WREXHAM MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT
DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

ISSUE 02

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PURCELL

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WREXHAM MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT: DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 04

2.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT 06
2.1 Timeline 08
2.2 Significance 10

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING 14
3.1 Location 14
3.2 Current Appearance and Scale 15
3.3 Use, Layout and Amount 16
3.4 Inclusive Access 17
3.5 Landscaping 18
3.6 Condition 19
3.7 Building Structure 20
3.8 Building Services 21

4.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT 23
4.1 Consultations with WCBC Stakeholders 23
4.2 Consultations with WCBC Local Planning Authority and Cadw 25
4.3 Stakeholder Panels 27
4.4 Public Consultation 27

5.0 DEVELOPED PROPOSALS 28
5.1 Appearance and Scale 28
5.2 Use, Layout and Amount 32
5.3 Inclusive Access 36
5.4 Landscaping 37
5.5 Repairs and Alterations 39
5.6 Building Structure 41
5.7 Building Services 42
5.8 Mood Board 43

6.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT 44

7.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 45
7.1 Building and Significance 45
7.2 Engagement 45
7.3 Proposal 46
7.4 Impact 46

APPENDICES 47
A List Description 48
B Conservation Area Plan 49
C Conservation Management Plan 50
D Conservation Management Plan Addendum 121
E Heritage Impact Assessment 148
F Access Audit 182
G Bat Survey Report 243
H HSD Collation of Feedback from Consultation 251
I Existing Schedule of Accommodation 253
J Proposed Schedule of Accommodation 256
K Details of Planning Correspondance 258
L Tree Report 262

This Design and Access Statement supports applications for Planning and Listed Building Consent for the Wrexham Museum Redevelopment. The document has been written by Purcell, Architects, Heritage Consultants and Masterplanners. It was commissioned by hsd on behalf of the Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC). The proposals seek to transform the current museum building into a new 'museum of two halves' incorporating a Football Museum for Wales (Amgueddfa Bêl-droed Cymru) and a new museum for Wrexham based on the area's local heritage and the Welsh Football Collection, where inclusivity, learning, well-being and enjoyment are key priorities.

The Museum is located in the County Buildings, a Grade II listed building, located at the junction of Regent Street with St Mark's Road to the west of Wrexham town centre. It is a Grade II listed building and sits in the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area at its southern boundary.

The project has been developed to RIBA Stage 3 with funding from Welsh Government and Wrexham County Borough Council. Further funding is being sought from Welsh Government, the National Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources to progress the project through RIBA Stage 4 to RIBA Stage 7.

This document explains the historical development of the museum constructed originally as a militia barracks and identifies its significance, its current use and the current issues it suffers, the development of the proposals to the submitted design along with the stakeholder engagement undertaken to support the development of the design and the exhibitions it will house. Finally we will review the impact the proposals will have on the significance.

The following team of consultants has developed the designs with the support of WCBC museum staff and associated stakeholders.

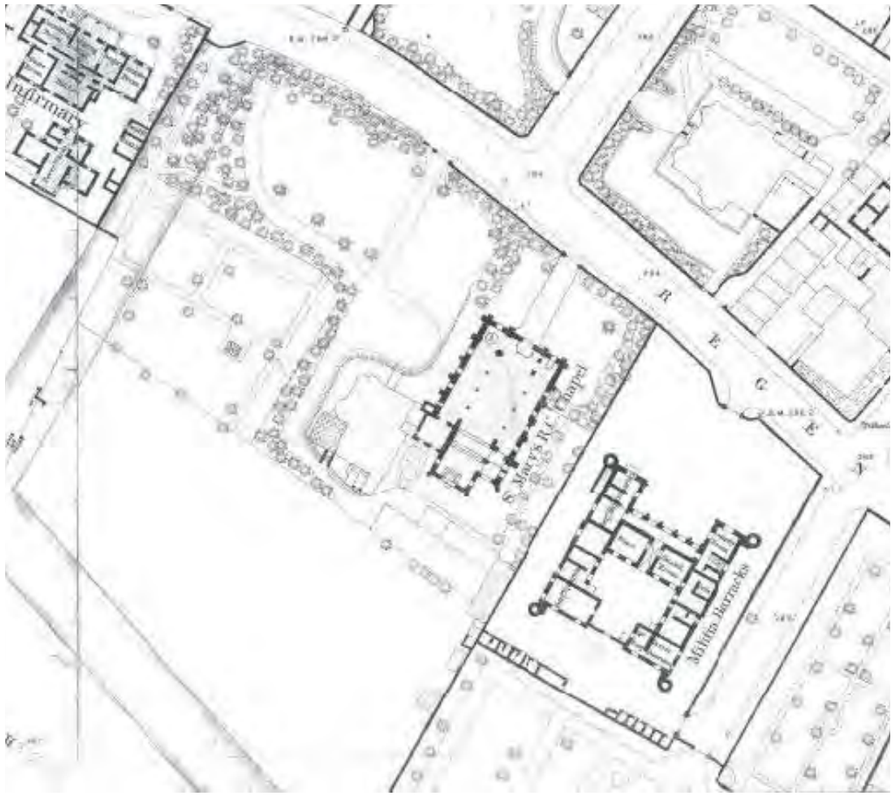
Exhibition Designers	hsd
Architects and Heritage Consultants	Purcell
Structural Engineers	Blackett-Ord Conservation Engineering
Building Services	Parker Wilson Consulting
Principal Designer	Thornton Firkin
Ecology	Urban Green

This Design and Access Statement will clearly show that the proposals will provide a new and improved museum offer with inclusive design and visitor experience at its core to create a museum celebrating the history, people and the birthplace of Welsh national football – Wrexham – and providing dedicated permanent gallery space for the Welsh National Football Collection, without negatively impacting on the significance of the listed building or the character of the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area.



This report should be read in conjunction with the following drawings:

241084-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-1000	Existing Ground Floor	Roof Plan Demolitions
241084-PUR-00-01-DR-A-1001	Existing First Floor	Proposed Elevations Signage Sheet 1
241084-PUR-00-RF-DR-A-1002	Existing Roof Plan	Proposed Elevations Signage Sheet 2
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1010	Existing NE & NW Elevations	Proposed Landscape Plan
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1011	Existing SW & SE Elevations	
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1020	Existing Sections	
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1021	Existing Sections	
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1010	Existing NE & NW Elevations	
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1011	Existing SW & SE Elevations	
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1020	Existing Sections	
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1021	Existing Sections	
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DR-A-1100	Location Plan and Site Plan	
241084-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-2500	Proposed Ground Floor Plan	
241084-PUR-00-01-DR-A-2501	Proposed First Floor Plan	
241084-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-2002	Proposed Roof Plan	
241084-PUR-00-GF-DR-A-2900	Ground Floor Demolition Plan	
241084-PUR-00-01-DR-A-2901	First Floor Demolition Plan	
241084-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-2200	Proposed Elevations Sheet 1	
241084-PUR-00-XX-DR-A-2201	Proposed Elevations Sheet 2	
241084-PUR-00-ZZ-DRA-A-2100	Proposed Sections	



1875 Map
Extract from CMP



County Buildings with Crimean War Souvenir Cannon

The majority of what are now known as the County Buildings were built as a depot for Denbighshire Militia in 1857 to the designs of the younger Thomas Penson, architect and surveyor. In 1879 the militia moved to a new barracks at Hightown, Wrexham and the building was converted to a county court and a police station. A second court and new entrances were added in 1896.



1898 Map



Wrexham Police Officers outside the East Wing of County Buildings



The Regent Street frontage circa 1914

The police moved to a new Divisional Headquarters at Bodhyfryd in 1976 and the Magistrates court was moved to new premises at Bodhyfryd in 1977. The County Buildings were then used by Wrexham Citizens Advice Bureau and subsequently taken over by Aston College Art Department. Circa 1978 the central courtyard was roofed over to create a single storey extension to provide additional gallery space and a canteen.

In 1995 Wrexham Maelor Borough Council took over the building and in 1996 the Wrexham County Borough Museum was opened. Subsequently the building has undergone a programme of repair and in 1997 the two storey satellite building and glazed link was added to the Museum partially funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

In 2010-11 the museum was refreshed and the museum gallery spaces were re-presented with a glazed extension constructed at the entrance and the provision of new washroom facilities including additional wheelchair accessible facilities at ground and first floor level. In 2017, new seating, sculpture and information and exhibition stands were installed.

2.1 TIMELINE

For a detailed historic background to the building see the conservation plan dated 2005

1833
Plan of Wrexham by John Wood showing the area where Wrexham Barracks were subsequently built belonging to Sir W.W. Wynn Bart. Regent Street is not shown and was described as the 'road from Mold'. The town was populated by 5,500 people at this time.

1852
The Militia Act came into force with improvements to conditions of service including voluntary recruitment, a cash bounty for a five year contract and 21 days training a year.

1854
Michaelmas Quarter Sessions for the County of Denbigh record notice from Robert Myddelton Biddulph Esquire, Lord Lieutenant of the County and Colonel Commandant of the Militia stating plans for new barracks to be submitted to the Clerk of the Peace. Land was purchased adjacent to Regent Street from Thomas Bury. The plans were drawn up by Thomas Penson, the County Surveyor of Denbighshire (QSD/SR/562). The schedule of works and materials brief for the building are very detailed covering the exact timbers, tiling, brickworks and paintwork used for doors, panelling and floors.

1855
Artillery Barracks built at Ipswich to fortified plan by R M Phipson- Illustrated London News 17.2.1855

1855
Contract signed 3rd September between Joseph Peers, Clerk of the Peace for the County of Denbighshire and builders Ebenezer Thomas and John Thomas (QSD/AM/3).

1856
140 troops from Wrexham deployed in quelling rioting miners from Wrexham area.

1857
Wrexham and Denbighshire Advertiser, 13th June, reported that the new Militia Barracks was almost complete. The building, constructed in Cefn Mawr sandstone, had the appearance of a fort. The towers at each corner, proposed bullet proof shutters and moat (not executed) give some indication of the desire for the building to appear commanding, given nervousness regarding the war with Russia, political insurgency from the Chartists aims for 'one man one vote' and industrial unrest at local collieries. The forecourt was also used by the Denbighshire Militia band as a venue for public entertainment. The Denbighshire Yeomanry Cavalry used one of the towers as a store.

1857
A cannon from Russia was presented to Wrexham by the Secretary of State for War to commemorate those who fought in the Crimean War (although residents had to fund transportation from Woolwich Arsenal to Wrexham).

1857
St. Mary's Cathedral, The Cathedral Church of Our Lady of Sorrows was built adjacent to the Militia Depot to serve the local Catholic population. The church was founded by Richard Thompson and built by Edward Welby Pugin the son of the celebrated architect Augustus Welby Pugin.

1863
The cannon was fired to salute the marriage of Prince Edward (King Edward VII). The earliest photograph of the building shows it decorated to mark the wedding of Prince Edward to Princess Alexandra - the full details are provided in the Wrexham Advertiser.

1868
Wrexham granted its own Commission of the Peace

1873
The newly published OS 6" map, in contrast to the fields shown on the Woods plan, shows 'Regent Street' with buildings on either side.

1874
The 25" scale edition of the Ordnance Survey maps shows greater detail of the barrack layout. The entrance from Regent Street is at an angle with the wall angled in towards the gates. The barracks are divided into Sergeant Major's quarter and Sergeant Major's Quarters on the west wing, a store and general room in the central wing, Orderly Room, cells and Quarter Master Sergeants' Quarters in the east wing. A second entrance to the barracks is located at the south end of the east boundary. A number of small service buildings range along the south boundary wall.

1876
Wrexham Art and Industry Exhibition. At the time of the exhibition there were many thriving industries in the town including breweries, machinery manufacturers, leather works and tanneries.

1877
The Militia were moved to new barracks in Wrexham at Hightown where they joined the Royal Welch Fusiliers. The old barracks were converted for the Court of Petty Sessions and Police Headquarters and renamed County Buildings. The buildings also provided accommodation for married police officers and families.

1879
First session of the Magistrates Court was held in January. Complaints are made concerning the coldness and drafts in the court room from the very start. Details available in the reports in the Wrexham Advertiser.

1882
The miners in Moss Valley went on strike. The Police Constables were issued with cutlasses and eventually the militia were drafted in to help. The surviving cutlasses of the Denbighshire Constabulary are in the museum collection.

1885
The cannon was removed to Hightown Depot. (It was evidently returned as post 1896 photographs reveal it in-situ).

1885
The Tithe Wars took place when the Church of England caused great anger when they forced sales of farm goods belonging to non-conformists who objected to paying taxes to the Church.

1897
Proposal to demolish the County Buildings prior to building new Guildhall. Instead alterations were made including a second court and new public entrances. This changed the north façade of the building considerably as the pair of towers were removed and the east wing was added. The exercise yard dates from this period. The sycamore tree on St Mark's Road adjacent to the exercise yard wall was maintained at the specific request of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, an influential individual in Wrexham at that time.

1899
The barracks had undergone alterations by this time and were called 'County Buildings'. Both turrets at the north end are squared off. The survey shows an extension to the north end of the east wing that abuts the east boundary wall. A smaller extension is shown west of the west wing. The inner court of the barracks is enclosed at the south end by new structure which links the east and west wing. The inner court has a wall forming a corridor along the north and east sides. The service buildings along the south wall are also linked by a new structure which extends north towards the barrack complex. Walls are also shown linking the south west of the barracks to the service buildings and the east of the complex to the boundary wall.

1900
The population of Wrexham was over 15,000.

1912
The survey shows the introduction of a small structure linking the south-east turret to the boundary wall. Church House was built across the road to the east of the County Buildings.

1914
Upon the outbreak of the First World War the forecourt of the County Buildings was used for military parades. All appeals against the decisions of the Military Tribunals of the Borough and Rural District of Wrexham were held at County Buildings (1916-18).

1937
The site has changed little since 1912 except from the addition of two small buildings in the north west corner of the courtyard. Coroner's inquests into the deaths of the 266 men killed in the Gresford Colliery Disaster (22.9.1934) finally held at County Buildings. Also the trial of the management for criminal negligence was heard at County Buildings attracting nationwide attention.

1940
A two-storey flat-roofed building was added to the rear of the building to accommodate an ARP store. After the war the extension was divided for use by the CID and police garage facilities. This was demolished in 1997.

1959
The demolition of St Mark's Church, located to the south-west of County Buildings, and the conversion of its churchyard into a car park negatively impacted on the setting of County Buildings. The open air car park was later replaced in the 1960s by a brutalist concrete multi-storey car park.

1960
The last resident, the Bridewell Sergeant, moved out of County Buildings. The OS shows changes to the footprint of the buildings. A structure has been introduced between the service buildings and the main County Building. Two small buildings have been added to the west corner of the courtyard.

1976
The police moved to the new Police Divisional Headquarters at Bodhyfryd.

1977
The Magistrates court was moved to new Magistrates Courts at Bodhyfryd.

c.1978
The County Buildings were used by Wrexham Citizens Advice Bureau and subsequently taken over by Aston College Art Department. The Art College enclosed the central courtyard to create a gallery space with the canteen facility and associated kitchen installed in what are now Gallery and Exhibition Prep. The art college also installed an additional staircase on the south side of the building, which was removed in 2010 (the site of the toilets on the two floors).

1995
Wrexham Maelor Borough Council took over the County Buildings.

1996
Wrexham County Borough Museum was opened at the County Buildings on 30th September.

1997
The Satellite building was added to the Museum partly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

1998
Opening of the Satellite extension

2001/02
Replacement of roof slates across County Buildings

2002-3
Conversion of disused south-west corner rooms ground floor to host Local Studies library. Modernisation of temporary gallery and conversion of disused canteen into exhibition prep space.

2005
Additional security measures to the building's windows to meet National Security Advisor's recommendations prior to hosting the Mold Cape loan, courtesy of the British Museum.

2010-11
Museum Makeover ground floor and glazed extension. Removal of former police station toilets and internal panelling on first floor.

2017
Installation of new seating, interpretation/exhibition stands, Brymbo Man sculpture and Acton Dog sculpture on museum forecourt, funded by the Landfill Tax.

2.2 SIGNIFICANCE

Significance can be defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The objective of understanding the heritage values of an historic asset and assessing its significance is to enable an authoritative statement of significance to be made, and allow for the effects of proposed changes to be evaluated. This demands the application of a systematic and consistent process, which is appropriate and proportionate in scope and depth to the decision to be made, or the purpose of the assessment. English Heritage's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) described in detail the family of heritage values and provides an extended explanation on assessing heritage significance. Cadw sees no reason to differ from this set of heritage values. The following provides a summary of these values and on managing change to historic assets.

Evidential Value

This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric. These may be visible and relatively easy to assess, or they may be buried below ground, under water or be hidden by later fabric. These remains provide the primary evidence for when and how an historic asset was made or built, what it was used for and how it has changed over time. The unrecorded loss of historic fabric represents the destruction of the primary evidence. Additional evidential values can be gained from documentary sources, pictorial records and archaeological archives or museum collections. To assess the significance of this aspect of an asset, all this evidence needs to be gathered in a systematic way and any gaps in the evidence identified.

Historical Value

An historic asset might illustrate a particular aspect of past life or it might be associated with a notable family, person, event or movement. These illustrative or associative values of an historic asset may be less tangible than its evidential value but will often connect past people, events and aspects of life with the present. Of course the functions of an historic asset are likely to change over time and so the full range of changing historical values might not become clear until all the evidential values have been gathered together. Historical values are not so easily diminished by change as evidential values and are harmed only to the extent that adaptation has obliterated them or concealed them.

Aesthetic Value

This derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset. This might include the form of an historic asset, its external appearance and how it lies within its setting. It can be the result of conscious design or it might be a seemingly fortuitous outcome of the way in which an historic asset has evolved and been used over time, or it may be a combination of both. The form of an asset normally changes over time. Sometimes earlier pictorial records and written descriptions will be more powerful in many people's minds than what survives today. Some important viewpoints may be lost or screened, or access to them may be temporarily denied. To assess this aspect of an asset, again the evidence of the present and past form must be gathered systematically. This needs to be complemented by a thorough appreciation on site of the external appearance of an asset in its setting. Inevitably understanding the aesthetic value of an historic asset will be more subjective than the study of its evidential and historical values. Much of it will involve trying to express the aesthetic qualities or the relative value of different parts of its form or design. It is important to seek the views of others with a knowledge and appreciation of the historic asset on what they consider to be the significant aesthetic values.

Communal Value

This derives from the meanings that an historic asset has for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It is closely linked to historical and aesthetic values but tends to have additional or specific aspects. Communal value might be commemorative or symbolic. For example, people might draw part of their identity or collective memory from an historic asset, or have emotional links to it. Such values often change over time and they may be important for remembering both positive and uncomfortable events, attitudes or periods in Wales's history. Historic assets can also have social value, acting as a source of social interaction, distinctiveness or coherence; economic value, providing a valuable source of income or employment; or they may have spiritual value, emanating from religious beliefs or modern perceptions of the spirit of a place.

Statement of Significance

The Wrexham County Borough Museum is a fine example of an increasingly rare building type being an 1850's militia barracks following the act of 1853. The equivalent militia depot for the Royal Flintshire Millitia in Flint was demolished. Although significantly altered in later periods, the basic plan of the 1850s barracks remains legible making the building of national importance as an example of its type. The period of construction also links the building to wider British military history and to the design of military architecture, upon which the influence of early barracks buildings such as these must not be underestimated. The militia themselves also have notable historical value having been used to quell riots and insurgence across Wales.

The buildings second use as Magistrate's Courts alters the layout and exterior design of the building as a fortified keep removing the two front turrets and building extensions that slightly unbalances the architectural design although these early alterations are themselves of high significance. Although a 19th century magistrates court is worthy of retention and is of national interest in its own right, giving the building further strong historical connections as the centre of the judicial system for the wider area. The retention, largely intact of the alterations and many of the fittings, albeit in storage, mean this is an interesting and relatively complete example of a provincial court.

Regent Street is one of the primary arterial routes into the town and the Museum, in conjunction with the adjacent cathedral and neo-classical infirmary, defines the approach to the town. Architecturally the building forms a strong addition to the streetscape of Wrexham in a prominent location in the town and an important group value comprising: the neighbouring Church of St Mary (grade II); the church boundary walls (grade II); the presbytery (grade II); numbers 1,3 and 5, 56, 58 and 60 Regent Street, King Street (grade II); and number 2 Grosvenor Road (grade II) all contributing to the combined setting. The main façade reads as an example of 19th century gothic with its turrets and castellations all surrounded by the stone boundary wall and it is an important contributor to the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area. It is one of the three surviving buildings of the mid-19th century 'west end' of Wrexham when the town expanded westwards.

The building is a fascinating blend of picturesque intent, pragmatic spatial planning, military functionality, and the contrast of this functionality with the later court alterations. Influences vary from the Tudor houses of the 16th century to the early pioneers of the picturesque such as Miller through to more contemporary influences from Salvin and the other 'barrack builders' of the period.

The building is well known locally, often referred to as the police station. It has played a significant role in the local community both in this role and subsequently as the Aston College Art Department. The use of the building as the Wrexham County Borough Museum can both draw upon and enhance this familiarity with the people and communities of Wrexham. In a town where many historic buildings have been demolished including the adjacent Church House, St Mary's Church and Imperial Hotel, the surviving buildings have taken on an even more important role.

Good records survive for the building including floor plans by the architect, Thomas Penson. Penson was a prominent architect with several notable projects in Wales, he was the county surveyor of Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire and was an innovative architect and designer of several masonry arch bridges over the River Severn and elsewhere. Thomas Penson designed the following buildings in Wrexham: Butchers' Market hall on High Street (1847, extant); and the British School, Brook Street (1844, demolished recently). Penson's involvement adds further historical interest to the building.

The Museum has demonstrable importance nationally (in a British as opposed to purely Welsh context) as a key example of the development of a system of barracks for militiamen. The significance of the building in a Welsh context is further enhanced by its second incarnation as courts and a police station, a task it undertook for almost 100 years.

The building is of high significance.

The levels of relative significance used to inform the assessment of significance in this heritage statement are as follows:

Very High Significance
Attributable to those themes, features, buildings or spaces which are the most valuable. These elements are considered to be essential to the understanding and appreciation of the place and are contributors to its overall character and setting, as well as its local, regional, national and international importance. Large scale alteration, removal or demolition should be strongly resisted.

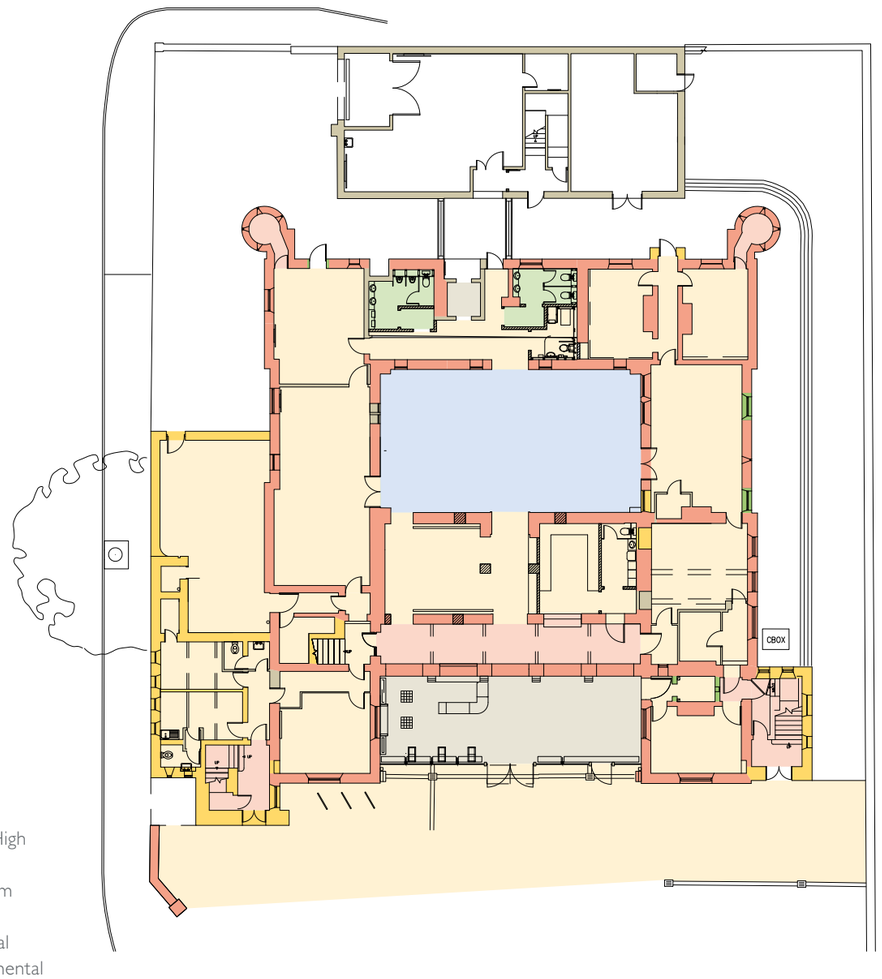
High Significance
Attributable to a theme, feature, building or space which is has a high cultural value and forms an essential part of understanding the historic value of the site, while greatly contributing towards its character and setting, as well as its local, regional and national importance. Large scale alteration, removal or demolition should be strongly resisted.

Medium Significance
Attributable to a theme, feature, building or space which has some cultural importance and helps define the character and appearance of the site. These features are generally of local or regional value. Efforts should be made to retain features of this level if possible, though a greater degree of flexibility in terms of alteration would be possible.

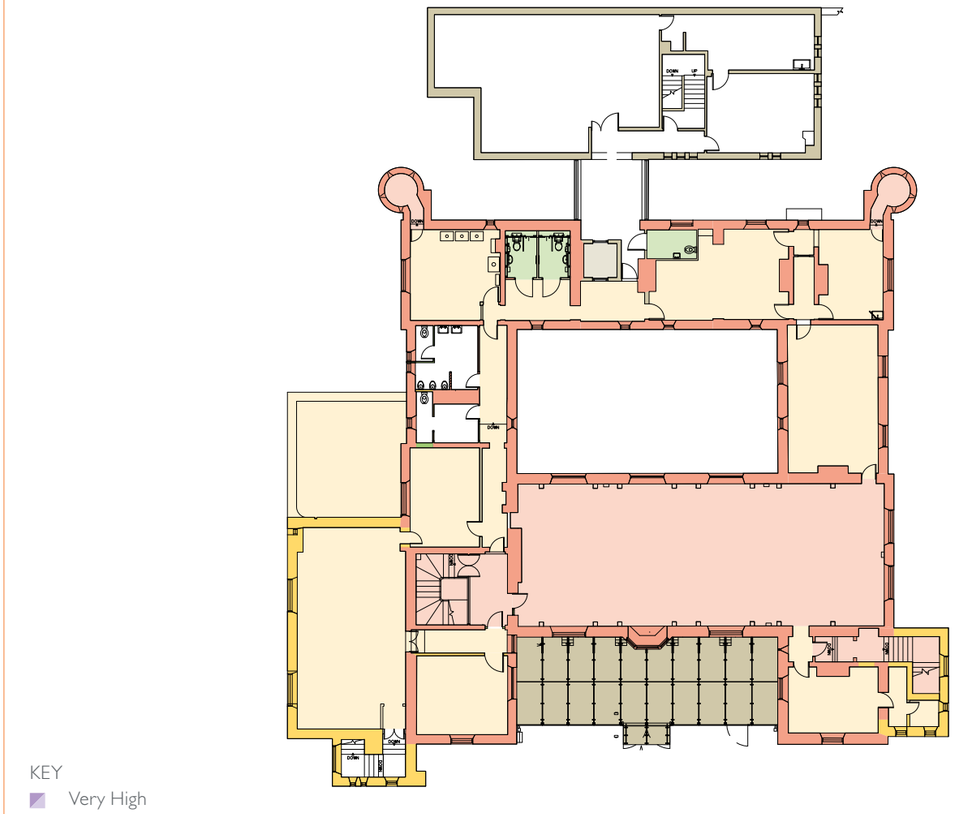
Low Significance
Attributable to themes, features, buildings or spaces which have minor cultural importance and which might contribute to the character or appearance of the site. These features are generally of local value. A greater degree of alteration or removal would be possible than for items of high or medium significance, though a low value does not necessarily mean a feature is expendable.

Neutral Significance
Themes, spaces, buildings or features which have little or no cultural value and neither contribute to nor detract from the character or appearance of the site. Considerable alteration or change is likely to be possible.

Intrusive Significance
Themes, features or spaces which actually detract from the values of the site and its character and appearance. Efforts should be made to remove these features. The significance plans provide a level of significance for both the physical fabric and the spatial characteristics of internal areas.



Ground Floor
Significance Plan



First Floor
Significance Plan

3.1 LOCATION

The Museum is located in the County Buildings, a Grade II listed building, located at the junction of Regent Street with St Mark's Road to the west of Wrexham town centre. It is a Grade II listed building and sits in the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area at its southern boundary.

The museum is well connected with public transportation link; Wrexham General Station is 0.3 miles away (6 minutes on foot), the Bus Station is 0.1 miles away (2 minutes on foot), and a few minutes' walk from the town centre.

Although there is no car parking on site, provision has been made for 3 wheelchair accessible spaces off St Mark's Lane and there is a public car park immediately to the south of the site.



LOCATION PLAN
- Site Boundary
- Grosvenor Road Conservation Area Boundary

This plan is not to scale

3.2 CURRENT APPEARANCE AND SCALE

The original Militia Depot was constructed in the Tudor Gothic style with a two story courtyard plan with the Regimental stores and guardrooms to the Regent Street frontage and domestic quarters to the other three ranges. When the building was converted to the for the Court of Petty Sessions and Police Headquarters the first floor room was extended to create a courtroom and an additional court was constructed on the eastern side. The domestic quarters then provided accommodation for married police officers and families.

The building is constructed of coursed and squared stone with freestone dressings using Cefn Mawr sandstone, with steep slate roofs, parapet gables and axial and end wall stacks with chamfered shafts. The principal facade is 2 storey, with a 5-bay entrance front flanked by advanced gabled ranges to either side. The main entrance in loggia (now glazed) comprising 5 bays of gothic arches with buttresses between. Above is a gable housing a 4-light oriel window with a leaded roof flanked by 3-light windows to each side, with mullions and transoms. The right gable houses the public staircase to Court No. 1. To the left is the entrance to Court No. 2 in a chamfered buttressed tower, with a deep moulded arched doorway, the staircase expressed under a sloping, embattled roofline with stepped windows. The tower terminates in octagonal turret with crenellations around slate spirelet with openwork crown and a weather vane. The ridge bears the plinths of two ventilators, which have been subsequently lost.

The other ranges are similarly detailed with transomed and mullioned windows with metal lights, originally with a diamond pattern, but amended to plain glazing by the late 1890s. At the rear angles are two original circular turrets with stepped stone conical roofs and window loops.

In 1997 the 2 storey Satellite building was constructed in a facsimile style with parapet gables slates roof, but with the walls finished in grey roughcast render with reconstituted stone window and door dressings. A 2 storey glazed link was also constructed at the period, located in the position of the opening of the original rear range.

In 2010-11 a low pitched single storey entrance was constructed in structural glass which sits between the projecting gables on the principal facade.



North Elevation



View of the main entrance from Regent Street



East Elevation



Satellite Building to the rear of the east elevation



Early photograph of the Militia Depot

3.3 USE, LAYOUT AND AMOUNT

County Buildings houses the Wrexham County Borough Museum and Archives. At ground floor level it houses

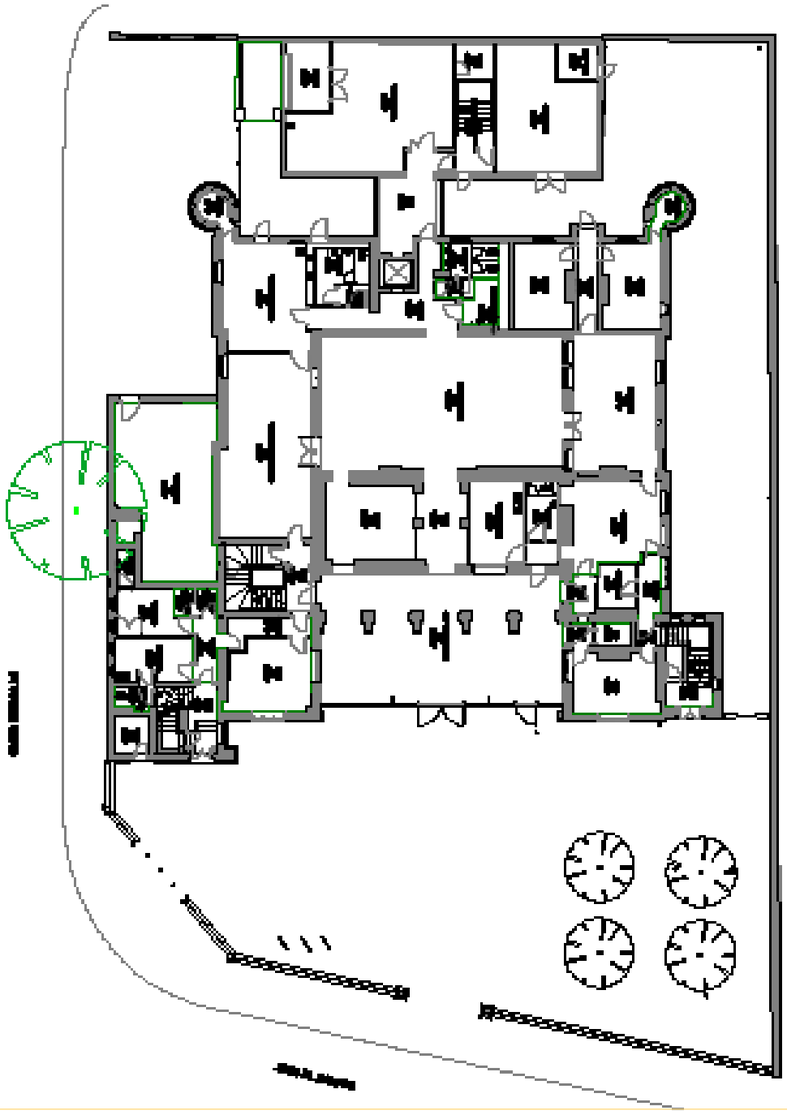
- Entrance, reception and shop
- Cafe and seating area
- Museum Galleries
- Special Exhibition Gallery and exhibition workshop
- Archives Reading Room, offices and collections store
- Public toilets
- Staffroom and staff toilets
- Staff offices

At first floor level it houses the following accommodation

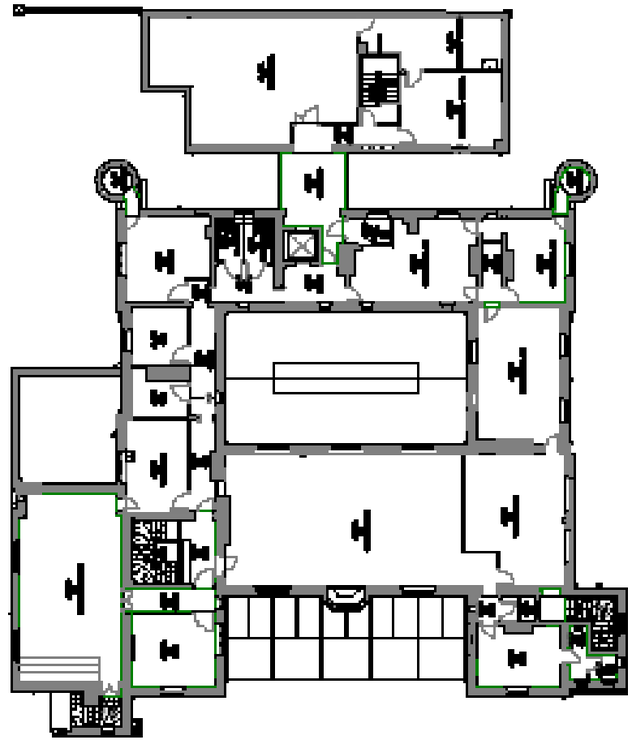
- Learning Suite
- Plant Room
- Collections Storage
- General storage including cafe store and retail store
- Public toilets
- Staff Offices

The Satellite building accommodates Collections storage and a small plant room at ground level with further Collections storage, the Collections office and conservation workshop at first floor level. The glazed link provides informal meeting space and breakout activities for children visiting the Museum.

Refer to the existing plans for details of the layout of the existing building. For a detailed breakdown of accommodation refer to the existing Schedule of accommodation in Appendix I.



Ground Floor Plan
Existing



First Floor Plan
Existing

3.4 INCLUSIVE ACCESS

An Access Audit was completed in November 2021. Whilst the Museum and Archives provides a diverse offer of communication techniques, the current layout and the physical constraints of the listed building prevents fully inclusive design. Its main findings are identified under 4 headings:

Access into the Buildings

- The dedicated parking bays for museum visitors who are blue badge holders are used by non-visitors
- Vehicular access into the forecourt is required on occasion to provide a safe setting down area for visitors with seriously impaired mobility.
- Uneven external surfaces on the forecourt could be improved.
- Wayfinding for the public is difficult and an issue raised by staff.

Horizontal and Vertical circulation

- The combination of narrow door widths, narrow corridor widths and a lack of turning space makes the public areas of the first floor difficult to access, while the existence of steps renders other currently back office areas on that floor inaccessible.
- Only Stair 1 can be used by an Evac Chair.

Existing Facilities

- The majority of public spaces are accessible although not compliant. The exception is the Learning/ Event space at first floor level.
- The majority of the back of house and staff areas are not accessible.
- The hard surface finishes in the reception and café dining areas make conversations difficult to hear because of the long reverberation time.

Sanitary accommodation

- There are currently no ambulant disabled WC cubicles.
- The Family Room (baby change facilities) are currently located in the ground floor wheelchair accessible unisex toilet.
- The first floor wheelchair accessible unisex toilet adjacent to the lift is virtually unusable, because of the narrow corridor width outside.
- There is no Changing Places provision within the building.
- There is currently no Gender Neutral WC provision.

3.5 LANDSCAPING

The building stands in the centre of an urban plot and has Cefn Mawr stone walls and copings at its perimeter. The forecourt, originally the parade ground for the Militia, has been reduced in width along the northern boundary at some point, presumably to increase the public highway width on Regent Steet. The northeast corner has been chamfered, presumably to improve sightlines for vehicles. The height of the wall has been reduced to make the boundary more permeable and inviting, but it retains the original coping. The entrance gates have also been removed. The forecourt is finished with a network of open brick drainage channels with gullies and resin bound gravel between. Recessed external lighting has been installed but is a constant maintenance item and needs addressing. There is a painted decorative metal gate at the entrance to the western external area which is currently used as informal staff parking and bin storage.

The forecourt has 4 small trees, seating and exhibition stands to the west, along with sculptures of Brymbo Man and the Acton Dog. There is also a steel mast to accommodate event publicity banners in the north-east corner and 3 cycle racks. The openings in the boundary wall have removeable stainless steel bollards to prevent unauthorised vehicular access.

The forecourt is well used for events which are well attended.

The western boundary is a retaining wall; the ground level of the Cathedral gardens being approximately on metre higher than the forecourt. The land to the south of the cathedral falls away sharply to the south. The area between the western boundary and the museum building is finished in the same materials as the forecourt, as is the area between the museum building and the Satellite building to the south. There is a CCTV mast in the southwest corner of the site.

The Eastern boundary is walled to the forecourt, the most easterly section of the building and the exercise yard are hard to the back of the public highway. Vehicle access to the Satellite building and three accessible parking bays are off this highway (St Mark's Road). This area has been finished with concrete blocks and painted metal railings have been installed in the area between the Museum building and the Satellite building to prevent iantisocial behaviour. The levels of the concrete blocks at the perimeter of the museum building are believed to be causing damp internally and this needs to be addressed.

The southern boundary is shared with the public car park and is formed the by the Satellite building and masonry walls approximately 1.8 metres high and finished in roughcast render.



3.6 CONDITION

A high level architectural condition survey was completed in November 2021 with the following findings.

Exterior

The exterior of Wrexham Museum is predominantly of hammer dressed, roughly coursed freestone with finely dressed quoins, window, and door surrounds. In general, the masonry work is in good condition, there are isolated areas where repointing is required and areas where rainwater goods have failed allowing water to spill down the facades, however these are few and far between. To the front elevation (along Regent Street), sits a modern glazed, single-story entrance complete with glass roof. This was installed during the last major redevelopment of the building (2010). The glazing is all in good condition, however mechanical, retractable solar shading only partially works, and the Museum has had difficulty finding a supplier to repair this, cleaning of the glass roof also appears to be a problem.

The windows across the building are single glazed, metal framed and are not generally operable, either due to being painted or rusted closed. These would benefit from being overhauled and redecorated.

The roofs are steeply pitched and finished in Welsh slate. Other than a couple of partially slipped slates, the roofs all appear to be in good condition. There is however an internal valley adjacent to the current learning space which was created at a previous development of the building and has caused water penetration issues, this will require attention when access is available. There are several other locations where failing rainwater goods are contributing to water staining of the outside of the building and water ingress into the building.

In the centre of the building, covering a former courtyard (currently the main exhibition space) is a modern roof of single ply membrane (or similar). Access to this flat roof was not available, however it is viewable through windows and there were no apparent visible defects to this covering, equally, there is no evidence of water ingress below. The roof to the annex is, similarly, steeply sloping in Welsh slate and remains in good condition.

It is proposed that, when possible, access is provided to undertake a full survey of the roofs from high level.

To the rear of the museum building is an annex (known as the Satellite) used by the collections staff. This was constructed in 1997 and is finished in rough cast render with concrete dressings and coping stones. This element is in generally good condition, albeit the profile of the render has collected dust/soot and would benefit from cleaning/ redecorating.

Interior

Owing to the 2010-11 museum makeover, the interior of the building appears in good condition. However, this is caveated by the fact that the museum exhibitions and storage equipment are hiding significant portions of the interior. Different areas of the building have different finishes, from historic lime plaster to modern gypsum, flooring is a combination of timber, vinyl, carpet, slate and tiles. There were no significant defects identified to the finishes, however there were a couple of isolated areas where water ingress from failing rainwater goods had penetrated the building and caused staining to the plaster, once the underlying issue is resolved, these areas should be allowed to thoroughly dry and redecorated.

Cracking was observed in the interior masonry at Stair 2 (east corner adjacent to administrative offices) and Stair 3 (north corner adjacent to Archival Offices). It is unclear whether this movement has ceased, and this was referred to the Structural Engineer.

There were also several areas, particularly on the upper floor, where some cracking was observed over door lintels, in particular in the Courtroom 1 on the first floor. These items were referred to the Structural Engineer.

On balance, considering its age, this building is in good condition with very few obvious defects and nothing which appears urgent.

3.7 EXISTING BUILDING STRUCTURE

The building is Grade II listed and lies just inside the south-eastern boundary corner of the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area.

Built as militia barracks between 1854 and 1857 to the designs of the younger Thomas Penson, architect and surveyor. It was converted circa 1879 to a divisional police station and magistrates court, and extended in the 1890's. It was then used as council offices and the Art college annexe. It was during this period that the central courtyard was roofed over to create an art gallery space. Thereafter it acquired a new role as a county museum. Thereafter it acquired a new use as a county museum. The building has therefore demonstrated its ability to adapt to change and perform structurally to many different, but similar uses without any significant signs of distress. In 1998 a two storey collection store, plant room and offices, commensurate with its current use as a county museum.

In 2002 roof works were undertaken to the main building together with general stone cleaning.

In 2010-11 the building underwent significant alterations: a glazed extension was added to the front of the building, as well as the insertion of a kitchen for the new café and improvements to the central courtyard roof.

The structural form of the main building is mainly a two-storey loadbearing masonry structure with brick jack arched floors covered with solid woodblock floor finishes on a cement/lime screed. The roof consists of timber trussed, purlin and jack rafters covered with a slate. The external face of the walls is a rough faced coursed stone, backed with brick and with internal walls of brick and non-loadbearing studwork. The staircases from ground to first floor are stone staircases. The ground floors are solid ground bearing floors.

In overall terms the structure of the building can be considered to be very good to good. From the original design use of military barracks, through public courtroom and justice activities the building appears to have responded well to the changes in use and loading. Changing the use to a museum with associated exhibition space and public activities also do not appear to have adversely changed the structural performance of primary members. The only minor issues are isolated areas of water ingress with local areas of timber decay.

More recent alterations and additions to the building do not appear to adversely affect the overall structural integrity of the building.

BS6399 Imposed loading comparisons suggest the following:

- Drill Halls 5.0 Kn/m2 (previous - most likely to have been at ground floor level but could have been Courtroom 1 at first floor when a barracks)
- Dormitories / Mess Hall 2.0 Kn/m2 (previous)
- Public Courts 4.0 Kn/m2 (previous)
- Museum Galleries 4.0 Kn/m2 (current)
- General Offices 2.5 Kn/m2 (current)

It can be seen from this that the previous generic usage of the building and the proposed use have no effect on the imposed floor loading. It is unlikely that the original building design incorporated different designs for different uses, so whilst some office areas will become museum gallery space there is little or no perceived overall structural implication.

3.8 EXISTING BUILDING SERVICES INSTALLATIONS

Mechanical Services

Heating

Heating within the building is generally as follows:

Main Building

The heating to the office on the Ground and 1st Floors to the front of the building is via either wall mounted or free-standing electric heaters. Heating to Courtroom 2 (the Education Room) is via a hot air vent in the ceiling served from a wall mounted combi-boiler in an adjacent store-room towards the end of its service life. This is a domestic type boiler and therefore is not fitted with autofill or expansion vessel.

An industrial type gas fired heater, with local wall mounted control panel is installed within Courtroom 1, this is no longer in use.

2010 Refurbishment Areas

As part of these works a new boiler house was installed on the 1st Floor to the rear of the building with 2 No. wall mounted gas fired boilers. The boilers serve the following circuits:-

01 Variable temperature (weather compensated) system serving low surface temperature radiators within the offices, circulation corridor and toilets.

02 Constant temperature system serving the trench heating within the entrance / reception area and the heater batteries in the 3 No. supply AHUs.

Only one of the two boilers is currently working and the BMS / control system in inoperative. The system is therefore running on manual.

The glazed entrance / café area is heated via perimeter trench heating with a electrical overdoor heater is located over the main entrance.

Rear Building (Satellite)

The building is served by a single wall mounted gas fired boiler, both the boiler and the pressurisation / make-up unit are showing signs of age and should ideally be replaced.

The boiler serves the radiators, within the link building, collection storage rooms and offices and the heater battery within the air handling unit located within the loft space.

Domestic Services

Original Building

01 Cold Water Services

The water main enters the building within the WC to the left-hand side of the entrance. From here a 22mm mains cold water supply is taken to run within the roof void to the cold water storage tank located in the loft above the DDA WCs adjacent to the boiler room.

The GRP sectional tank serves the cold water booster set located in the boiler room and from here boosted cold water is taken to serve the sanitary fittings within the toilets, the café kitchen and the local electric water heaters located in the toilets and kitchen. Access to the CWS tank in the roof void is poor.

02 Hot Water

Hot water is provided via unvented local electric water heaters located adjacent sanitary fittings within the toilets and in the kitchen. The wash hand basins are fitted with thermostatic mixing valves to provide a tempered water supply.

Rear Building (Satellite)

01 Cold Water Services

A 22mm mains cold water supply pipe runs through the roof void of the glazed link to serve the Satellite Building to serve floor standing humidifier units within the Collection Stores and Laboratory and sinks and electric water heaters in exhibition prep and Laboratory.

A connection off this main serves the sanitary fittings and electric water heater in the DDA WC in the link.

02 Hot Water

Hot water is provided by local electric unvented water heaters generally located adjacent to sanitary fittings.

Gas

The external gas main runs from the gas meter housing located within the front forecourt to serve the Satellite Building boiler plant at the rear. A 65mm gas main is taken off this to serve the boiler plant in the 1st Floor plantroom in the main building.

Mechanical Ventilation

01 Galleries

2 No. supply air handling units serve ceiling mounted grilles in the main exhibition gallery and wall mounted grilles within the National Gallery.

These AHUs are all of simple design. No extract ventilation is provided to the Galleries and there is no means of heat recovery on the system. Access to the air handling units is restricted. One of the AHUs is installed vertically within a small plantroom to the rear. The other is located in the ceiling void of the office.

No ventilation is provided to the Secure Exhibition Room and the windows are effectively sealed.

02 Toilets

Extract ventilation is provided to the toilets on the Ground and 1st Floor. From the ceiling mounted grilles flexible ducting is taken to connect to ridge ductwork and extract fans located above in the roof void. Access to these fans is poor.

03 Kitchen

The small supply AHU providing supply air to the kitchen is located in the ceiling void over the staff changing area. An inline extract fan located within the roof void serves the kitchen and adjacent staff change area. Access to the supply AHU and extract fan is poor.

04 Courtroom 2 / Education

Ceiling mounted ventilation grilles are located within the sloped ceiling, the ventilation system associated with these has not been located.

05 Rear Building (Satellite)

The supply air handling unit located on a platform in the roof void serves ceiling mounted grilles within the Object Registrations / Receiving Area on the Ground Floor and the Collections Store / Research Collection and Conservation Laboratory on the 1st Floor.

Air is extracted from the rooms via ceiling mounted grilles and the associated extract fan is located within the roof void. There is no heat recovery and access to the plant areas is via ceiling hatches.

Ductwork passing through fire walls is fitted with 4-hour fire dampers.

Comfort Cooling / Humidifiers

There is no comfort cooling provided within the buildings, however humidifiers and dehumidifiers are installed within a number of areas in particular the rooms within the Satellite Building.

Electrical Services

Mains Distribution

The site has two electrical incomers, a 160A of three phase supply to the original main building, and a three-phase supply to the rear Satellite Building. Fuse size TBC, but assumed to be 60-100A from incoming cable size. There are warning signs at each incomer position as the main building and Satellite Building are interconnected at both the Ground and 1st Floor via the link corridor.

The main switchgear for the main building consists of a wall mounted MCCB panel board with metered outgoing ways. The board is a Square D I-Line board with CD range MCCBs, which are now obsolete.

This then feeds local distribution boards around the main building, these are typically single phase. These boards are generally in good condition, but there is a lack of circuit labelling throughout the building and no record drawings.

The Satellite Building incomer feeds a 'MEMShield 2' B Type MCB board, which feeds circuits on both floors.

Lighting Installation

Within the main building the lighting is all fluorescent type. The gallery areas have flexible track lighting. The individual spotlights are dimmable allowing localised control depending on the exhibit being lit.

Lighting to the areas of the building which have not been refurbished is via aged fluorescents. The reception and café area has linear lighting within the supports of the glass roof, and feature up-lighting to the vaulted ceiling and recessed uplighters in the floor.

The Satellite Building has fluorescent light fittings.

Lighting control throughout the buildings is generally via local switching, except for those areas that were re-fitted as part of the 2010-11 museum makeover.

External lighting is provided to the front forecourt, however a number of these external light fittings have failed.

Emergency Lighting

The building is covered by a mixture of self-contained 3-hour versions of the main lighting, and in some areas stand alone, non-maintained emergency bulkheads.

Fire Alarm System

The main fire alarm panel is located within the Satellite Building, with a repeater panel located by the main reception of the main building. The system is fully addressable with separate loops for the main building and the Satellite Building. It operates on an open protocol which is supported by several manufacturers.

4.1 CONSULTATIONS WITH THE WCBC STAKEHOLDERS

The development of the brief for the redevelopment of Wrexham Museum has been based on a series of workshops with the Museum Team, staff and volunteers and other WCBC Stakeholders and a structured programme of consultations with external users and representative groups.

The process started with a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the existing buildings which highlighted building and operational issues encountered by those working in, maintaining and visiting the building. In conjunction with the aspirational brief for the building and informed by the findings of a series of surveys and investigations, the design team started to look at the adjacencies which would create the working Museum.

Via a series of workshops with key stakeholders three options were developed and assessed, and a preferred option developed as the outcome of RIBA Stage 2. This option was used to start the consultation process.

KEY
- Football Gallery Circulation
- Wrexham Gallery Circulation
- Reception
- Circulation
- Retail
- WC
- Temporary Gallery
- Permanent Gallery
- Education
- Archive
- Food and Beverage
- Collections Store
- Staff Offices and Facilities

GROUND FLOOR PLAN (RIBA STAGE 2 OPTION)



RIBA Stage 2 Preferred Option: Ground Floor



SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION

- Reception area 50m2
- Retail area 55m2
- Permanent Gallery area 513m2
- Education area 110m2
- Food and Beverage area 135m2
- Staff Offices (Excluding mess area) 82m2

Gallery Breakdown

- Football Gallery 186m2
- Wrexham Gallery 187m2
- Temporary Gallery 115m2

Please note, all area calculations are based on the HSD Stage 1 report. Purcell will review these area calculations following receipt of the measured surveys.

KEY

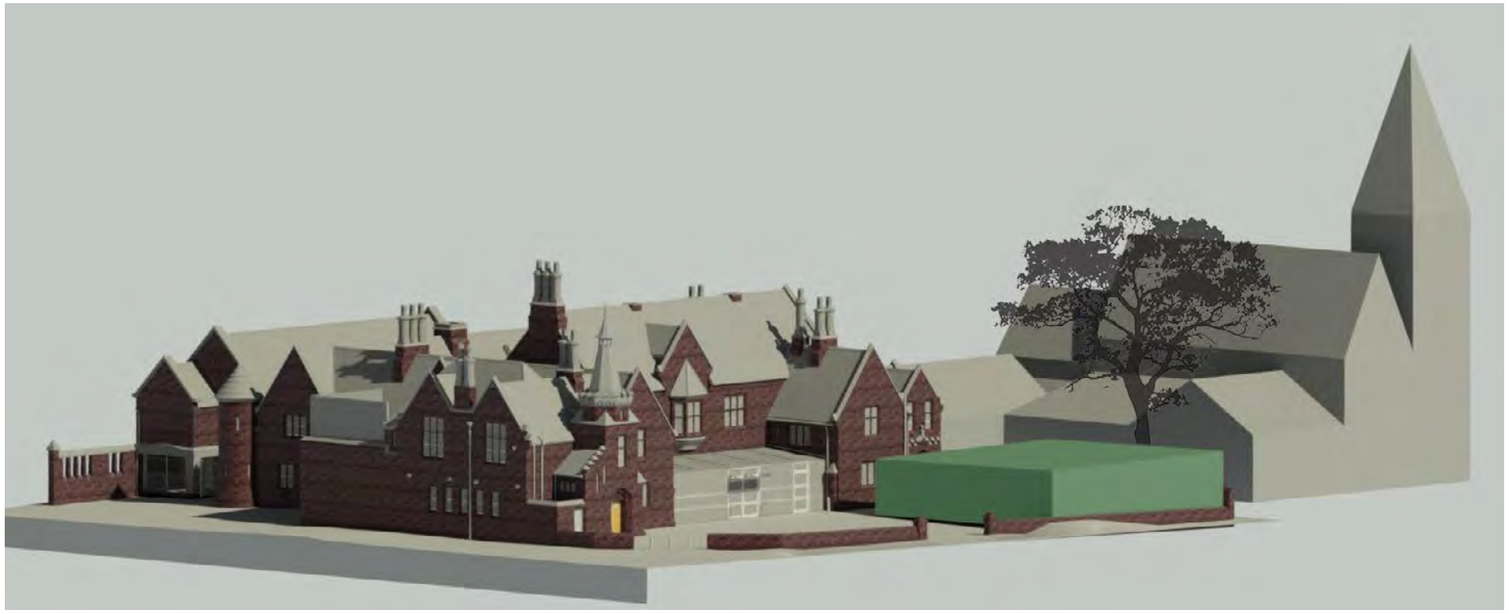
- Football Gallery Circulation
- Wrexham Gallery Circulation
- Reception
- Circulation
- Retail
- WC
- Temporary Gallery
- Permanent Gallery
- Education
- Archive
- Food and Beverage
- Collections Store
- Staff Offices and Facilities

RIBA Stage 2 Preferred Option: Ground Floor

4.2 CONSULTATIONS WITH WCBC LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY AND CADW

Following informal internal discussions with the WCBC conservation officer early in RIBA Stage 2, formal discussions between the architects and the WCBC Conservation began later during RIBA Stage 2, with an initial meeting on site on 31st March 2022 to review the preferred option at that stage.

Following this meeting a submission for preapplication advice was made on 27th April 2022 to the planning department and the initial response received 19th May 2022. The proposals for County buildings were generally acceptable but there were some concerns regarding the size and scale of the proposed new building and its impact on the principal facade of the listed building and its impact on the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area. A massing study was undertaken to better understand that impact.



Massing Study Option A



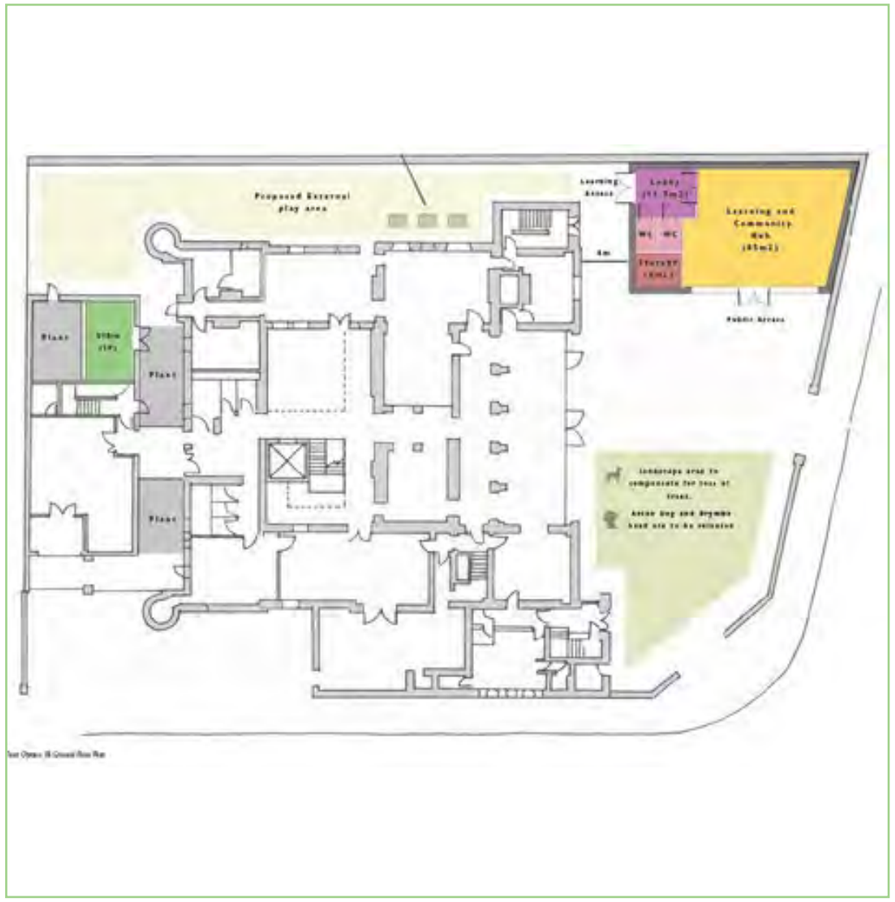
Massing Study Option B

Subsequently meetings were held with Cadw on:

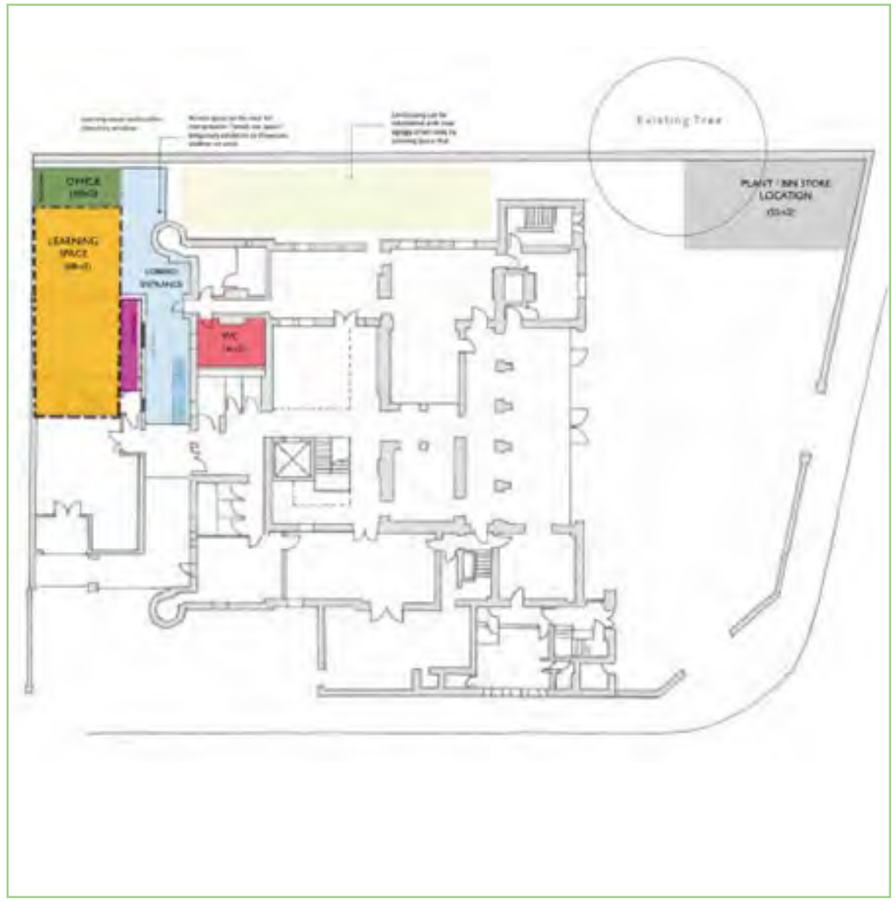
- 19th July 2022
- 19th August 2022
- 14th October 2022

As part of the discussions further options have been explored for the building on the forecourt and options to extend the Satellite building, as well as the massing study. The solution has been to reduce the proposed accommodation to enable the proposals to fit within the perimeter of the existing building, with the exception of a new external store for furniture and bins at the west side of the frontage.

Details of correspondence can be found in Appendix K.



Option 1B
Reduced Area New Building on Forecourt



Option 4
Extension of Satellite Building

4.3 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PANELS

A series of Stakeholder Consultation Panels held during the week commencing 14th March 2022. The following panels were undertaken over the week:

- Education (Formal and informal)
- Football Subject Specialist
- Football Communities Panel
- Wrexham Subject Specialist
- Wrexham Communities Panel
- Staff and Volunteers

The focus of the panels differed between groups with the Football and Wrexham panels having a greater focus on the proposed interpretation and the Education and Staff sessions initially showcasing the building proposals and then both interpretative schemes.

The feedback was that the proposals were well received and where issues were raised these were either addressed within the proposals or the reason for a proposal identified. The points raised by these panels are included at Appendix H.

The Access Panel was initially held on 18th May 2022 and the following feedback to the developing proposals was received

- The panel considered the overall proposals were inclusive and would create access for all.
- A request for gender neutral toilets (This request has been incorporated into the plans)
- A request for baby change facilities to be separate from the wheelchair accessible WCs. (This has been incorporated into the planned layout and separate family rooms have been provided at ground and first floor levels.)
- A request for a Changing Places facility. (This was investigated at length but it proved impossible to accommodate such a facility owing to the overall service demands on space.)

The Access Panel met again in October 2022 to review the proposals. Refer to Appendix H.

4.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

The initial public consultation on the project took place in November 2021 during RIBA Stage 1, with a focus on the levels of interest in and support for the redevelopment of the museum building here in Wrexham as the Football Museum for Wales and Wrexham Museum.

A second series of consultation sessions occurred during March 2022 to feed into the design development at RIBA Stage 2.

A third series of consultation events took place in autumn 2022. An online public consultation was hosted by the museum team and hsd, the exhibition designers, on Monday, 24th October 2022. This was hosted by the Wrexham Museum team and the hsd interpretation planning team. The background to the project was explained and the proposals for the new galleries presented. Questions were invited from those attending.

All the consultation panels met in late October 2022 5 to review and provide feedback on the plans as they had developed since March 2022. Feedback can be found in Appendix H.

An open day to view designs for the 'Museum of Two Halves' project at Wrexham Museum was held on Wednesday 26th October 2022 in Courtroom 2 of the museum. The event was attended by members of the interpretation planning team, the Wrexham Museum team, and members of the public. The event gave an opportunity for the public to share their thoughts and feelings with the design team and museum staff ahead of this application.

A pop-up exhibition was displayed providing an insight into the proposals developed during the 'Museum of Two Halves' project and the plans envisaged for the Football Museum for Wales galleries and the Wrexham Museum galleries. The pop-up exhibition has also been displayed at other locations.

The event was well attended. Refer to Appendix H for feedback.



HSD visualisation of the circulation hub and introduction to the new galleries ©hsd

The proposals for Wrexham County Borough Museum (County Buildings) are for this Grade II listed to become a new joint museum that celebrates both the history of Welsh football and the history of Wrexham County Borough.

The museum will remain free to enter and the proposals have been developed with extensive stakeholder input in key audiences, the wider public and current visitors to the museum.

At the outset it was clear that to achieve the ambitions of the 'Museum of Two Halves' project brief, and to ensure equal access for all users, the design scheme would require improved access to and throughout the first floor and additional gallery and orientation spaces. To meet these challenges, two extensions to the current building are planned involving the central courtyard and the former Prisoners' Exercise Yard.

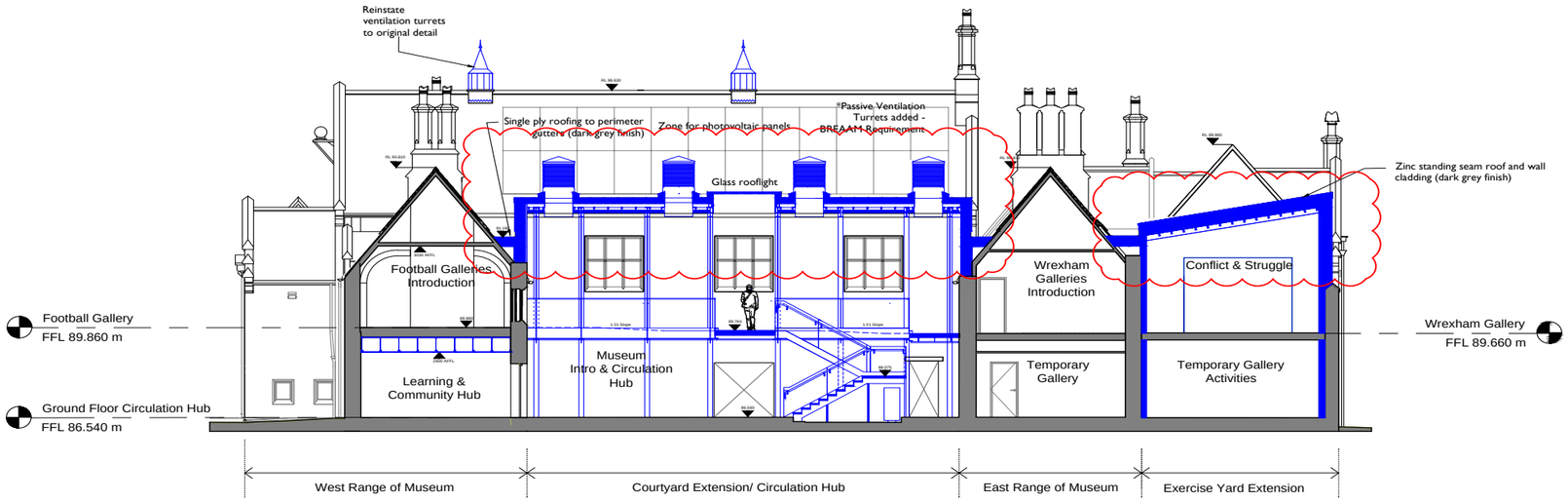
5.1 APPEARANCE AND SCALE

Scale

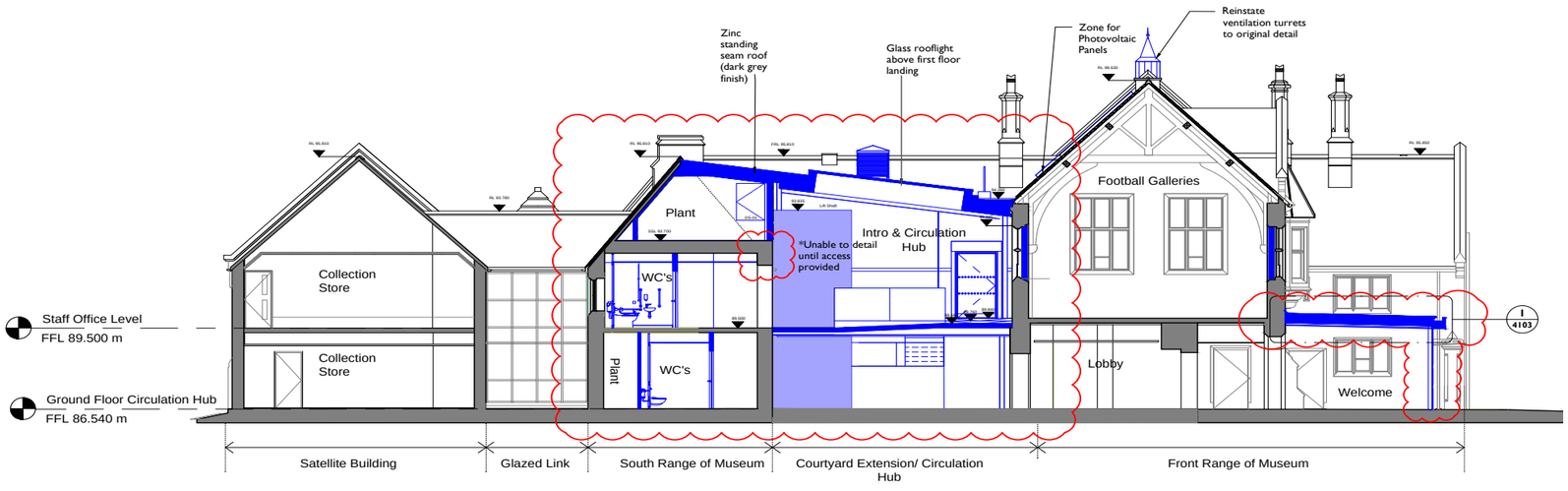
Both extensions have been designed to reflect the scale of the existing building.

The Exercise Yard extension has a monopitch roof and is 8550mm above the external ground level in height at its ridge, which is below the ridge heights of the adjacent ranges. The roof extends over the roof of the adjacent range and sends water back to the rear valley gutter, reducing water run-off to the stonework elevation below. The existing design of the rainwater discharge is not effective causing water to rund down the elevation. The existing perimeter wall is to be maintained at its existing height and the new build extension is limited to the space bounded by this yard wall. At first floor level, the extension has the benefit of establishing a circular route around the Wrexham Museum galleries.

The central circulation hub is also two storey and is located in the internal courtyard area. This houses the lift and stair access to the first floor landings and ramps which provide access to the galleries, the staff offices and the first floor of the satellite building. It has a low monopitch roof with a rooflight over the central landing and a ridge height of 8900mm, which is lower than the adjacent ridges. A plant area has been created at loft level as there is insufficient space to locate it withing the existing floor plans. This loft will also provide access to the valley gutters around the perimeter of the new roof. This central courtyard currently has a single storey extension located within it.



Section 1
Proposed



Section 2
Proposed

Appearance

The external masonry walls and slate roof will be repaired along with the cast iron rainwater goods. The vents to the roof pitch of principal facade will be restored to provide passive ventilation to the football gallery. Some work will be required to the hidden valley gutter to remove the maintenance issue and access for maintenance will be improved. Minor modifications will be required to improve rainwater discharge and a number of the cast iron downpipes will need to be increased in size.

The original diamond pattern metal framed windows will be retained but the later plain glazed metal windows will be replaced with double-glazed 'Crittall' style colour finished metal windows to match the existing.

The glass roof to the front entrance extension will be replaced with a low pitch zinc standing seam roof which will reduce solar gain and internal temperature fluctuations and improve the internal acoustics.

The walls and roofs of the 2 new extensions are to be finished in standing seam zinc cladding. The proposals seek to distinguish these interventions from the existing historic building. They aim to be visible as honest interventions to the building that do not seek to replicate or pretend to be that which they are not. The circulation hub will be top lit by a simple rooflight.

The external store (located on the western side of the building) will have a timber structure and a zinc clad roof also. The gable on the boundary will be clad in timber over a 60 minute fire resistant blockwork gable wall. A dark grey finish is proposed to ensure it is sympathetic tonally to the slate roofs.

Signage Provision

This application includes for external signage for the museum, to signal the building's purpose to those passing. The museum is currently working on the branding for the enhanced offer of the Wrexham and Welsh Football galleries and any signage will be provided in Welsh and English.

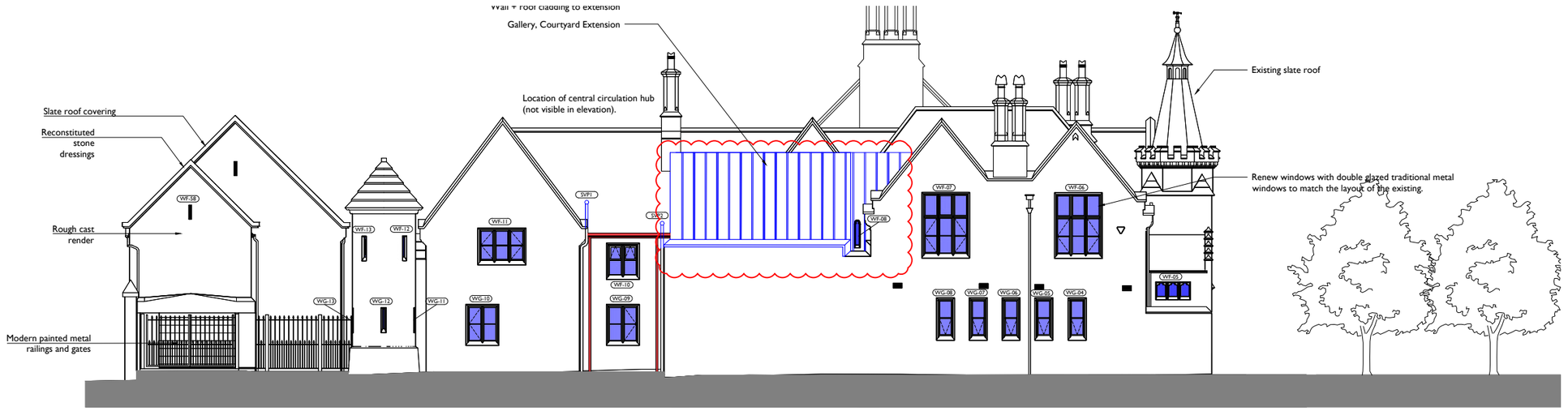
It is proposed to have a slate monolith on the fore court with an illuminated signage incorporated, and two non-illuminated signs, one on the east gable of the principal façade on Regent Street and one on the East elevation fronting St Mark's Lane.

The Signage will be sized as follows:

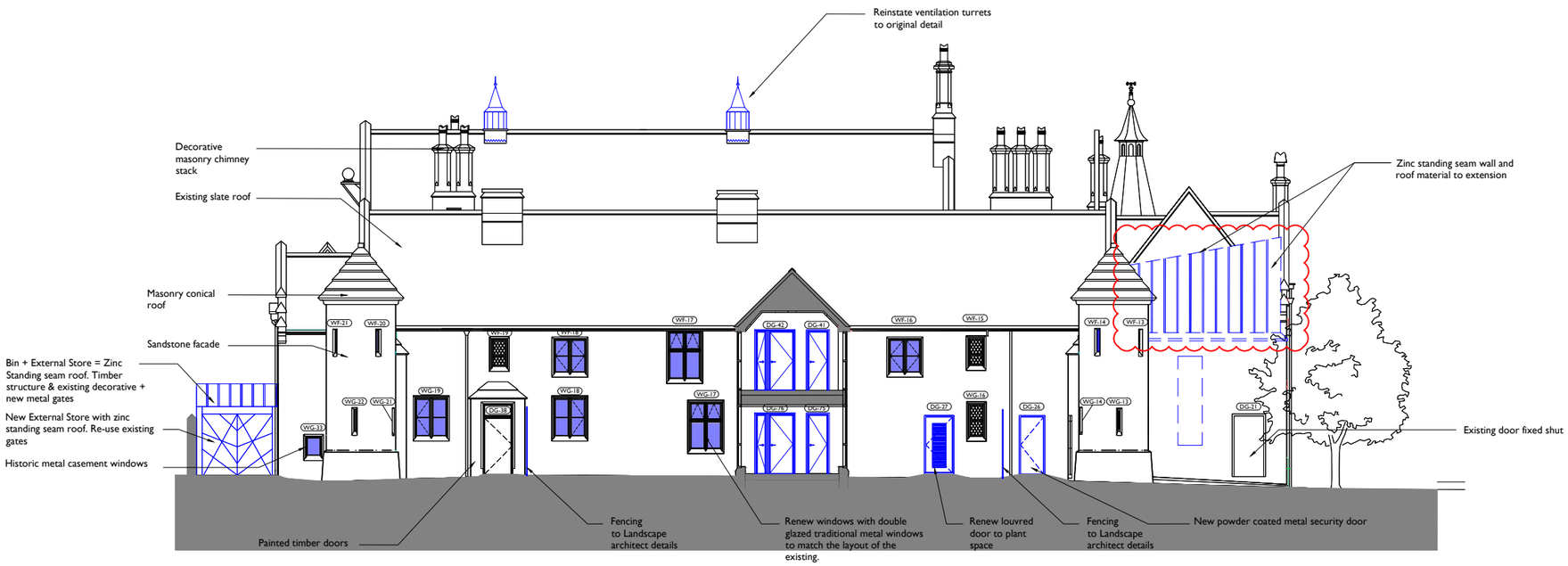
Forecourt	Approx 2400 x 1200 illuminated sign
North Elevation *(East and West Gables)*	2 x 4095 x 855mm
North Elevation *(Entrance Roof)*	5560 x 435 mm
South Elevation Exercise Yard	3395 x 855 mm

Refer to drawings for details of locations.

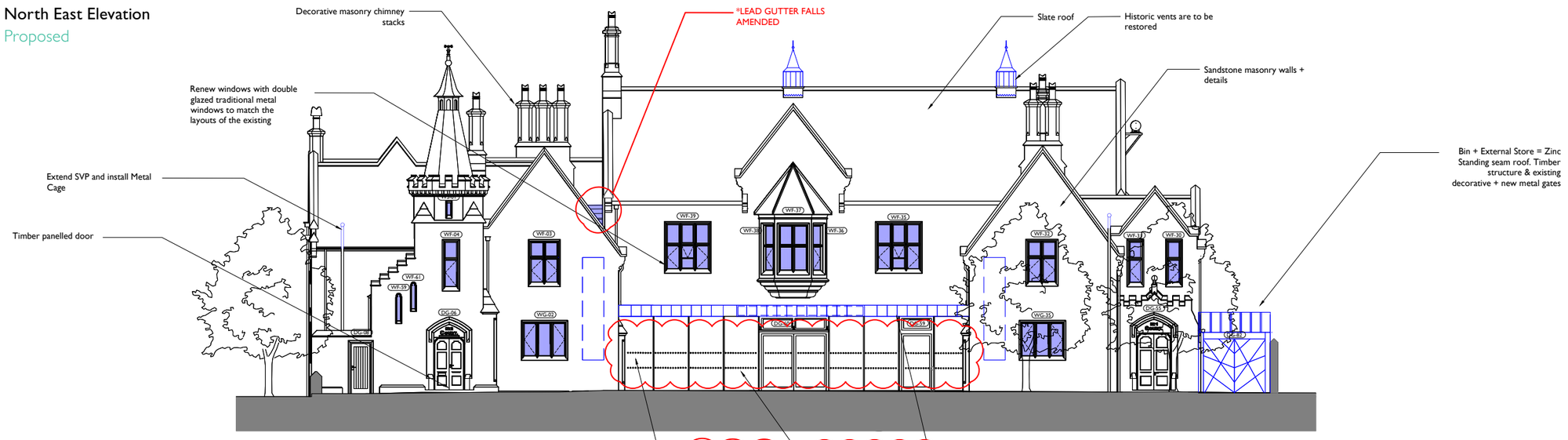
East Elevation
Proposed



South Elevation
Proposed



North East Elevation
Proposed



North West Elevation
Proposed



5.2 USE, LAYOUT AND AMOUNT

Use

Essentially the use of the building remains unchanged. However, the proposals involve the delivery of two museum offers on one site: the new Wrexham Museum and the Football Museum for Wales. The proposals will enhance the visitor offer and community benefit of the building and will include the creation of two new suites of galleries. As such the new museum will attract new audiences and ensure the continued viability of this landmark building.

The Special Exhibition Gallery has been almost doubled in size and can be used flexibly to accommodate large or modest exhibitions. The security will meet the ACE security standards to meet the Government Indemnity Scheme to enable touring exhibitions to visit and promote return visits.

WCBC seek to further develop the learning offer for schools and community groups. This ambition requires the proposed learning and community suite be accessible for all. This facility would also aid in the long term business strategy for the museum as a hireable space, alongside the adjacent atrium and café area.

The museum will also improve the cafe operation by updating and extending the food preparation area, and through re-locating the café store nearer to the kitchen. Improvements to the kitchen's ventilation as guided by the environmental health officer will improve working conditions for the kitchen staff.

The current proposals do a great deal to improve inclusive access within the existing Grade II listed building. In summary, the proposals seek to maximize the area of the existing building that will be accessible to all. The existing first floor is currently split across three levels and consequently not all areas are accessible. The proposals will ensure improved orientation for visitors throughout the building and for the first time easy access from the ground floor to the first floor via the new central courtyard.

By creating a new two-storey circulation hub in the original central courtyard area and providing a new lift and ramped first floor landings to address all the first floor levels, inclusive access is provided to both the proposed Football Museum galleries and the Wrexham Museum galleries. Further to this, the staff and back of house areas also become accessible.

The proposed design for the museum building has the following principal objectives:

- To create a new suite of galleries for the Football Museum for Wales;
- To provide a suite of galleries for the new Wrexham Museum;
- To provide an enhanced Special Exhibition Gallery;
- To provide enhanced learning and community facilities providing access for all;
- To improve the café offer to support the museum's long term business strategy;
- To provide an enhanced retail offer to support the museum's long term business strategy;
- To provide the necessary ancillary accommodation for the museum staff and volunteers; and
- To improve inclusive access and orientation throughout the building and provide physical access to all the first floor level.

Layout and Amount

In the first instance, the proposals have sought to maximise the available footprint of the existing building itself. By freeing up spaces currently used for storage, the creation of a circulation hub in the centre of the building makes it possible to use the first floor of the building for two suites of connected gallery spaces thereby realizing the potential of the building to accommodate two museums on one site.

Through the design process, the proposals have sought to balance both, maximising the potential use of the existing floor space, whilst also minimising the need for major alterations to the historic building fabric. The opportunity to extend the building into the exercise yard and extend the extension in the central courtyard would all limit the need to make more substantial changes to the existing Grade II listed building.

Two new extensions are proposed

- A two-storey circulation hub in the location of the original central courtyard. It is hoped that sufficient of the original elevations will remain to enable these to be repaired and expressed as external elevations. (105m^2 on two floors)
- A two-storey extension in the Exercise Yard to create 28.3m^2 of gallery space to increase the Special Exhibition Gallery, 17.1m^2 of exhibition storage and 36m^2 of gallery space at first floor level as part of the Wrexham Gallery.

In addition an external covered store of 18m^2 is proposed at the west end of the north elevation. This store will re-use the existing decorative gates to secure the frontage and an additional set of metal gates will secure the rear of the area. This will be used for bins and storing loose external furniture.

Internally the museum is arranged as follows:

Ground Floor

- Entrance/ Reception
- Retail (Museum shop)
- Courtyard Café - café seating area, kitchen, store and changing area
- Central courtyard (circulation hub, stairwell and lift)
- Learning and Community hub including materials and furniture stores
- Visitor toilets and family room
- Special Exhibition Gallery (including store)
- Exhibition Prep (technician's workshop)
- Staff and volunteer room and WCs

First Floor

- Football Museum for Wales galleries
- Wrexham Museum galleries
- Circulation hub, gantries and lift
- Staff offices
- Visitor WCs and family room
- Changing Places

The Satellite building and its accommodation remains unchanged with the exception of part of the Ground Floor Store which is converted into additional office space.

Refer to the proposed plans for details of the layout. For a detailed breakdown of accommodation refer to the Proposed Schedule of Accommodation in Appendix J.