



Wrexham Glyndwr University Plas Coch Campus - C Block Laboratory Refurbishment Application for Listed Building Consent

Design and Access Statement

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cassidy + Ashton have been instructed by Wrexham Glyndwr University to prepare and submit this application for Listed Building Consent to Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 1.2 The application is for the following:
Internal refurbishment of academic laboratory spaces within C Corridor.
- 1.3 This statement sets out the context of the site, proceeding to outline and evaluate the design and access features of the proposed works and how good quality design principles have been considered and applied.
- 1.4 As per the Welsh Government and Design Commission for Wales' guidance, Design and Access Statements are a vital tool in ensuring the appropriate consideration of design quality and inclusive access when preparing planning proposals.
- 1.5 This statement is to be read in conjunction with a separately submitted Heritage Impact Assessment.

- 2.1 The site to which this application is concerned is the Wrexham Glyndwr University Plas Coch Main Academic Campus.
- 2.2 The Campus is comprised of the Universities academic and residential buildings, together with its ancillary amenities, including sports facilities, car parking and open space.
- 2.3 Specifically, the application for Listed Building Consent relates to the Main Plas Coch Campus Building, C Corridor.
- 2.4 The Main Building is the focal point to the arrival of all University users and visitors.



- 2.5 The Main Building is comprised principally of three academic corridors, A; B and C.
- 2.6 Under Application Ref. P/2021/0329 the B Corridor was granted Listed Building Consent for comparable refurbishment works to those proposed subject to this application.

WREXHAM GLYNDWR UNIVERSITY – FUTURE STRATEGY

- 2.7 Wrexham Glyndwr University is public research University with charitable status, which was established in 2008 from the former North East Wales Institute of Higher Education.
- 2.8 'Campus 2025' is the universities future strategy, which seeks to sustain its position in the higher education sector, delivering a 21st century appropriate learning environment.
- 2.9 Campus 2025 therefore presents the primary objective to provide a modern, flexible campus, with spaces which are able to adapt as teaching and learning styles evolve.
- 2.10 Glyndwr are committed to investing in the campus to develop an environment where students want to stay, building a student centred, vibrant and sustainable campus. Aligned with this are examples such as the Northern Quarter permission, the sale of the land and subsequent reinvestment in the University campus and facilities being integral to the University's strategy.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The scope of this project intends principally to modernise the laboratory accommodation within the C Block of the Main Plas Coch Campus Building.
- 3.2 The proposed works will allow the existing dated laboratories to be brought up to modern day standards in a manner that is sympathetic to its historic character and appearance and the University's long term sustainable use and reputation.
- 3.3 The significance of the Listed Building has been considered in the design of these proposals, placing the priority to preserve and enhance its heritage value central to the scheme.
- 3.4 The proposals concern internal alterations with a view to modernise and enhance the learning facilities.
- 3.5 The works are detailed within the Heritage Impact Statement submitted with this application, which concludes that all proposals make a neutral impact to the Listed Building and as such the proposal should be supported.

4.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS

- 4.1 Design and access statements are a requirement of applications for Listed Building Consent. This Chapter will set out the design principles which have been considered in shaping the proposed refurbishment works.
- 4.2 Modern standards for laboratories are important and accordingly the University are required to modernise the facilities to make them fit for purpose and to encourage students to study at Glyndwr.

DESIGN

- 4.3 The proposed works set out in this application have been designed carefully and respectfully in response to the building's character and historic fabric.
- 4.4 The works comprise principally internal alterations which are generally reversible should the future requirement arise. Accordingly, as reported within the Heritage Impact Assessment undertaken by Henderson Heritage, there will not be any detrimental impacts to the heritage value of the building.
- 4.5 Minimal external works are proposed, concerning simply the required ventilation interventions to facilitate the safe operation of the modern science labs.

EXISTING FACILITIES

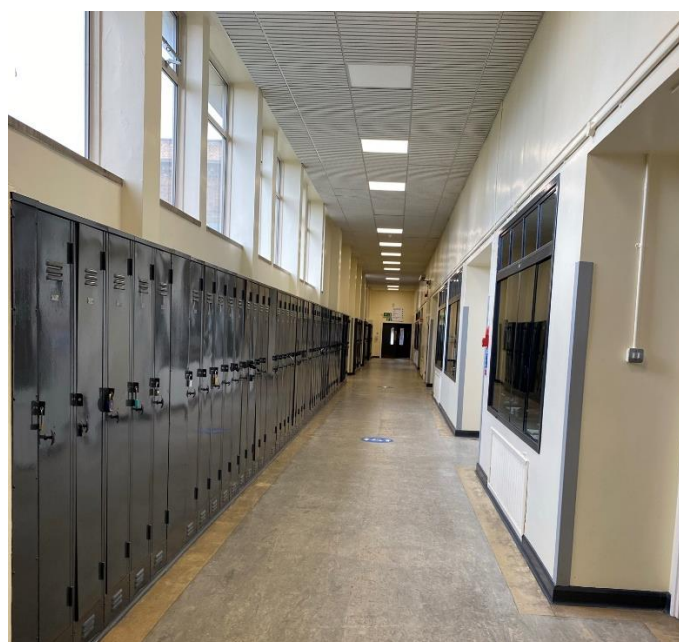


Fig. 1 C Corridor

- 4.6 The lockers (as demonstrated within Fig. 1) are to be retained, recognised for their significance in the context of the building's listing.



Fig. 2 Laboratories

- 4.7 The laboratory spaces are dated and are to be upgraded, with due consideration to the existing building fabric.

AESTHETIC CHANGES

- 4.8 Contemporary openings are proposed to replace existing display cabinets along the corridor (Fig. 1). These openings have been designed with consideration to the building's heritage value. The display cabinets are broadly being retained, yet extended down to floor level. This is comparable to the works within the B Corridor (LBC Approval P/2021/0329) and is a minor change – as supported within the Heritage Impact Assessment – which uses appropriate materials, scale, and form.
- 4.9 The white boards and ceiling mounted TV Screens to be added along the teacher's wall elevation are a reversible addition that respond to the modern requirements of the spaces, whilst not making a detrimental impact to the Listed Building.

- 4.10 Two existing doors facing onto the corridor are to be internally blocked up whilst retained in situ to preserve the appearance of the corridor and thus its heritage value.
- 4.11 Currently there are small prep rooms between the two lab rooms. These will be altered slightly to facilitate improved areas to prep and include a shower in case of spillages of chemicals, however their form will remain broadly the same, thus preserving the built fabric and character.
- 4.12 The original parquet flooring is to be retained with a new lining placed over the floor as the existing floor is not non-slip, is grained and can't be cleaned properly. This allows for the preservation of the floor's historic significance, whilst allowing for modern chemical de-contamination.

MECHANICAL INTERVENTIONS

- 4.13 In line with modern scientific requirements, an enhanced ventilation system is required.
- 4.14 The preferred approach has been a mechanical ventilation system consistent with that of the 2021 approved B Corridor works, involving slightly lowering the ceiling by 680mm and ducting out to higher level glazing panels.
- 4.15 The ventilation has been designed whilst making minimal disruption to the building fabric. The ducts will not be visible internally due to the lowering of the ceiling. The ducts out will not make a significant impact to the courtyard façade, as with the comparable B Corridor works.

ACCESS

- 4.16 The proposals allow for DDA compliant access within the building in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations.
- 4.17 The opening up of the prep rooms to form one large circulation space will enhance this accessibility.
- 4.18 Replacement of the existing desks will allow for more flexible teaching spaces that are adaptable and allow the University to respond to student needs with dynamic teaching facilities.
- 4.19 An inclusive design has been prioritised. The teaching spaces have all been designed to allow full accessibility and to facilitate the highest standard of learning and interaction between students and staff.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.20 In line with modern standards of science, health and safety requirements are heightened. Maintaining health and safety within laboratories, particularly during *lone working*, is an increasingly important consideration in the design of such spaces.
- 4.21 The proposed opening up of the display cabinets to facilitate more open and visible working space will therefore enhance natural surveillance, particularly to lone workers.
- 4.22 It is therefore presented that the contemporary openings will achieve a higher standard of health and safety for the labs operation.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This Statement concludes that the scope of works subject to this application for Listed Building Consent are minor and generally reversible. On this basis, it is evidenced that the refurbishment works can be achieved whilst protecting the significance and value of the Listed Building.
- 5.2 The proposed works have been designed sympathetically to the Listed Building, whilst facilitating a contemporary learning / working environment.
- 5.3 The Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Henderson Heritage supports the proposals, concluding they are positive and will make a neutral impact to the Listed Building. Ultimately, it is concluded that the works will preserve and enhance the continuing operation of the building.

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