

From: geoff f <geofff@hotmail.co.uk>
Sent: 07 September 2018 11:31
To: planning
Subject: comments on Glyndwr University Planning Applications

Please accept these Wrexham Area Civic Society comments on planning applications P/2018/0666/0667/0668 /re. creation of a 'new learning gateway' at Glyndwr University on Mold Road and Regent Street, Wrexham.

It should also be noted that similar comments were made at the pre application stage but only the first sentence was included in the applicants Pre-Application Consultation Report. The Society's reservations were unaccountably omitted.

Comments on Campus 2025 proposals, from Wrexham Area Civic Society

Wrexham Area Civic Society recognizes the University's cultural and economic importance to the County Borough, and welcomes this initiative to upgrade facilities for the 21st century. We do, however, have reservations about architectural aspects of these proposals.

Mold Road building

- The building was listed in 1994 because it represented a landmark both in the provision of technical education in Wrexham, and in design for education. It is an excellent, little altered example of the architecture of the early 1950s and was considered outstanding at the time. It was awarded the RIBA architectural bronze medal.
- The long frontage has attention focused around the entrance by channeled brickwork, recessed doorway, step treatment, and the Portland stone relief panels on the shallow curve of the main lecture theatre. Over the years this prominence has been undermined through inept schemes of hard and soft landscaping, random uncoordinated signage both free standing and fixed to the building, unsympathetic street furniture, and vehicular access that cuts across the entrance frontage.
- The proposed block placed in front of this entrance will further degrade the entire architectural composition, which should be a key asset to the University. Its scale, massing, materials, height and siting are completely at odds with the architecture of the original. The heavy supports & lintels of the proposed building are wrong: the old building has no lintels or parapets, just minimal copings. The new block does not look transparent: there is insufficient information about materials and finishes: for example, will the glass be clear or opaque? The justification for this block is far from convincing and will detract from the building and this gateway into Wrexham. It is far from clear how prominent the stone relief panels will be from within the proposed block.
- It is stated that the present entrance has "poor visibility and low prominence", but the approach, so far as this aspect is concerned, is overkill. A far better solution would be to reinstate the focus on the entrance from Mold Road by widening the gateway for pedestrians only, with skillful use of hard and soft landscaping to draw the eye to the entrance. Signage would be coordinated and freestanding with no need to clutter the entrance with random signs. The entrance frontage could then be a place for pedestrians to linger instead of the curve of tarmac leading to parking spaces.

- In summary, the entrance design to this building is still a strong and positive contribution to the whole composition, the proposed block sited in front is not a sensitive change and will degrade the listed structure, and not enhance this major gateway into the town.

Former Gymnasium / Students Union

- In the Heritage Impact Statement, demolition is justified partly on grounds that it needs a lot of backlog maintenance and is under-used: but this is surely due to the University's own neglect of this building.
- 7.7 states that "within that comprehensive masterplan" demolition will enable better connectivity N-S and an E-W 'campus boulevard: are we to believe that there is no possible way of achieving this without demolition?

Art College and environs, Regent Street

Listed in 1990; currently the frontage is degraded with signage and clutter. We recognize the need for improved access so long as the frontage setting is kept restrained and uncluttered. We hope that the scheme for this site results in the removal of the adjoining frontage car parking. Improvements to the messy and shabby area behind the listed building are to be welcomed, but the design of the proposed new buildings is commonplace. Here again there is little information about materials and finishes.

Please could you acknowledge receipt of these comments.

Geoff Foy
Chairman, Wrexham Area Civic Society