

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

On behalf of Glyndwr University

**Land at Regent Street Arts School
Wrexham**

***Application for refurbishment and improvement of Arts College,
demolition of ancillary buildings and construction of new 107-bed
student accommodation facility***

August 2018

Contents

	Page
1 Introduction	1
2 Site Description & Surroundings	2
3 Campus 2025	3
4 Application Proposals	7
5 Listed Building Consent	8
6 The Development Plan	13
7 Delivery, Planning Obligations and Conditions	19
8 Benefits, Planning Balance and Conclusions	20

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The application submitted on behalf of Glyndwr University seeks detailed planning permission and listed building consent. The specific land uses are identified in Section Four of this Planning Statement. The description of development is:

Application for refurbishment and improvement of Arts College, demolition of ancillary buildings and construction of new 107-bed student accommodation facility

- 1.2 Prior to the submission of the application, the views of the local community were sought via a Pre-Application Consultation exercise. A Pre-Application Consultation Report is submitted as part of this planning application as a separate document. There were no changes to the proposals arising as a result of this exercise. The application comprises the following documents:

- Planning Application Form including Ownership Certificate
- Drawing 531-17-2_531-17-6-AE-00-001 Elevations A&B
- Drawing 531-17-2_531-17-6-AE-00-001 Elevations C&D
- 531-17-2_AE-04-001 Elevations Sheet 1 of 2
- 531-17-2_AE-04-002 Elevations Sheet 2 of 2
- 531-17-2_AE-04-003 Existing Elevations – Street Views
- 531-17-2_AE-04-004 Street View Elevations
- 531-17-2_AL-04-001 Existing Site Plan
- 531-17-2_AL-04-002 Proposed Site Plan
- 531-17-2_AL-04-003 Lower Ground Floor
- 531-17-2_AL-04-004 Ground Floor Plan
- 531-17-2_AL-04-005 First Floor Plan
- 531-17-2_AL-04-006 Second Floor Plan
- 531-17-2_AL-04-007 Third Floor Plan
- 531-17-2_AL-04-008 Art School Main Entrance Refurbishment
- 531-17-2_AL-04-009 Existing Overall GA Plan
- 531-17-2_AS-04-001 Site Plan Demolitions
- 531-17-2_AS-04-002 Existing Site Sections
- 531-17-2_AS-04-002 Proposed Site Sections
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Energy Statement
- Utility Statement

- Transport Statement
- Tree Constraints Plan and Tree Survey Assessment
- Flood Consequence Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Landscape Layout and Strategy

1.3 It not the intention of this Planning Statement to substantially repeat the content of these documents, in particular the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and, as required for the Listed Building Consent, the Heritage Impact Assessment. This Planning Statement seeks to provide the planning context for the proposal.

2. Site Description and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site extends to 0.55 hectares (1.3 acres) and is situated within the town centre of Wrexham.
- 2.2 The site falls within a mixed-use area of the town centre. To the south and west is a retail park and some period office buildings, to the north is the A541 and beyond this a range of office and commercial premises and to the east is St Mary's Cathedral and Wrexham town centre.
- 2.3 The site comprises the buildings of Wrexham Art College, which occupy and adjoin all of the northern, eastern and southern boundaries. This creates a courtyard arrangement, whereby the central portion of the site is used for car parking.
- 2.4 The site is currently occupied by two listed buildings and sits entirely within the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area. The two listed buildings comprise:
- No 49 Regent Street (the Former Wrexham Infirmary, which is located in the north, east and south of the site)
 - No 51 Regent Street (Adult Education Centre, which is located in the north west and west of the site)
- 2.5 A number of other listed buildings are located within the surrounding area, including St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral. All these listed buildings are discussed in detail within the Heritage Impact Assessment.

3 Campus 2025

- 3.1 This planning application forms part of the overall Campus 2025 Estates and Learning Environment Strategy which is now being pursued by Glyndwr University (the University). Campus 2025 has assessed the University's existing estate and is based upon a recently undertaken extensive package of surveys of building condition, space utilisation, future academic requirements etc.
- 3.2 The conclusion of this exercise is that the University's Estate does not fulfil the principles and objectives of Glyndwr University and therefore needs a significant package of investment and redevelopment for the University to sustain a viable position within the higher education sector. The issue is not about expanding the overall size and academic capacity of the University Estate.
- 3.3 Indeed, the surveys show that the overall occupancy levels across the estate are low and that if the University needed to increase student numbers and/or the range of academic courses it offers, then there is sufficient capacity within the existing University Estate to accommodate such growth. The key requirement is to upgrade and modernise Glyndwr University's facilities to modern standards when compared to other Universities throughout the UK, so that the University can sustain a viable offering and student numbers across the range of academic courses which it provides. There is also a statutory requirement for Glyndwr University to maintain their existing listed buildings, which Campus 2025 enables Glyndwr to discharge.
- 3.4 Given this context, Campus 2025 is a package of planning applications, which enables the ambitions of Campus 2025 to be realised. The applications are all linked through the pressing economic, social and environmental case for Glyndwr University to improve its overall estate. Once the development identified within Campus 2025 is delivered, then this will bring substantial benefits:
- a) in the delivery of academic courses at Glyndwr University;
 - b) in the student accommodation offering within Wrexham and significant knock-on benefits to the town from a sustained and increased student population;
 - c) in the sale of land assets which are not required by Glyndwr University and can make a more positive contribution via residential development to meet Wrexham's housing need;
 - d) By enabling Glyndwr University to continue to attract new students and sustain a viable position in the higher education sector;
 - e) ultimately via the retention of Glyndwr University, with its significant contribution of jobs, investment and profile within the Wrexham economy.

- 3.5 The subject application will form part of Campus 2025 by providing 77 new homes within Wrexham and by providing funding back to Glyndwr University from an eventual land sale of consented development land to a housebuilder. Proceeds from the sale of the land sale will be invested back at the Plas Coch Campus and Regent Street Arts School.
- 3.6 It should also be noted that because this application is being brought forward direct by Glyndwr University themselves, there is not a developer taking an element of profit from the land sale, therefore this approach maximises the revenue available for the University.
- 3.7 The package of planning applications forming Campus 2025 is detailed on the table below. Whilst these are all individual planning applications and are submitted for determination as such, Campus 2025 is an overall project, whereby all of the individual sites make up the overall enabling package. It is therefore envisaged that the application will be determined by Wrexham CBC as part of a collective package of applications.

Site	Proposal
Plas Coch	Demolition of Student Union Building and reconfiguration of main campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension. Campus 2025 also involves significant package of refurbishment of the existing social learning and academic tuition space, together with improved and reconfigured car parking and significant improvements to the overall public realm and campus environment.
Regent Street	Refurbishment and improvement of Arts College (which is a listed building) removal of redundant outbuildings (not listed) and construction of new 107-bed student accommodation facility.
Northern Quarter	Demolition of redundant student halls and construction of up to 420 apartments on surplus land within Plas Coch Campus.
Wrexham Village	Following demolition of the student halls on the Plas Coch Campus, it is proposed to build a new student accommodation facility of 197 bed spaces. This adjoins an existing 323 bed facility (Wrexham Village), which was constructed within the last ten years and is currently operated by a third party. Wrexham Village is being purchased by Glyndwr University and will create a combined facility of 520 bed spaces, adjacent to the Plas Coch Campus.
Holt Road	Outline planning application for 77 residential units. With planning in place, this site will be sold and 100% of the funds will be utilised in the improvements at Plas Coch and Regent Street
Gatewen Road	Outline planning application for 112 residential units. With planning in place, this site will be sold and 100% of the funds will be utilised in the improvements at Plas Coch and Regent Street

3.8 Due to the proposals involving both Listed Buildings and a Conservation Area, then the overall package of applications is as follows:

Site	Proposal	
Glyndwr University Plas Coch Campus	Detailed planning and Listed Building Application for Demolition of student union and other redundant buildings, and redevelopment of academic campus to provide new Learning Gateway and Inner Gateway Buildings, new Engineering Building, new Sports Hall Extension, redevelopment of multi-use games area, refurbishment of social learning and academic tuition space, together with new car parking, infrastructure, landscaping and public realm works.	Application One
Regent Street Arts College	Application for refurbishment and improvement of Arts College, demolition of ancillary buildings and construction of new 107-bed student accommodation facility	Application Two
	Demolition required within conservation area of ancillary outbuildings within Arts School to enable construction of 107 bed student accommodation facility.	Application Three
Land at north west of Plas Coch Campus	Demolition of redundant student halls and construction of up to 410 apartments with access from B5101, together with car parking, site landscaping and associated infrastructure on surplus land within the overall Plas Coch academic Campus.	Application Four
Land west of Crispin Lane	Outline application for student accommodation facility of up to 197 bed spaces, with parking and landscaping.	Application Five
Holt Road	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 77 dwellings together with vehicular/pedestrian access from Holt Road, open space which can be used with adjoining land to the west to create a formal sports pitch, site landscaping, sustainable drainage and other related infrastructure	Application Six
Gatewen Road	The erection of up to 112 dwellings together with vehicular/pedestrian access from Gatewen Road, open space, site landscaping, sustainable drainage and other related infrastructure	Application Seven

4 Application Proposals

- 4.1 This application contains a series of architectural drawings for the proposed new building elements. In terms of the proposals, then the following is a summary of the proposals:
- a) Demolition of a single storey outbuilding range at the rear of 51 Regent Street.
 - b) Demolition of the free standing detached single storey craft workshop
 - c) Demolition of the southern arm of 49 Regent Street.
 - d) Following demolition of elements (a) – (c) the construction of a replacement craft workshop area, with residential accommodation above for 107 student bedrooms in a new block of five storeys in height.
- 4.2 The proposals also include a significant and extensive refurbishment of the Listed Buildings, including remodelled academic tuition and studio space. A new publicly accessible gallery will be created, alongside a café and shop.
- 4.3 More detail on the proposals is found within the application drawings, together with the Design & Access Statement and Heritage Impact Assessment.

5 Listed Building Consent

5.1 This application seeks Planning and Listed Building Consent. The assessment and rationale for Listed Building Consent is set out within the Heritage Impact Assessment. This Planning Supporting Statement is not seeking to replicate all of the findings within the Heritage Impact Statement. However, the issuing of planning permission is clearly linked and dependent on Listed Building Consent also being granted.

5.2 The Listed Building Consent is required for

the demolition of some of the ancillary elements of the listed buildings,
alterations to the remaining onsite listed buildings

construction of the new five storey structure, which houses 107 student bedrooms, on top of new workshop space.

Any impacts on the conservation area (which is the subject of a separate application for Conservation Area Consent)

An assessment of any impacts on surrounding listed buildings

5.3 The Heritage Impact Assessment assesses the following impacts:

Demolition at No 49 Regent Street (the former Wrexham Infirmary)

Neither the paired, steel-truss roofed single storey sheds, nor the adjacent concrete block shed possess more than limited significance; being of standard constructional techniques and employing basic materials to create architecturally plain and utilitarian structures that contribute little to the site and townscape around them.

It is assessed that the demolition of these structural components would have a negligible effect on the building's special interest. It is determined that these relatively late additions to the former infirmary make little or no contribution to its special interest or significance. Even then, it is assessed that the communal value attributed to these structures has little to do with an appreciation or enjoyment of them as historic assets; so, it is considered that their communal value could be delivered by a new building on the same site in the same way. Hence, the impact of their demolition is likely to be minimal.

5.4 Demolition at 51 Regent Street (the former adult Learning Centre)

The only proposed change to No. 51 Regent Street (the second Grade II listed building) is the demolition of the high, red brick wall running southwards into the site and supporting low lean-to sheds on its eastern elevation. Whilst the wall comprises a 'fixture' under the terms of

s1(5) of the 1990 Act, it is assessed as being of no more than limited significance, and as making little contribution to the listed building's special interest.

Therefore, its proposed demolition is assessed as having a negligible effect on the special interest of the Grade II listed building, which is instead focused on the main street fronting block and the rear range creating the characteristic T-shaped plan form.

This long narrow range of brick-built outbuildings is attached to the rear of the existing detached house and sits in the location of the proposed car parking. It therefore needs to be removed to facilitate the proposed development. This building range is not utilised for any academic or ancillary purpose and is therefore assessed as being redundant. Its removal would also improve access into the remodelled internal landscaped courtyard at the heart of the redevelopment. The demolition of this section of listed building has been discussed previously and agreed on site with the Local Authority Conservation Officer.

5.5 Alterations to the remaining listed elements of 49 Regent Street

Internal alterations to this Grade II listed building will be minimal, comprising the removal of a section of the wall in the north side of the courtyard, the insertion of a glass screen at the back of the entrance foyer and the insertion of new partitions at two locations inside the western section of the former infirmary building.

The wall proposed for removal is a plain and architecturally unsophisticated piece of brick fabric in the rear elevation of the 1920s-1930s Phase 4 Technical College. It is concluded that, despite this phase of development contributing positively to the special interest of the listed building as a whole, the wall itself is of limited interest, and its demolition would have no effect on its special interest because the aspects of this structural phase that contribute positively in that regard would be preserved.

Whilst the inserted partitions would obviously break up the spaces within the historic asset, their impact would be negligible for the simple reason that these spaces have already been altered once already, and do not exhibit any features or decorative treatments which would be lost or damaged through the partitions' insertion.

By its nature, the change brought about by the sub-division of the spaces in the Phase 1 former infirmary building would be reversible. Equally, any impact arising from the insertion of the glass screen could be reversed in the future if circumstances change and there is a desire to re-open the internal space. However, in itself, the provision of the glass screen is assessed as having a negligible impact on the special interest of the listed building, given that its form

and appearance would clearly preserve the existing sense of openness and space created by the 1920s-1930s extension evident on entering the entrance foyer

It is also considered that the proposed construction of a new DDA access would have no impact on the listed building's special interest; in view of the fact that there would be no anticipated loss of (or damage to) original historic fabric associated with this earliest element of the structure, the proposal would not conceal any aspect of the structure which contributes to its special interest and the design and materials used would be of a quality which compliments the architectural sophistication of the principal elevation.

5.6 Construction of the new five storey student accommodation / workshop building on 49 Regent Street

The construction of the proposed workshops and student accommodation would change the setting of this listed building. Even so, it is considered that the aspects of this historic asset's setting which contribute positively to its significance would be clearly preserved; i.e. the inter-relationships with the surrounding street scene on Regent Street and the other adjacent buildings making up the historic townscape hereabouts.

Nevertheless, the drawings illustrate a substantial building to the rear of the site, reaching four storeys looking across the courtyard. Whilst it is noted that the rear of the site makes no positive contribution to the significance of the listed building, the erection of this new workshop and student accommodation would certainly bring about change to the way in which the asset is experienced within the contemporary streetscape, especially in views inwards from the north and north west.

he inter-relationship between the Regent Street elevation of the former Technical College and the proposed workshops/student accommodation is highlighted in Appendix EDP 1. This clearly shows that the top storey of the new building would rise above the roofline of the original infirmary building looking south, whilst more of the structure would rise above the roofline of the Phase 4 Technical College range fronting Regent Street. This would serve to erode the prominence and integrity of the historic buildings within the wider street scene on this route into and out of Wrexham.

Whereas the height of the built environment currently falls away down the slope and away from the Regent Street frontage, under the proposals it would in fact rise upwards towards the rear. It is concluded that the prominence of the new structure in southwards views of this asset would cause some degree of harm, albeit relatively modest.

5.7 Construction of the new five storey student accommodation / workshop building on 51 Regent Street

The construction of the proposed workshops and student accommodation would change the setting of this listed building. Even so, it is considered that the aspects of this historic asset's setting which contribute positively to its significance would be clearly preserved; i.e. the inter-relationships with the surrounding street scene on Regent Street and the other adjacent buildings making up the historic townscape hereabouts.

Nevertheless, the drawings illustrate a substantial building to the rear of the site, reaching four storeys looking across the courtyard. Whilst it is recognised that the interior of the site makes no positive contribution to the significance of the listed building, the construction of this new workshop and student accommodation would certainly bring about change to the way in which No. 51 Regent Street is perceived and experienced in the contemporary streetscape, especially in views from the north west.

Whereas the height of the built environment currently falls away down the slope and away from the Regent Street frontage, under the proposals it would in fact rise upwards towards the rear. It is concluded that the prominence of the new structure in southwards views of this asset would cause some degree of harm, albeit relatively modest.

5.8 Impact on the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area

Whilst the development proposals would bring about a change in the character of the wider conservation area, the conclusion is that it would also deliver an enhancement to the wider appearance of the conservation area. The proposed building at the rear of the site is much taller than the existing structure, but there is no doubt that the quality of the architecture and materials is a step-change better than the baseline position.

Hence, taken as a whole, it is concluded that the special interest (or 'significance') of the Grosvenor Conservation Area would be preserved, especially in view of the improvements proposed to the public realm within the site's interior through the upgraded landscaping expected in the central courtyard

5.9 Impact on other Listed Buildings in the vicinity

It is assessed that only two of the listed buildings in the surrounding area would experience a change to their setting as a result of the proposals. These are the Grade II listed Offices and Lodge to the Wrexham Lager Brewery, some 25 metres south west of the site, and the

Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Mary situated on the eastern side of Bradley Road and set within its own walled enclosure.

The former stands to the south west of the site, separated from its boundary by the modern alignment of Central Road and separated from the historically significant elements of the University by the low, one storey sheds closing off the southern edge of the courtyard. Its current setting is considered to detract from the special interest of the building because of the generally poor quality of the built environment.

Insofar as there would be any change to the wider setting of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, it would be in respect of views of the asset's spire in the surrounding townscape, looking east along Regent Street or east across the site from the adjacent retail park. In respect of the former, it is concluded that the proposed building would be set to one side of the main field of view along the road, in part concealed behind the street-defining elevations of the College buildings. With regard to the latter, it is considered that, whilst the new five-storey workshops and student accommodation would potentially curtail this view across the site, it now has limited historic integrity (because of the area's redevelopment) and makes only a low contribution to the Cathedral's significance.

It is considered that, even if the view is blocked or curtailed by the proposed development, any harm to the Grade II listed Cathedral would be minimal.

- 5.10 Given the above analysis, whilst there is inevitably some minor harm resulting to listed buildings from the proposals, this does not result in any substantial or even moderate impacts. The existing Listed Buildings at Regent Street are suffering significantly from under-investment and there is a back-log of maintenance required to maintain their condition. Campus 2025 provides the opportunity for Glyndwr to undertake these repairs, as part of an overall enabling package of works across the Glyndwr Estate.
- 5.10 The listed buildings are currently in academic use. This application, together with the overall Campus 2025 package safeguards this use and significantly enhances the credentials of the Art School, via the introduction of 107 new student bed spaces and enhanced academic space, which will form a significant new facility for Regent Street. For the first time, students will be able to live and study within a complex designed around the art courses provided by Glyndwr University. The significant benefits to the listed building that this will bring outweigh any harm caused by the works themselves.

6 The Development Plan

- 6.1 The development plan consists primarily of Planning Policy Wales (November 2016) and the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011. Also relevant to various specific topics are various Technical Advice Notes issued by the Welsh Government, together with Local Planning Guidance Notes issued by Wrexham CBC. There is no relevant planning history for this site, as it has not previously been the subject of any planning applications.

Wrexham Unitary Development Plan

- 6.2 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 is now significantly out of date. The site does not benefit from any specific allocations and is simply white land, within the settlement limit of Wrexham Town Centre.
- 6.3 The broad location of development is set out within Policies PS1 – PS12. The PS Policies cover a range of issues, but those most relevant to this application include:
- a) Policy PS1 *“New development for housing, employment and community services will be directed to within defined settlement limits”*. The proposal clearly accords with this element of policy, as it falls within the boundary of the largest settlement within Wrexham CBC’s administrative area.
 - b) Policy PS2 *“Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment”*. The proposal accords with this policy in planning terms, as it involves 100% brownfield land within Wrexham Town Centre.
 - c) Policy PS3 *“Development should use previously developed brownfield land, comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to greenfield land, wherever possible...”* Again, the proposal fully accords with this policy.
 - d) Policy PS4 *“Development should maintain the existing settlement pattern and character and be integrated with the existing transport network to help reduce the overall need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car.”* In proposing to retain and improve the academic facilities of Glyndwr University within the urban area of Wrexham, then the proposal accords with this policy in maintaining the existing settlement pattern, integrating with the surrounding land uses and maximising the potential for trips which do not involve the car.

6.4 Within the UDP, the General Development Principles are set out within Policy GDP1, which covers a range of themes. It is important that proposals can demonstrate accordance with Policy GDP1, due to a link between this policy and Policy H2 (discussed later within this section). The following themes within Policy GDP1 are relevant to this application:

- **Scale Design & Layout.** An assessment has been made of the scale, design and layout of the building within the Heritage Impact Assessment, which concludes that the buildings are acceptable and make a positive contribution beyond the current existing structures.
- **Public Transport Facilities** – these are outlined in the accompanying transport assessment. Given the location of the site within the town centre, the site scores excellently from a sustainability perspective.
- **Environmental Safeguarding.** The proposals accord with the uses in the local area and do not result in any significant issues from noise, odour and vibration. Any effects from the construction period will be limited to this phase in the same way that any construction activity does. Planning conditions regarding construction hours of operation, traffic management etc can be used to control this aspect.
- **Secure Public Services.** The site is located within the urban area of Wrexham and effectively surrounded by existing utility networks, which can be utilised by the new development.
- **Flooding, Soil Erosion, Landslides and Contamination.** The site does not flood, nor is there any issue with contamination.
- **Secure the Development of Sustainable Communities.** The site is located adjacent to the town centre of Wrexham and therefore enables new housing to be developed within the single largest and most sustainable settlement within the entire Authority, with the greatest potential to achieve modal shift away from the private car and to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

6.5 Policy GDP2 relates to the capacity of infrastructure and states a requirement for the developer/landowner to enter into a planning agreement/obligation which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. Glyndwr University intend to fully consider any appropriate contributions in accordance with Article 122 of The Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 with the aim of producing a planning agreement for the subject land in due course.

6.6 Policy EC7 deals with conservation areas and states that

“Within, and in close proximity to conservation areas, the priority will be to reserve and/or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area. New buildings and alterations or additions to existing buildings in conservation areas, whether listed as of special architectural historic interest or not, must reflect the design and character of the area as a whole and the form, scale, detailing and materials of existing buildings.”

The Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the special interest of the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area would be preserved and that they would deliver an enhancement to the wider appearance of the conservation area. On this basis, the policy test has been met.

6.7 Policy EC8 addresses the demolition of any building in a conservation area and states that this will not be permitted unless, in exceptional circumstances:

- a) *“the building or structure is beyond reasonable repair; or*
- b) *demolition would be a positive benefit to the conservation area’s enhancement; and*
- c) *planning permission has been granted and a legal agreement entered into for the erection of an appropriate replacement building reflecting the design and character of the conservation area.*
- d) *the material generated from the demolition of the building will, where appropriate, be used for the construction of the replacement building or structure.”*

The Heritage Impact Assessment addresses how (b) is engaged and (in granting the subject application) Wrexham CBC could accord with (c) on the basis that this application for Planning and Listed Building Consent is submitted alongside a duplicate application for Conservation Area Consent.

6.10 Policy EC9 deals with listed buildings of special architectural or historic interest and states that:

“Alterations or additions to, and development or redevelopment within the curtilage of, buildings or structures listed as of special architectural or historic interest must respect the setting and character of the listed buildings or structures.”

The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment demonstrates how the proposals respect the character and setting of the listed buildings and enhance them, when compared to the current situation.

Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan

- 6.8 The Wrexham Town Centre Masterplan has been adopted by Wrexham CBC and is therefore a material consideration, as the application site falls within its boundaries. The document contains several key objectives, with an analysis of each objective under various themes. The proposal accords with the objectives as follows:
- 6.9 Objective 1 : Improve the identity of the town centre. The proposals for a specialist Arts School improve local distinctiveness, enhance local culture and incorporate good design and place making. The proposals include publicly accessible areas which make a positive contribution toward these aims.
- 6.10 Objective 2 : Improve the visitor experience. The objective specifically refers to arts and culture and high quality, attractive environments. The proposals to the Arts School fully accord with these aims.
- 6.11 Objective 3 : Improve town centre accessibility : the proposals include new public areas and disabled ramps to new café/gallery/shop facilities which currently are not accessible to the general public. The provision of 107 student bed spaces also means that students can live adjacent to the buildings, thereby reducing the impact of students commuting to the arts school, as they currently do now.
- 6.12 Objective 4 : Improve the evening economy. The proposals enable 107 students to live within the town centre. This therefore results in a positive contribution to the evening economy of Wrexham.
- 6.13 Objective 5 : provide opportunities for town centre living. 107 students are proposed to live within the town.
- 6.14 Objective 6 : accommodate the needs of a growing population. Because the arts school currently does not have any dedicated accommodation of its own, then there will be a net benefit in accommodating the needs of the growing Wrexham population, as the 107 students which move to the new facility will free-up accommodation elsewhere, which can then be used by local people.
- 6.15 Objective 7 : provide opportunities to improve green infrastructure. The proposed scheme relatively neutral in this regard, does encourage walking, by putting the Arts School and students in the same place, thus contributing to reduce the impacts of climate change.

Local Planning Guidance Notes

- 6.16 In addition to the Wrexham UDP, a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes have been produced and approved by Wrexham CBC, which amplify development plan policy and are therefore material to the consideration and determination of the subject planning application. The key notes are as follows:
- Local Planning Guidance Note 4 looks at conservation areas. The guidance focuses upon maintaining the buildings, whilst recognising the need for them to remain viable places to live and work. The Heritage Impact Assessment addresses the Conservation Area requirements specifically and concludes that the special attributes of the conservation area would be preserved. Introducing 107 new student bed spaces and upgrading the Arts College also, importantly, means that the buildings have a viable future.
 - Local Planning Guidance Note 16 looks at car parking. The DAS and accompanying transport assessment looks at this guidance and demonstrates how this has been complied with. By accommodating both students and the Arts School itself, then the proposals score very highly from a sustainability perspective.
 - Local Planning Guidance Note 19 provides guidance in respect of urban landscape design. The subject site at Regent Street falls within Character Area 1a – Historic Core. The strategy involves conservation, restoration and the encouragement of diversity. By conserving the existing historic buildings and safeguarding them via Campus 2025, restoring those elements which require investment and introducing 107 new student bed spaces into the site, then the proposals clearly accord with the requirements of this guidance.
- 6.17 Whilst the above list of policies is relevant, the key planning justification for the package of new buildings and general improvements is the overall enabling package of benefits found within Section Three : Campus 2025. Glyndwr University is a significant asset within Wrexham and provides significant jobs, profile, an active student population, local community benefits and cultural assets to the town of Wrexham. Campus 2025 is a genuine pivotal point for Glyndwr University. Without the package of improvements and the knock-on effect of being able to sustain a viable range of academic courses and student numbers, then the University faces an uncertain future. A visit to any university city across the UK reveals the extent of investment that has flowed into UK Universities over the past 20 years. Glyndwr (in standing still) has effectively fallen behind, within this highly competitive marketplace.

Planning Policy Wales

6.18 National planning policy is set out within Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Its contents are not repeated in full in this Planning Statement. However, for the purposes of determining the subject application, there are a number of issues outlined below.

6.19 Paragraph 4.6.2 addresses the priorities for urban areas within Wales. The policy states that:

“An effective way to achieve regeneration is to foster integrated communities within the existing settlement pattern by promoting mixed-use development, comprising appropriate combinations of housing employment, retailing, education, leisure and recreation uses and open space.”

The proposals clearly accord with this aspiration and combine the existing academic uses on the site with a new 107 facility of 107 student bed spaces.

6.20 Policy 7.6.1 addresses economic development and places an obligation on Local Authorities to adopt a positive and constructive approach to applications for economic development. Whilst the buildings proposed are not significant employment generating assets in their own right, the context needs to be the safeguarding and retention of Glyndwr University.

6.21 Para 7.6.3 deals with employment and residential uses. Whilst student accommodation is not C3 residential, it does involve people living there and so the principles are consistent. 7.6.3 of PPW confirms that residential and employment uses can be compatible, where Local Planning Authorities have regard to ensure that amenity and economic development opportunities are not compromised.

6.22 There are a series of policies within PPW relating to listed buildings and conservation areas, all of which are dealt with in the Heritage Impact Assessment.

7 Delivery, Planning Obligations and Conditions

- 7.1 There are no known insurmountable technical or environmental constraints to bring the site forward for development. The application scheme is a sustainable form of development and forms the focus of investment for Campus 2025.
- 7.2 Glyndwr University have a well progressed funding package, which brings together various revenue streams to enable the overall Campus 2025 project to be realised. Once planning permission is obtained, then this work can continue with the benefit of a planning permission in place, so that the further package detailed design work for construction can take place.
- 7.3 The current assumption is that, following outline planning permission in Autumn 2018, the site would be delivered once funding became available via some of the other elements of Campus 2025. Due to the current condition of the existing buildings at Regent Street, then there is a need to make the works at Regent Street a priority in the delivery of the overall Campus 2025 package.

8 Benefits, Planning Balance and Conclusions

- 8.1 This Detailed Planning and Listed Building Application is for refurbishment and improvement of Arts College, demolition of ancillary buildings and construction of new 107-bed student accommodation facility
- 8.2 As outlined within this supporting statement, there are a number of Local and National Policies relevant to the determination of the application. In policy terms, then there are no specific land-use policies which seek to prevent Glyndwr from (a) improving academic and ancillary facilities within their existing Arts College and (b) introducing new student accommodation facility within Wrexham Town Centre. Both of these elements accord with policies within the Wrexham UDP and PPW, insofar as there is a general presumption which supports developing existing brownfield sites and undertaking mixed-use development within town centres, in a way which sustains and supports existing uses.
- 8.3 The key balancing exercise involves the impacts on the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. These are dealt with by the Heritage Impact Assessment, which concludes that the development of the site should be considered favourably in respect of the heritage issues.
- 8.5 As discussed previously, Campus 2025 is a pivotal point for Glyndwr University and represents a unique opportunity to safeguard not just the listed building, but also the wider university within Wrexham. Subject to all statutory consultees being satisfied that the technical aspects of the application such as drainage, highways, landscape etc can all be resolved satisfactorily, it is requested that Officers recommend that Planning Permission be granted, subject to planning conditions and any necessary planning obligation.

Narvo Asset Management

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