National Cycle Network route NCR 8 which runs through the heart of Wales, connecting Cardiff in the south with Holyhead in the north. The cycle route follows the River Taff running north to south and is predominantly traffic free and offers an excellent leisure route.

### **16.1.3. Car Parking on Site**

There is limited external space for car parking on the site. Staff and visitor parking is located in the existing car park to the south east of the building, adjacent to the workshop entrance. The car park is accessed using the shared lane between the Town Hall and the Library and will be clearly signposted from the main road.

There is provision for the following car parking:  
8 no. staff/visitor parking bays;  
2 no. designated disabled visitor parking bays.

Accessible bays are clearly visible upon entering the car park and will be clearly identified using pictogram road markings and signage. All accessible bays are designed in compliance with Approved Document Part M (2004).

Car park security barriers will be used to secure the car park outside of normal working hours. During normal working hours the barrier will be open.

### **16.1.4. Cycle Storage on Site**

There is a provision for 5 no. Sheffield type cycle stands, accommodating secure storage for 10 no. cycles. Shower, locker and changing facilities have also been provided in the building.

### **16.1.5. Pedestrian Approach**

Level changes across the site are not significant therefore all new external pedestrian routes are predominantly level or have shallow gradients (less than 1:20) with firm, durable, smooth and even surface finishes. The exception to this is the approach along New Castle Street which has a steep gradient exceeding 1 in 6 in places, making it unsuitable for wheelchair access.

Pedestrian footpaths around the building are generally owned and maintained by the Local Authority. All pedestrian routes are wide enough to allow wheelchair users to pass each other travelling in an opposite direction. Where pedestrian routes cross vehicular areas they have clearly defined edges with dropped kerbs and tactile warnings where appropriate. Materials with different colour are used to distinguish vehicular and pedestrian routes.

External lighting along public footpaths and access routes is owned and maintained by the Local

Authority. External lighting in the car park will be designed and maintained to meet the standards set out in BS. 5489 to ensure good access and to reduce crime risk.

#### **16.1.6. Signage**

A signage strategy for the building will be developed in conjunction with the Local Authority and will take the historic interest of the building and its setting, multicultural and multi-lingual considerations into account. Symbols or pictograms will be used to supplement written information wherever possible.

#### **16.1.7. Access for emergency services and utilities**

Access for emergency services and utilities to the site can be achieved along all four elevations.

#### **16.1.8. Access Audit of the Proposals**

Planning Policy Wales: Technical Advice Note 12: Design states that "Consideration should be given to the volume and relative ease of pedestrian movements, including people with mobility or sensory impairments".

#### **16.1.9. Assessment of users of the building**

The Target Audience includes:

Market research will have to be undertaken to establish the exact usage, expressions of interest and diverse needs. Some examples are:

'Little Look / Small Sounds' (ages 1-4). Creative activities for young children which will engage families with creative projects;

50+ known as the 'Sandwich Generation';

Elderly – dealing with social isolation;

There are community groups who are already formed but need spaces to grow and develop;

Also, there are groups who need to refocus their skills, such as NEET; recently redundant and long term unemployed;

Artist, designers, and performers who are starting out and need mentoring. Specialist spaces also available to the more established of these groups.

Creative Businesses.

#### **16.2 Assessment of the physical impediments to access and Assessment of the circulation**

Refer to the following 'Current and Proposed Access Provisions to All Floors'.

Once inside the building, the ground floor is mainly all at one level. Currently there is a 490 mm level rise to the gaol area (where the cells are) in the north east corner of the building and

there is a nominal drop of 40 mm to the zone in the south east corner.

For the 490 mm rise to the north east corner, a new ramp will be incorporated at 1 in 15, with a half landing at a change in direction. For the 40 mm change in level to the south east corner, this will be made up in the floor build-up.

Also one currently has to step down one step to access the courtyard.

The proposals ensure that the new internal courtyard area is the same level as the remainder of the ground floor.

The existing corridor around the building, circumventing the courtyard, provides excellent, legible access to the whole of the ground floor. This is being fully retained.

All of the basement area is at the same floor level.

On the first floor, there is a change in level at the toilet block, however this is proposed for demolition. To the eastern section (the old County Court area) of the building, there is a general 610 mm level drop, with a variety of levels within the space.

It is proposed that the floor level within this whole County Court area is raised to meet the level of the rest of the first floor, thereby provided a completely level first floor.

Once again, the existing corridor around the building, circumventing the courtyard, provides excellent, legible access to the whole of the ground floor. This is being fully retained.

The second floor level, which only exists in the north east corner of the building, is all at one level. This will remain as it is.

Currently there is one lift in the north east section of the building which provides access between the ground, first and second floors.

It is proposed that this lift is brought back into use. The existing shaft will determine the size of this lift.

It is proposed that a new lift is provided within the front (western) end of the building. This will access basement, lower entrance, ground, first and roof void level (the latter is identified simply for storage). This will be a 16 no. person sized lift.

There are three existing staircase in the building. The proposals retain the primary staircase in the entrance foyer and reconfigure the two modern staircases within the eastern section of the site. A fourth staircase is proposed in the middle of the south section of the building primarily to provide for emergency escape, however also offering accommodating provision.

Essentially, therefore, the building will be as accessible as it can possibly be. All four floors will

be either completely level, or, in the case of the ground floor, incorporate a ramp to overcome a 610 mm change in level. Two lifts will link the floors, one linking all four, the other linking three.

### **16.3 Accessible entrances at the Old Town Hall**

#### **16.3.1.Existing Entrances**

The following summarises the situation at each available entrance to the building, addressing the number of steps up to the door and the slope of the ground / pavement outside the door / steps. The slopes are calculated from survey information. The approach is taken as travelling along the pavement; the cross fall perpendicular to approach.

High Street main entrance and Grand building entrance:  
10 steps up from pavement to ground floor level with two intermediate landings;  
1:51 approach from North, 1:29 approach from South;  
1:53 cross fall on pavement.

New Castle Street (near High Street):  
near level threshold with pavement to ground floor level;  
1:8 approach from West, 1:10 approach from East;  
1:12 cross fall on pavement.

New Castle Street (near Tramroad Side North):  
11 steps up from pavement to first floor level (level at rear is lower than level at front, High Street side) with two intermediate landings;  
1:8 approach from West, 1:9 approach from East;  
1:16 cross fall on pavement.

Library Lane (near High Street):  
8 steps up from pavement to ground floor level with one intermediate landing;  
1:22 approach from West and East;  
1:21 cross fall on pavement.

Car park (single door):  
2 steps up from pavement;  
1:28 approach from from West, 1:27 approach from East;  
varies 1:8 to 1:12 cross fall on pavement.

Car park (double door):  
near level threshold on exterior, single step on interior;  
1:27 approach from West, no approach from East;  
1:45 cross fall (perpendicular to door).

#### **16.4 Possible methods of access**

There are two possible access methods – arrival as pedestrian on pavement or by vehicle to car park adjacent to and serving only the development.

Pedestrian entrances suited for accessibility are limited by slopes of the existing pavement. Only two entrances come close to meeting the criteria set out in AD M, the grand entrance on High Street and the Library Lane entrance closest to High Street. Both entrances have steps that will need to be overcome to reach the ground floor level. Pedestrians will not utilise the car park entrance because of the excessive distance from High Street, the steepness of slope and lack of resting places along the way.

Arrival by vehicle to the car park with two dedicated disabled parking bays. (Parking provision is for staff or visitors by pre-arrangement; no open public parking.) Car park falls are gentle, but at least one step needs to be overcome to gain access to the ground floor via the double door entrance. There is adequate space to make both car park entrances accessible by both ramp and stair.

#### **16.5 Possible proposals considered**

##### **16.5.1.High Street grand entrance**

External ramp to intermediate landing level or to ground floor level is not possible from the south as the ramp works against the slope of the ground and becomes excessively long. From the north it is possible to provide an AD M compliant ramp to the first landing level, but not the ground floor level. Due to the generous pavement in this area there is ample width for a ramp or inclined approach from the north.

In addition to the external ramp the three intermediate steps would need to be “pushed” into the building to create a single flight from the first landing level to the ground floor level. New internal lift access would be provided from the first landing level to all levels of the building. Access to the lift will require creating a new door into a side wall of the exterior lobby. The existing wall is finished in glazed tile, which will be removed and reused for repairs elsewhere. The floor level in this area is dropped so it is possible to create a door well below the tile murals which exist on both sides of the entry.

See L(00)210 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan and A(90)901 – Ramp Study for additional information.

##### **16.5.2.Library Lane (near High Street)**

External AD M compliant ramp to the intermediate landing level or ground floor level is not

possible. The available pavement width is approximately 2150 mm. Allowing 1500 mm for the ramp width and 50 mm to set the ramp off the building leaves 600 mm clear pavement to access the starting point of the ramp. Similarly splitting the pavement width evenly results in a ramp clear width of approximately 825 mm between curbs and a pavement width of 1075 mm. Stairs to reach the same level as the top of ramp will be the same width as the ramp.

If at this entrance the ramp width could be addressed, ramping to the West works against the slope and there is not enough length along side of the building for an AD M compliant ramp. Conversely ramping to the East works with the slope and offers a possible solution to access the intermediate landing level but not the ground floor level. A new internal lift would still be required to access the ground floor and other levels of the building.

In all cases the external ramp would result in a congested or compromised entrance which would not be suitable for a building of this stature.

A possible alternative is to modify the building fabric by “pushing in” the external stairs to allow a level threshold to the pavement. Access to the ground floor and other internal levels would again be via a new lift or new flight of stairs inside the building. However as the existing pavement fall across the existing steps, to create a level threshold the pavement would have to be lifted and laid flat at the threshold. The pavement to the uphill side would also have to be lifted and re-laid to a steeper fall to make up the lower level to the level threshold.

Access to the lift will require creating a new door into a side wall of the existing stairwell.

See current planning application drawing G2 416 (05) 212 rev F for a representative layout of this solution. This layout would have to be revised to accommodate the current client brief as manifested in the current Propose Ground Floor Plan, L(00)210.

### **16.5.3. Car park**

External AD M compliant ramp and stairs to gain access from the car park and adjacent pavement to ground floor level. This provision will be in addition to the main accessible entrance.

There is currently a step up inside from the double door threshold level to the ground floor level. It will be necessary to cut a strip off the bottom of the doors and adjust any ironmongery to suit.

See L(90)200 – Proposed Site Plan for additional information.

### **16.5.4. Mechanical Devices**

External mechanical devices were disregarded due to their size and obvious visual impact on

the formality of the architecture. Mechanical lifting devices of this sort have a reputation for high maintenance requirements and reliance on them could leave the whole of the building inaccessible should there be a failure. Due to the time it takes to operate one of these devices and their limited capacity, they could quite easily become a bottle neck during peak periods.

One concealed option was assessed for use at the High Street entrance, produced by Sesame Access. This product is clad to look like the existing stairs and conceals a lift beneath retracting stair treads. While this would overcome the level change, it is limited in size and not suitable for all users as it does not have full height guarding around the lift platform. Also, if used as the only solution with the existing stairs, three separate lifts would be required as there are as many flights to reach the ground floor level. Lastly, even if used with the inclined approach and pushing the middle flight into the building, there is not enough space at the top of the existing stairs to safely alight from the lift and open the main doors. These doors would have to be pushed further back into the building to accommodate this.

#### **16.5.5.Chosen proposed**

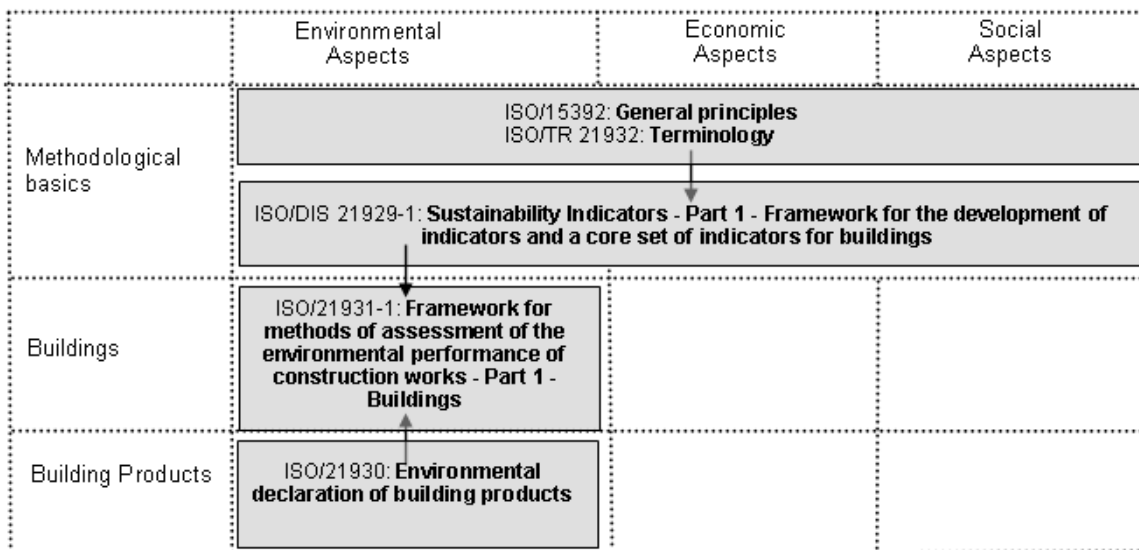
The High Street grand entrance is proposed as both the main and accessible entrance. This would allow all building users to approach and access the building, the feature main staircase and stained glass windows behind as historically intended. As noted in *Overcoming the Barriers: Providing Physical Access to Historic Buildings (Cadw)* "... the main entrance of certain types of structure, such as grand mansions or imperial public buildings, may have been designed to be dramatic and to overwhelm the visitor on entry." This is relevant to the MT OTH as it possesses an "...exceptionally fine imperial staircase..." as noted in the Cadw listing.

This choice also provides a positive and inclusive approach to building access maintaining the use of the historic main entrance for all. It maintains the original relationship of the internal and external entry procession. The Welsh Government supports inclusive design, where Planning Policy Wales states "Good design is also inclusive design. The principles of inclusive design are that it places people at the heart of the design process, acknowledges diversity and difference, offers choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users, provides for flexibility in use, and, provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone."

### **17.0 Effects on the environment**

- 17.1** The Old Town Hall as a landmark building of immense historical value to Merthyr Tydfil has a key opportunity to demonstrate the manner in which an existing building can minimise its affect on the environment. The approach to minimising those affects will need to consider the definition of "environment" from two perspectives, the first of these being the environment of the 'building 'its self and secondly the environment in a wider context, as in its affect on the wider local and global community, to do this the approach will need to consider the fundamental performance characteristics of the building "as designed" and "as refurbished" to ensure stability of indoor environment and the operational and embodied energy consumption

of the building in the refurbishment phase and subsequent operational use. To enable the project team to undertake this in a measurable way it is intended that the following process will be used to assess the wider impacts of the building and any measures introduced to improve its footprint.



**17.2 Building Environment**

As far as possible and practicable it is the intention of the project to mimic the performance parameters of the building as designed, which in essence relies on natural ventilation, breathing structure, natural daylight and constant or controllable indoor relative humidity. This will be balanced against the need to drive down the carbon footprint and energy usage of the building in operation.

The sustainability of the developed concepts and technological solutions will be assessed considering the following aspects:

- building performance,
- service life,
- environmental impacts and
- life-cycle costs.

The starting point for this task is that achieving and maintaining the desired building performance while minimising the negative impacts in terms of environmental and economic impacts are all essential elements of sustainable building. Though environmental impacts and LC costs indicate aspects of sustainability, the quantifying and comparing cannot be done

without a common reference. When comparing different concepts and design options, performance aspects are the underlying factor.

Although there is no formal requirement to assess the sustainability impact of the Town Hall it has been decided that the building must be as sustainable as possible both in works carried out and in operation, therefore the following list presents the chosen outline for the overall performance assessment of external walls in the Merthyr Town Hall project:

- 1) Durability (with reference to required service life (50 / 100 a)) (considering relevant deterioration mechanisms)
- 2) Need for care and maintenance
- 3) Impact on energy demand for heating
- 4) Impact on energy demand for cooling
- 5) Impact on renewable energy use potential (use of solar panels etc.)
- 6) Aesthetic quality
- 7) Environmental impact of manufacture and maintenance
- 8) Life cycle costs
- 9) Effect on cultural heritage
- 10) Structural stability
- 11) Fire safety
- 12) Buildability
- 13) Disturbance to the tenants and to the site
- 14) Impact on daylight

The basic environmental data will be collected and presented in such a way that the focus will be on the following environmental aspects:

- use of renewable energy
- use of non-renewable energy
- use of renewable natural raw materials
- use of non-renewable natural raw materials
- green house gas emissions
- wastes (problem wastes, other wastes).

Carbon footprint assessed on life cycle bases in terms of green house gases will be the main environmental assessment criteria, and a bespoke tool created by the BRE will be used to measure the LCA impact of any measures undertaken, created for the Susref project which is the Sustainable Refurbishment Project funded under the FP7 EU call.



## SusRef Embodied Impact Assessment Tool

### Test Data

This is test data

<b>Brick Wall Main</b>	Net Corners	4
This is the main wall of the building	Height	3.000
	Length	10.000

Item	Rate Applied	Impact		
		Energy (KJ)	Carbon (KgCO2)	Carbon Equiv (KgCO2e)
Brick	Brick Wall 02	31383.0	2406.0	2510.6
Brick	Brick Wall 02	24255.0	1859.6	1940.4
Window	Window	1575.0	93.4	98.1
Door	Window	350.0	20.8	21.8
<b>Element Totals</b>		<b>57563.0</b>	<b>4379.7</b>	<b>4570.9</b>

- 17.3** When assessing the total green house gases the factors presented in IPCC 4th Assessment Report<sup>1</sup>, Chapter 2 and Table 2.14 (Lifetimes, radiative efficiencies and direct (except for CH<sub>4</sub>) Global Warming Potentials relative to CO<sub>2</sub>) will be used. According to this Table the global warming potentials for 100 years' time horizon for carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are 1, 25 and 298 in the corresponding order.

To ensure that the performance and stability of the wall of the Town Hall is not compromised by any improvement it will be necessary to understand the current relative humidity, porosity of the structure, this will ensure that any risk for interstitial condensation, mould growth or other factor is considered in the improvement options. to do this the BRE has undertaken steady state modelling of the current wall constructions using WUFI 2d.

In the calculation of heat transport, WUFI takes into account:

- thermal conduction
- enthalpy flows through moisture movement with phase change
- short-wave solar radiation
- night-time long-wave radiation cooling (optional, and with TRY or DAT weather data only).

Convective heat transport by air flows has been disregarded, since it is usually difficult to quantify.

The vapour transport mechanisms included in WUFI are:

- vapour diffusion
- solution diffusion

Again, convective vapour transport by air flows has been ignored.

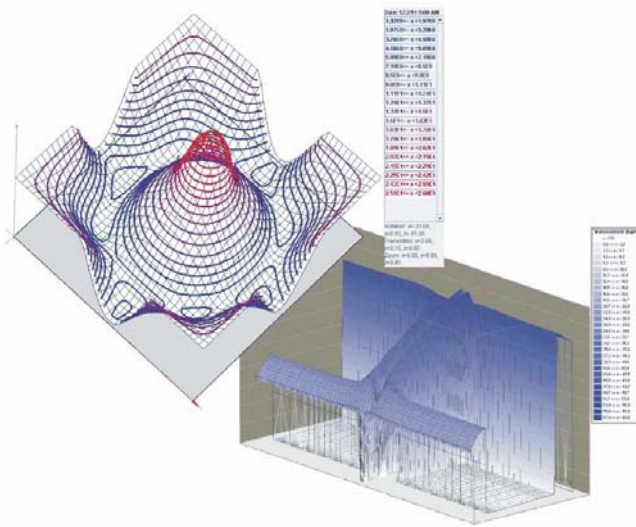
The liquid transport mechanisms taken into account are:

- capillary conduction
- surface diffusion.

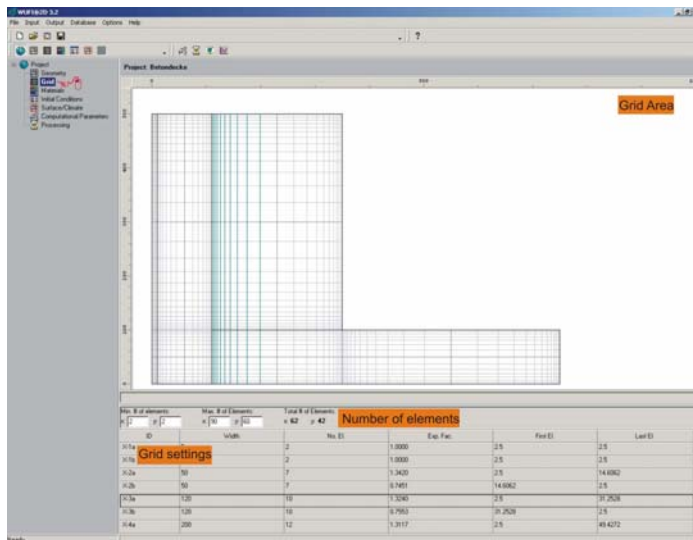
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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg1/ar4-wg1-chapter2.pdf>

Figure 1 – whole wall modelling and internal transfer of moisture through the fabric Merthyr Town Hall.



The image below demonstrates the modelling which has been undertaken by the BRE to ascertain the current state of the walls after on site readings were taken for measurement purposes.



On completion of the base line modelling a range of insulation materials will be assessed for their impact on the breath ability and performance of the external walls, and using the criteria set out in the LCA and Sustainability Assessment the most appropriate material will be selected for the works.

**17.4 Environmental Impact**

The following equation and methodology will be used to calculate the impact on the environment for any replacement heat and or power systems to demonstrate the considerations undertaken by the design team in their final selection, this will be undertaken in conjunction by the BRE with the M&E Consultants.

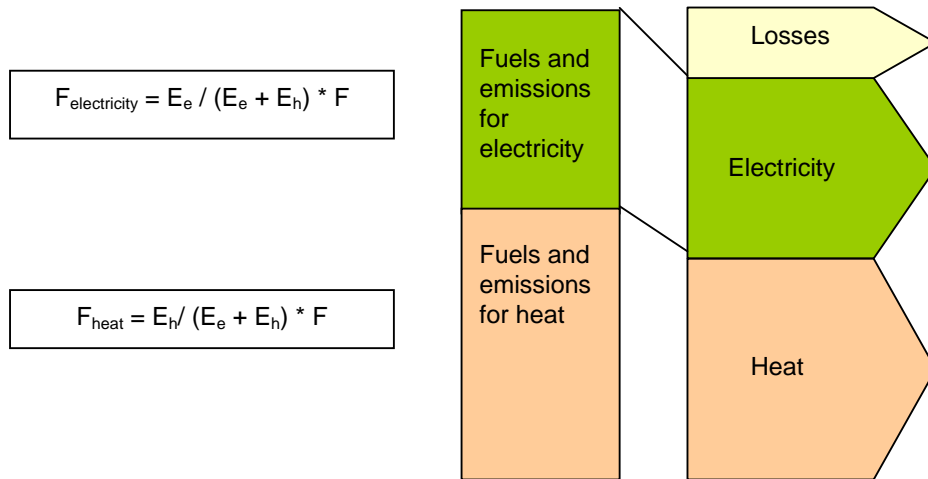


Figure 3. Allocation procedure in heat and power co-generation. Note: Ee = produced power, Eh = produced heat, F = energy from fuel type, Fe= fuels for electricity production and, Fh fuels for heat production.

In addition at this stage the consideration of any new forms of heat and power, lighting, or renewable technologies will be evaluated using the Susref tool and the parameters set out in the LCA process, this will ensure that the balance of improved performance will be a measured approach of all of the three pillars of sustainability (Environmental, Social and Financial). The principles of Whole Life Costing will be used to assess the suitability of any measure to be considered as discussed in the section of this report which looks at maintaining any Long term benefit.

## 18.0 Maintenance

- Tell us what you need to do to maintain the heritage, who will do it, when and what resources are needed.
- Tell us what you need to do to maintain any new work funded by HLF including new facilities, new buildings or new interpretation material, who will do it, when and with what resources.

### 18.1 Future Management & Maintenance of the Old Town Hall to ensure maintenance of the benefits for the long term

MTHA believes that any proposals for the refurbishment it is essential that a framework for ensuring long term benefits its in place.. For this to take place there must be a well measured and robust maintenance plan. As part of this process it is vital that any works undertaken are fully assessed using Whole Life Costing principles to ensure that the full impact of any decisions made is fully understood and appreciated.

### 18.2 Whole Life Costing (WLC)

WLC is the estimation of the monetary costs for the construction, operation, maintenance and repair (and sometimes demolition) of a built asset over a chosen study period. The purpose of a WLC model is to improve the decisions being made by practitioners. Forecasts may be used to improve design, specification and through life maintenance and operation of an asset which will have various economic benefits. It may be applied to either new designs or to existing structures, enabling residual life and value to be estimated. As various activities take place at different times to maintain the asset the incremental costs have to be converted to present day value using a discounted cash flow technique. WLC relies on predicting when elements of the asset will deteriorate to a condition at which intervention is needed and what the discounted cost will be for each activity. WLC calculations depend on numerous assumptions, all of which are subject to a degree of uncertainty.

Whole Life Costing is defined in the International Standard ISO 15686 as:

***“economic assessment considering all agreed projected significant and relevant cost flows over a period of analysis expressed in monetary value. The projected costs are those needed to achieve defined levels of performance, including reliability, safety and availability”.***

Although this definition captures a number of the essential issues in whole life costing it is not particularly easy as an introduction, and it may be easier to consider the Crisp definition which is:

***“the systematic consideration of all relevant costs and revenues associated with the ownership of an asset”.***

Whole Life Costing (WLC) is a tool, to assist in making decisions between different options with different cash flows over a period of time. In this respect it is a form of investment analysis.

Typical decisions informed by WLC analysis include:

- a) choices between alternative components, all of which have acceptable performance (component level WLC analysis);
- b) choices between alternative designs for the whole, or part, of a constructed asset (assembly or whole asset level WLC analysis);
- c) evaluation of different investment scenarios (e.g. to adapt and redevelop an existing facility, or to provide a totally new facility);
- d) estimation of future costs for budgets or the evaluation of the acceptability of an investment on the basis of cost of ownership;
- e) comparison and/or benchmarking analysis of previous investment decisions which may be at the level of individual cost headings (e.g. energy costs, cleaning costs) or at a strategic level (e.g. open plan versus cellular office accommodation).

Such decisions, especially those placed in a strategic (organisational) framework, can create added value for the asset and the operations that occur within as maintenance is being performed in the most cost effective manner.

Whole life costing is relevant when considering whole estates, individual buildings or structures and when comparing alternative investment scenarios such as:

- Whether to accept or reject a project
- Optimise capital investment, for example between alternative designs (such as between framed and load-bearing structures)
- Optimise component selection, for example choosing between alternative specifications (such as between timber and metal windows).

It is often, but not necessarily the case, that this technique can help identify investment opportunities that promote increased capital investment in order to lower future operating costs and increase the benefits generated from the investment. For a built asset the potential savings may be significant given that for a built asset the initial purchase price may only be a small proportion of ongoing costs, such as maintenance, repair and energy costs for a building.

Therefore it is intended that a fully evaluated process for new works will be used bearing in mind the principles of WLC to minimise future maintenance costs, and that all existing features will be assessed for maintenance cycles in the future. The plan will identify all areas of potential works, considering the implications of :-

- Planned maintenance
- Cyclical maintenance
- Routine maintenance

-

The plan will identify all key components and the creation of a building log book will ensure that all cyclical maintenance and surveys are taken at the appropriate time.

## **19.0 Management**

The management of the building at Merthyr Tydfil is developed in two ways, firstly the use of the building is such that the people who are both managing and using the building are of an appropriate use class in order that the building is used and kept as a sustainable business for the foreseeable future. And secondly the building is being design and materials specified that will ensure the heritage is preserved and allows for the normal wear and tear associated with the planned future uses of the building. The building is not being promoted as a 'visitor attraction', this will be a public building used for socializing, education, creative industries and art activities.

Visitors will access and experience the 'Old Town hall' in a number of different ways, directly and indirectly, which will require clear management

Indirectly:

- Through taking up tenancy positions within the Old town Hall
- Participating in activities provided by tenants.

Each lease issued to a tenant will contain a clause which will ensure that they have to observe certain behaviors to guarantee heritage is respected and not damaged.

Directly:

- Through participating in organized heritage activities

Each activity will be designed to develop understanding and respect for the 'Old Town Hall' as a vital part of the heritage of Merthyr Tydfil. Codes of behavior when working within the building will be an integral part of the 'Old Town Hall' experience.

The visitor activities will inevitably have an effect on the heritage asset over the years but the way that the team are looking at lifetime costs and robustness is balancing that for a good long term maintenance strategy. There should be no exceptional adverse impact on the building / heritage over and above normal wear and tear associated with a public building of this type. The design team are ensuring that materials specified, and the design, address the future use and management and maintenance of the building to ensure the heritage is preserved.

This is functional building which was designed over 115 years ago in a robust way. The design team will ensure that not only will it be returned to its former glory but that the restoration work will once again make it robust and reinforce longevity.

The staff, volunteers will have the appropriate skills through appropriate recruitment and selection – development of job and persons specifications; advertisement and selection documentation; through interview and practical assessment and by taking up references and reviewing examples of work.

Comprehensive education and training programmes will be developed at appropriate diverse levels to inform and enhance the heritage knowledge and skills of volunteers, and staff involved with the 'Old Town Hall'.

The potential heritage conflict can be identified as one of the prospective long term leases to Merthyr Tydfil College. A balance will need to be in place to ensure that the spaces let to the college maintain a heritage focus whilst also providing an appropriate learning environment. Formal meetings are taking place between the design team and Merthyr Tydfil College to ensure this is achieved. A good example of this is the use of the old cells developed in to editing booths. To embed heritage preservation, further clauses will be included in the lease agreement to ensure the spaces are used and respected in an appropriate way.

The way that the Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association will manage and maintain the building in the foreseeable future is with a very carefully developed strategy and plan. The association has developed a 30 year management and maintenance plan for this building incorporating sustainability measures and whole life costing principles.

This will be reviewed and evaluated yearly to ensure targets identified in the plans are met and any new concerns included and addressed.

### **Managing information about your heritage**

The decisions made to restore and manage the building are from the detailed information about the heritage gleaned through the research that has already been completed into the original plans, development brief, materials that informed the development of the building when it was first built.

Through the research we have uncovered detailed minutes from council meetings held with the architect 115 years ago. These notes discuss development of design and construction of the 'Old Town Hall'. This research coupled with the expertise of appointed structural engineer ensures that decisions made are informed, accurate and sympathetic.

The research about the buildings has been undertaken by Jane Barnes, a consultant employed for this purpose; in partnership with Merthyr Tydfil Librarian, Carolyn Jacobs and Austin-Smith:Lord Architects and Conservation Architects. This research is then available to inform the design process and management plans.

The consultant and Austin-Smith:Lord have worked extensively with Carolyn Jacobs, Merthyr Tydfil Librarian, gathering information through archived newspapers; photographs; council minutes from 115 years ago and also through interacting with the public not only to inform but to present opportunity for the community to share their memories of the 'Old Town Hall'. The consultant has also gathered further information from the Masonic Museum in London; Doulton; and Craven Dunnill and Jackfield with regards to tiles and Abergavenny Library in addition to

gathering information from the community of Merthyr Tydfil.

The storage of heritage information is important for future generations to ensure the research and management principles are established and brought forward into future decision making. The CMP and other management documents are to be stored in electronic format, in fact work undertaken by MTHA is being converted to electronic documents by MTHA for the Library.

Heritage information will be stored in a number of ways:

- Electronically in themes, aimed at different levels from ranging from formal education incorporating curriculum demands for National Curriculum and Welsh Baccaalaureate to informal research needs.
- Pertinent hard copies of information will be available at an information research point to facilitate further knowledge acquisition.
- Images and memorabilia will be displayed at relevant points, in a secure manner, throughout the building and heritage space, again to enhance the heritage experience.
- Collections of memories from the community will be in audio, video and written formats, displayed through extended labeling and also captured electronically.
- Electronically the screens will be interactive enabling the participant to select the theme they wish to explore further.
- Space is of a premium at the 'Old Town Hall', exhibits will be carefully themed on a rotational programme to ensure the heritage is kept fresh, avoiding information saturation.

To ensure volunteers, staff and contractors have access to information about the heritage, the raft of information that has been created for the design and submission process can be passed on to staff and users through induction and training.

We will inform the public, visitors and others about our heritage and how we are looking after it, through meetings, events and press releases. There is a long term outreach strategy to continue this work, which is documented in a programme which has been published, outlining the consultation and information events that have been and will continue to take place.

This will be achieved in a number of different ways in both outreach and in-house capacity, commencing prior to the Old Town Hall being completed:

- **Outreach:** using heritage themes specific to the Old Town Hall. Targeting groups in unconventional places, such as Supermarkets, Town Centre and established groups, Older Peoples forum, Town Centre Partnership, Youth Groups; and schools. These session will be interactive in three ways:
- Disseminating information
- And also gathering information/ memories.
- The delivery of heritage within formal education establishments such as schools will link in with curriculum delivery with the National Curriculum and Welsh Baccaalaureate.

- **Web site:** development will inform people remotely about the heritage of the Old Town Hall, engaging through interaction. This will also have information which will be updated on the development of the Old Town Hall and information about the renovations of the building.
- **In- House:** Heritage activities will take place in a number of different formats:
  - Through information and interpretation panels
  - Heritage trail through the building either with audio tour or interactive sessions identifying the main features.
  - 2hr heritage workshops working with identified heritage themes such as 'secrets - symbolism in architecture'.
  - 4hr heritage workshop and studio session where heritage themes are explored further in a studio situation.
  - Heritage Symposiums.

Activities plan attached below.

Old Town Hall

Communications and PR activities

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Date	Events and activities	Achieved
2011		
May		
	Exhibitions, road show and displays	✓
	Stakeholder presentations	✓
June		
	Old Town Hall 'open day' / visits	✓
	Exhibition, road show and displays	✓
	Press and media photo opportunities	✓
30.06.2011	Planning application submitted for accessible entrance to front and full glass roof to the courtyard	✓
July		
	Old Town Hall 'open day' / visits –HLF and WG	✓
	Publicise feedback on consultation – final plans & advertisement for space take up;	✓
05.07.2011	Bevan Foundation Conference	
August		
05.08.2011	Heritage Lottery Fund Round 2 submission	
	Out to tender for Main Contractor	
	Public launch of Old Town Hall memories and recollections (Mayor involvement)	
	E.A. Johnson story - publicity	
	Old Town Hall plans published (in line with planning process – story about layout – 3d images)	
	Publicity on stories of Old Town Hall – for example, past Mayors, Councillors, staff, courts	
Last 2 weeks of August	Arrange date for councillors to have a tour of the building – Rob liaise with Jeff Edwards; Jane to lead tour and tell the story (capture feedback on forms)	
Sept		
18 <sup>th</sup>	Global Village Event – Rhydycar Leisure Centre	
	E.A. Johnson buildings in Merthyr exhibition and tour	
	Old Town Hall plans published (in line with planning process – new access and courtyard)	
	Old Town Hall website launched (interactive)	
	Open Doors Event – Heritage Open Day (part of	

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	national event) at Old Town Hall	
<b>October</b>		
	Older Person Conference	
	Old Town Hall memories publicity – Aberfan memorial fund anniversary (Rob to liaise with Jeff)	
	Possible announcement of Planning approval	
	National publicity for Old Town Hall restoration. start (possibly in conjunction with start event)	
<b>November</b>		
	Old Town Hall visit / event (with Merthyr Business Club) as part of Enterprise Week	
	Official launch of campaign to recruit sponsors for Old Town Hall arts, creative industries and heritage projects	
15 <sup>th</sup>	Heritage Lottery Fund announcement	
	Heritage Lottery Fund approval – celebration	
	Possible announcement of Planning approval	
<b>December</b>		
	Main contractor appointed – announcement	
	Advertise / begin recruitment of Management Committee Members	
<b>2012</b>		
January	Work starts – VIP event (note 1896 event and celebrations)	
February	Video, photography and sound projects to record start of restoration work	
March	St David's Day soft launch of Old Town Hall arts, creative industries and heritage awareness raising campaign	
April	Quarterly progress visits for partners and stakeholders (and every quarter)	
May	Schools heritage and arts initiative begins – to link in with centenary of King George V visit at the end of June	
June	King George V centenary – link up with heritage celebrations in Merthyr, Dowlais, Rhondda and Cardiff (also involved in royal visit 1912)	
September	Launch of arts projects and competitions for 2012-13 academic year.	
	Heritage Open Day 2012 – demonstrating progress one year into restoration.	
November	Annual event for business and sponsors – link up again with Enterprise Week	
December	First 21 <sup>st</sup> century Christmas celebration at the Old Town Hall	
<b>2013</b>		

January	Report on progress with restoration of Old Town Hall over the year 2012 – prospects for 2013	
March	St David's Day community event – link to arts and creative industries campaign	
May	Successes, exhibitions and performances from community and Wales arts programme – link with Adult Learners Week	
June / July / August / September	Restoration completion. Handover to Chapter Arts and creative industries festival based in and around the Old Town Hall	

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**20.0 Adoption and review**

The Conservation management plan was issued in draft for comment and inclusion of any comment or correction and the final draft was adopted on ( **date** ) by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association

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