



Client. Coleg Cambria
Job No. 20068
Date. June 2021

Coleg Cambria
Yale Campus Redevelopment – Phase 2
Design and Access Statement



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DOCUMENT ISSUE RECORD

Issue	Date	Description of Amendment	By	Checked
1	June 2021	Issue for Planning Pre-Application	AJC	DM
2	July 2021	Issue for Full Planning Application	AJC	DM
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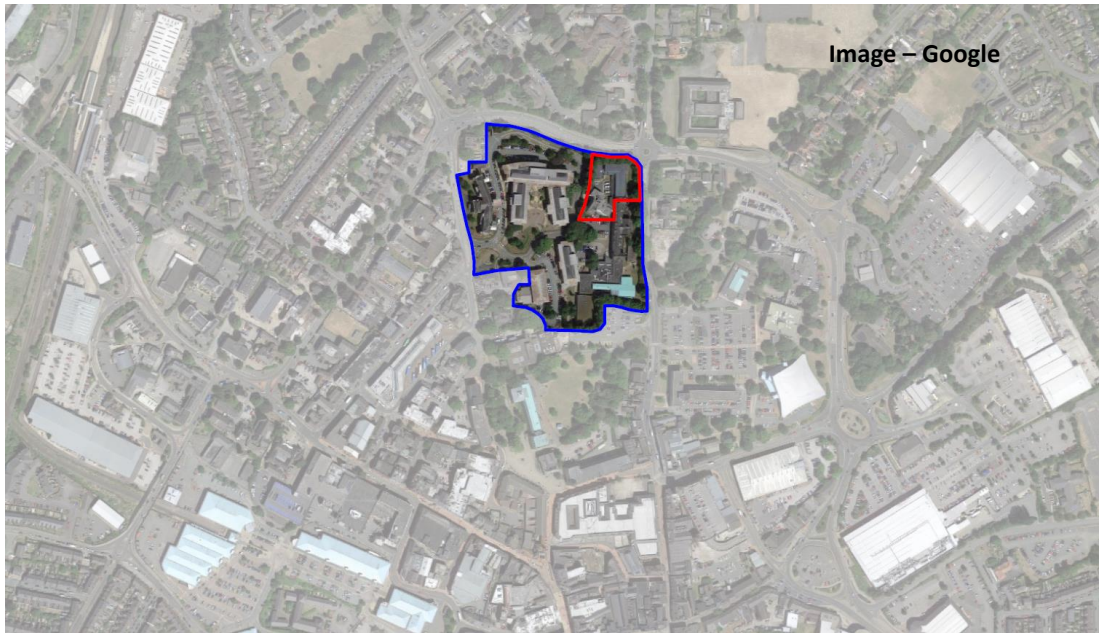
1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by TACP Architects Ltd on behalf of Coleg Cambria to support a full planning application for redevelopment at Yale Campus, Grove Park Road, Wrexham.
- 1.2 Coleg Cambria is a Further Education college serving 6 campuses across mid and North-East Wales. It has approximately 7,000 full time and 20,000 part time students making it one of the UK's largest colleges.
- 1.3 TACP Architects Ltd. were commissioned in 2021 by Coleg Cambria to carry out a feasibility study to investigate the options to facilitate the required accommodation. Extensive analysis was carried out and numerous options explored, culminating with all interested parties supporting the proposed redevelopment works which form the basis of this planning application.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Design and Access Statement is to explain the context of the college, the project intent and the design requirements with regard to the site constraints, regulatory framework and client brief. It accompanies a drawing package which supports the full planning application.

2.0 Context

Physical Context

- 2.1 Located on the northern side of Wrexham Town Centre, Coleg Cambria's Yale Campus is primarily accessed from Grove Park Road with secondary pedestrian access from Chester Road which constrains the eastern boundary. The campus is bound to the west by Rhosddu Road and by the A5152 to the north.
- 2.2 To the east lies one of the main retail areas of Wrexham commercial town centre and to the west public transport hubs and links to the university.
- 2.3 The campus is home to Yale sixth form college as well as many vocational courses and apprenticeships.
- 2.4 The brownfield application site is to the north-east corner of the campus area. The aerial photograph below identifies the application site in the context of its surroundings.



- 2.5 The north-west of the campus site is contained within the Grosvenor Road Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was first designated in September 1990 and its boundary amended in July 2007. The Grosvenor Road Conservation Area Character Assessment and Management Plan was adopted in April 2009. The application site falls on the Conservation Area which follows the existing building line. The new development encroaches into the Conservation Area by 6m.

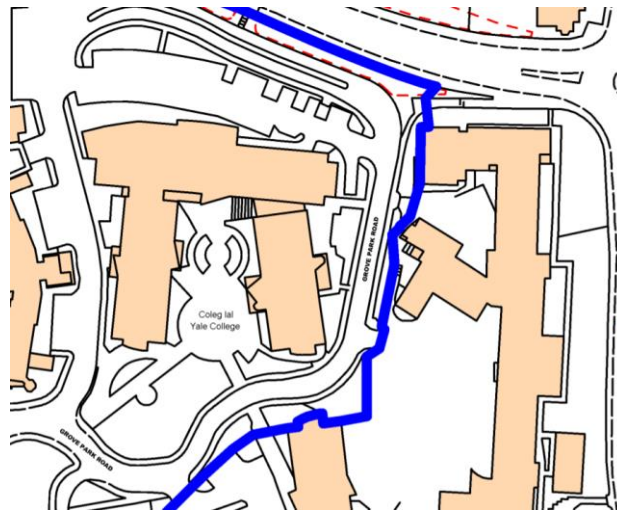


Image showing Grosvenor Conservation Area (left) and site (right)

- 2.6 The site is surrounded by a mix of land uses, primarily education, commercial and public amenities. Immediately to the south is Wrexham Library, with religious facilities and Waterworld leisure centre car parking directly to the east beyond Chester Road. Coleg Cambria campus facilities bound the north and west of the application site.



3D view of the site location from the East

- 2.7 The mix of adjacent land uses bring a variety of building styles to the area. Nearby properties include the reuse of traditional two to three storey semi-detached, detached and terraced buildings which are largely red brick with some areas of white or coloured render and welsh slate roofs. Adjacent contemporary development both reflects the traditional materials of the area as well as using buff brick, render and cladding panel systems.

- 2.8 The traditional buildings on the campus, including an existing Grove Park school building along Chester Road dating from 1902 were built using Ruabon red brick with local sandstone dressings and Welsh slate roofs. Newer additions to the campus are largely red brick with feature rendered areas and glazed curtain walling.
- 2.9 The site has a natural sloping gradient with low points to the north-east and south-west corners. The application site is made up of level plateaus as a result of previous development. There is a maximum level change between the application site and Chester Road of approximately 900mm, reducing to provide a sloped pedestrian access to the north of the application site.
- 2.10 The sites landscaping responds to its use, with a mixture of hard and soft landscaping. A large asphalt car park is located to the west of the site, with footpaths in concrete pavers around the perimeter of the existing buildings. The south and east boundaries are primarily soft landscaping, with a line of mature trees outside the site boundary to the south and a mixture of trees and bushes of varying quality to the eastern boundary.
- 2.11 The site falls outside Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3, there are varying degrees of surface water flood risk within the application site, ranging from none to high risk.
- 2.12 The Campus has recently successfully completed a major development to the south-east corner of the site.

Social Context

- 2.13 The proposed development will offer new teaching and training facilities and wellbeing facilities.
- 2.14 In the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP), Coleg Cambria (formerly Yale College) is highlighted as an institution of growing stature. The UDP also refers to improving quality of life for its residents with an emphasis on supporting access to a variety of education and employment opportunities.
- 2.15 The site is within Wrexham Town Centre, with public transport links in walking distance which offers strong travel links across North Wales and to the surrounding areas of Oswestry (14.3miles), Whitchurch (15.3miles) and Chester (14miles).

Economic Context

- 2.16 The provision of improved educational facilities will support residents, encourage people to move into or commute to the area which in turn will support local businesses and thus the local economy.
- 2.17 In the short term, the proposals will provide improved facilities for Coleg Cambria. This will enable a standard of education to be achieved, increasing student access to education and ultimately employment.
- 2.18 In the long term, the proposals to improve teaching facilities will provide economic benefit to the local area via the increase in employment opportunities. The college works in partnership with over 1,000 employers across the region to deliver the skills required for employment.
- 2.19 The proposals will also provide employment for those contracted to carry out the construction works.

Planning Policy Context

- 2.20 With regards to the efforts outlined by the Local Authority to maintain positive development and growth of the local areas, this section provides an overview of the key policies contained within the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) of relevance to the proposed development.
- 2.21 The Wrexham UDP (2005) and the Wrexham Local Development Plan 2 forms part of the statutory development plan for the Borough. The UDP supersedes previous adopted development plans, namely the Wrexham Maelor Local Plan: Forward to 2001, the Glyndwr District Local Plan, and the Clwyd Structure Plan: First Alteration.
- 2.22 The plan comprises of two parts, part one the strategy outlining the Council's broad intentions for development in the Wrexham County Borough area and provides a framework for specific policies and proposals.
- 2.23 Part two includes specific Policies accompanied by justifications, which expand on the strategic vision for the County Borough and provide detailed guidance for the development and other use of land.
- 2.24 Outlined below are those policies contained within the Wrexham UDP which have been identified as relevant to the proposed development:

- **Part 1 Strategic Policies - Policy PS3**

Development should use previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land, wherever possible, particularly so where greenfield land is of ecological, landscape or amenity value, or comprises agricultural land of grades 1, 2 or 3a quality.

- **Part 1 Strategic Policies - 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.

- **Part 1 Strategic Policies - Policy PS8**

The transport network will be developed by providing an integrated range of travel options to and from principal residential, commercial, employment and education centres by making the best use of the existing road and rail network, including, where necessary, the provision of facilities for both passenger and freight interchange and by the encouragement of public transport, cycling and walking.

- **Part 2 General Development Principles - Policy GDP1**

All new development should:

- a) Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.
- b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
- d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.

- e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.
- f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.
- i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.
- k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

- **Part 2 Environment and Conservation - Policy EC7**

Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve 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.

- **Part 2 Environment and Conservation - Policy EC10**

Environmental enhancement schemes will be implemented at sites

- **Part 2 Transport - Policy T8**

Development granted planning permission will be required to provide vehicle parking spaces either on site or nearby, in accordance with the Council's current parking standards. Special regard will be paid to the following factors, as appropriate: - a) the availability of public transport nearby, b) proximity to public car parking, c) proximity to local services and facilities, d) road safety hazards and amenity considerations arising from on-street parking in the vicinity of the site.

- **Part 2 Transport - Policy T9**

Development proposals will be required to provide walking and cycling routes, where feasible and appropriate, that link with existing or proposed walking and cycling routes, and integrate with the public transport system.

2.25 Other policies which have been identified as relevant to the proposed development are outlined below:

- **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reaffirms the primacy of the Development Plan in the determination of Planning Applications.

3.0 Existing Facilities

- 3.1 The existing campus site has provided further education for many years, previously as Yale College Wrexham, now as part of Coleg Cambria. There are currently a number of buildings, detached structures and infrastructural elements that facilitate the delivery of the courses available at Yale Campus.
- 3.2 Across the campus, the existing buildings range from two to five storeys high and include a mix of both turn of the 20th century red-brick buildings and contemporary purpose-built blocks.
- 3.3 The buildings within the application area include health and beauty departments, general teaching and a science block, all with self-contained staff administration facilities. These existing buildings date from the mid to late 20th century and are disjointed with several extensions at different periods. The buildings are finished with a buff brick and corrugated metal cladding, with a red brick façade to the central building. In 2020 a new three storey block was completed in metal cladding and feature brickwork with expanses of curtain walling and glazed Brise Soleil the south side of the application area.
- 3.4 The buildings within the application site are fragmented, inflexible and do not offer efficient teaching areas.
- 3.5 Access from Chester Road is pedestrian only with a paved pathway leading to the main building. Chester Road provides a level pedestrian access with access primarily from the campus to the west.
- 3.6 Block G, one of the existing Grove Park School buildings was completed in 1902 and is located to the north of the application area. This two-storey high building is constructed with facades of Ruabon Red Brick in garden wall bond and sandstone detailing. The building is parallel with Chester Road with gable end bays to the north and south end and dormer and Dutch Gable details along the roofline. The existing areas within the application site are linked to Block G internally via ramped and stepped access due to changes in floor level. This building houses a variety of accommodation for the college, including teaching, training and administration areas. Access to this block is from the campus side, with little active frontage to Chester Road.
- 3.7 Block E is situated to the west of the application site. This is a relatively contemporary building on the campus, completed in 1998 with refurbishment works completed in 2015. The three storey facades are red brick with artstone window surrounds, glazed curtain walling with white PPC transoms and white PPC window and door frames. The building has a pitched combination roof form to house the plant room with profiled stainless-steel of the lower gradient sections and natural slate to the central steeper pitch.
- 3.8 Block F is located further to the southwest of the application site, across one of the main staff parking areas. This building uses the same external materials as Block E and was completed in 1998 as part of the major campus redevelopment works. This two-storey building has a Dutch Gable Roof with a profiled stainless-steel finish.

4.0 Project Intent

- 4.1 The project intent is to provide suitable facilities to support the curriculum areas provided by Coleg Cambria.
- 4.2 The proposals will provide a focus on the provision of suitable facilities for general teaching, Health & Wellbeing training. The existing historic accommodation is proving to be inadequate for the current teaching requirements of these courses.
- 4.3 The proposals will replace the inefficient accommodation, providing much needed space for teaching with a flexible design that can also be used throughout the academic year.
- 4.4 The project aims to provide a variety of flexible teaching and training spaces with support facilities and social areas that can be used by Coleg Cambria to support specific areas of the curriculum as required.

5.0 Design Principles & Proposed Character

- 5.1 Planning Policy Wales and TAN 12 are the principle planning documents of the Welsh Government which set out the context for the consideration and evaluation of all types of development. The main thrust of the documents is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that the planning system provides for an adequate and continuous supply of available and suitable land to meet societies needs in a way that is consistent with overall sustainable principles.
- 5.2 A key element of sustainable development is good design, which should contribute positively to making places better for people. National Planning Policy also states that it is important to plan for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.
- 5.3 Planning Policy Wales also seeks to promote resource efficient settlements that minimise land-take and urban sprawl, locates development to minimise the demand for travel and promotes access to employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure and sports facilities and open space.
- 5.4 The existing Science and Wellbeing teaching facilities that no longer meet the needs of the college will be demolished. A new building providing training, teaching facilities will be built in the location of the demolished accommodation. This building will have a gross internal area of circa 4125m² over three floors.

Proposed New Building

- 5.5 There is an opportunity for the new buildings to be architecturally appealing and improve the visual character of this area of the campus. The new building will be visible from Chester Road, A5150 and presents the opportunity for the college to create a new impressive face to the campus.
- 5.6 The existing 1902 Grove Park School building provides the current feature at the frontage to Chester Road. The proposals respond to this existing building, providing an improved visual context, with the new building and the existing school working symbiotically to enhance the character of both.

- 5.7 The building footprint will run parallel to the northern boundary with the Chester Road entrance façade angled to respond to the existing school building. The northern façade runs parallel with the A5125 road.
- 5.8 The external landscape at the frontage to Chester Road will remain as amenity grassland. Soft landscaping and mature planting will be retained where possible along the red brick boundary wall, continuing the positive aspects of the character of the current Chester Road and A5125 landscape.
- 5.9 A sweeping pedestrian route runs through the building with a naturally lit triple height atrium above forming the core of the space. Social spaces surround this open route at ground floor leading to the Health and Wellbeing facilities and cafe. At first and second floor, independent study areas and social spaces focus around the atrium void, with flexible teaching and training rooms, administration and support facilities arranged around the active circulation space.
- 5.10 The mass of the proposed building has been carefully considered to break down into vertical bays and horizontal elements, reflecting the proportions and heights of the existing school building.
- 5.11 The proposed frontage is staggered in depth and angled to respond to the school building with the top roof height relating to the adjacent existing roof heights.
- 5.12 A flat roof construction has been proposed to reduce the overall height of the building.
- 5.13 A high quality contemporary palette of materials provides a contrast to the existing school building that does not mimic the existing but emphasises the architectural value. The materials let the proposed and existing work together whilst allowing for the architectural history of the site to be read.
- 5.14 The cladding material will include solid metal panels. Internal lighting will filter through the Brise Soleil create a feature. Coleg Cambria's signage will be incorporated into the textured panel design.
- 5.15 The textured brick element will be in a contemporary black brick to contrast with the existing Ruabon Red Brick.
- 5.16 The entrance is focused from within the campus to follow controlled circulation routes.
- 5.17 Window frames, door frames and curtain walling will be aluminium with a powder coated finish.

6.0 Accessibility and Equality - Vehicles and Pedestrians

- 6.1 Planning Policy promotes that Local Authorities should consider the opportunities of 'accessibility to all' including the needs of those with visual and hearing impairments and those of limited mobility, the elderly and people with young children.
- 6.2 Guidance in the Wrexham UDP has been considered in the preparation of this proposal.
- 6.3 Site accessibility for vehicles will remain unchanged in principle. All vehicular traffic will continue to access the campus via Rhosddu Road. This accommodates all vehicles including cars, buses and delivery vehicles.
- 6.4 Car parking on site is in several main clusters, including a large car park immediately to the west of the application site. Accessible parking bays will be provided to the south of the new building, adjacent to the main rear entrance. This will be accessed from Grove Park Road, the main route through the campus.
- 6.5 Coleg Cambria organises buses along several routes through Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham from the campus. These routes alight on Grove Park Road in the heart of the campus. The proposals for this development continue to champion Coleg Cambria's emphasis on sustainable public transport.
- 6.6 Parking Standards under Transport Policy T8 and Local Planning Guidance Note 16 have been taken into consideration. There are an existing 230 spaces on site that will remain. There is small number of additional parking proposed as part of the development, including number of accessible bays replacing those relocated during construction. This is not considered an issue due to the negligible impact on the numbers travelling to site by car. Student travel behaviour is expected to remain similar with the majority travelling to site via sustainable transport methods. The number of staff travelling to site by private vehicle is also expected to remain similar.
- 6.7 The aim of the project is to maximise safe pedestrian access across the campus, utilising the site to improve connectivity for students between areas of the Town centre to the east and west of the campus.
- 6.8 Existing cycle parking within the campus site will be retained.

7.0 Accessibility - Movements to, from and within the campus development

- 7.1 The new building will be designed and constructed in line with Building Regulations Part M and BS 8300.
- 7.2 All external approaches to new entrances will offer clear and flat access with a maximum gradient of 1:20.
- 7.3 Paved routes within the campus benefit from dropped kerbs in appropriate locations to enable level access. The proposals will maintain this approach.
- 7.4 Sufficient clear widths will be provided to door openings to meet current building regulations. External doors will include automatic opening facilities.
- 7.5 The proposed buildings will have level external perimeters wherever possible to facilitate maintenance access and emergency escape routes.
- 7.6 All proposed buildings and extensions will have level thresholds to external doors and throughout internally.
- 7.7 Proposed stairs will be designed in accordance with Approved Documents Part K and M.
- 7.8 The new building will include passenger lift, enabling wheelchair access from ground floor to and from the first and second floors.
- 7.9 Where new toilet facilities are provided they will comply with current Building Regulations in terms of access and fittings. Fully accessible and ambulant disabled WC facilities are provided for use by disabled persons.
- 7.10 Proposed circulation routes will have a flooring finish providing a surface appropriate for wheelchairs.
- 7.11 Flooring appropriate to wet areas, providing a suitable slip resistance will be used where applicable.
- 7.12 Proposed reception counters are to utilise non-directional lighting to eliminate glare and to incorporate split-level surfaces in line with Part M.
- 7.13 Proposed staircase handrails are to be in contrasting colours and warm to touch in accordance with Part M.
- 7.14 The proposals will incorporate contrasting colours and trims to differentiate doors, doorframes and floors from walls and stair risers and treads to aid visually impaired users in compliance with BS 8300.
- 7.15 Proposed exits, fire exits, rooms, WCs and hazards will be appropriately signed to comply with BS 8300. Signs to be non-reflective, contrasting and fitted at appropriate heights.
- 7.16 All proposed glazing within 300mm of a door and up to 1500mm above FFL to be impact resistant safety glass.

8.0 Community Safety

- 8.1 It is not anticipated that there will be any adverse effect on security or increase of risk on the site as a result of the development.
- 8.2 During the design process layout, appearance and landscaping have been carefully assessed to help to maintain and improve where possible existing crime prevention measures. The following safety measures have been considered in the design:

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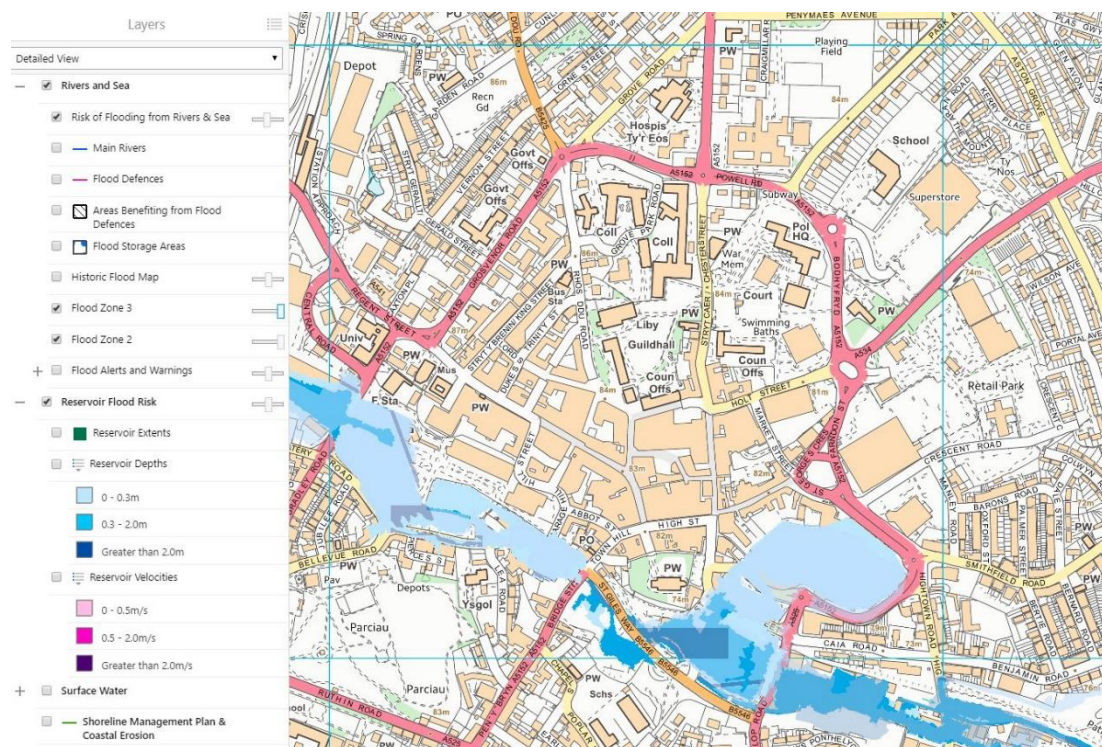
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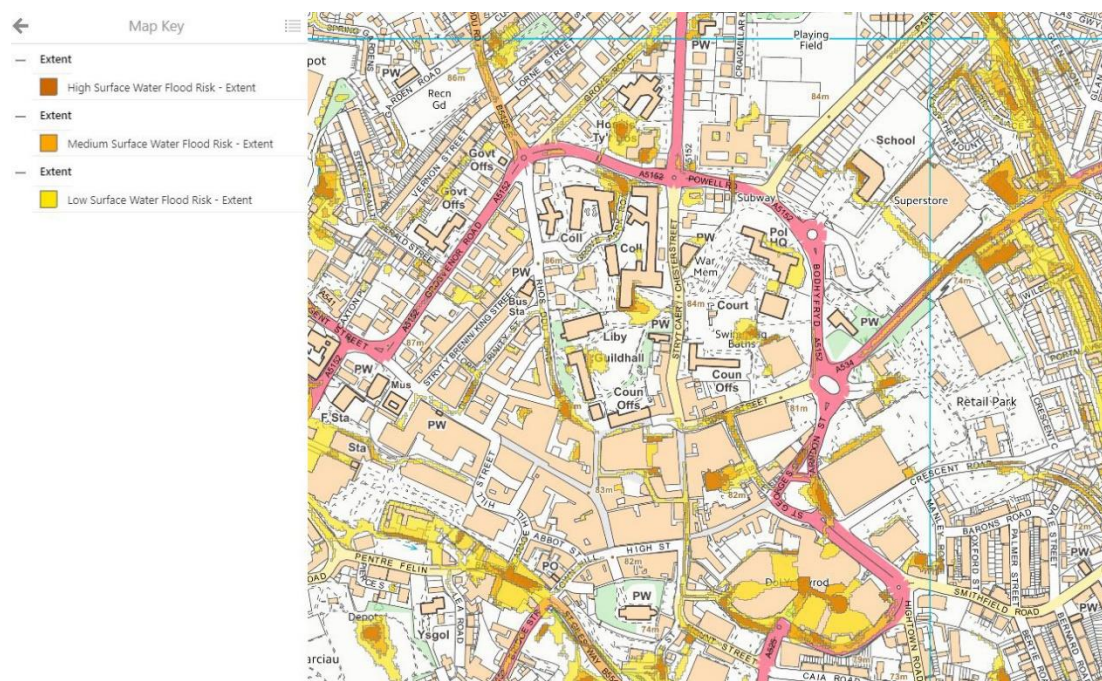
- Maintaining existing and creating additional natural surveillance;
- The new building will benefit from modern doors and windows that minimise the potential for intruders and break-ins;
- External environment design to avoid inadvertent creation of opportunities for crimes, for examples, providing hiding places or facilitating access to the upper floors;
- Appropriate external lighting and creating clear lines of sight in external areas where possible factoring in the existing buildings;
- External design to separate vehicular traffic and pedestrians, with clearly defined pedestrian routes;
- CCTV system maintained and altered where required to monitor the entrances;
- Existing boundary treatments will be maintained or replaced with suitable alternatives to provide a sense of ownership and defined boundaries.

9.0 Environmental Sustainability

9.1 The below images show the flood risk for the immediate area from Natural Resources Wales.



Natural Resources Wales – Flood Zone Map



Natural Resources Wales –Surface Water Flood Risk Map

- 9.2 It has been established via Natural Resources Wales that the site does not lie within a Flood Risk Zone.
- 9.3 The site has between none - high risk of surface water flooding. The east and west of the application site has no risk, increasing through low and medium to high risk around the bus drop-off.
- 9.4 The development will be constructed to fulfil current Building Regulations standards and Environmental Sustainability criteria where applicable. The development will be detailed to current standards of air tightness values with high levels of insulation to achieve compliant U-values.
- 9.5 Sustainable materials with a low environmental impact will be used where possible. All timber to be sourced from sustainably managed forests and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.
- 9.6 Low energy LED light fittings with suitable controls will be used throughout the areas of development.
- 9.7 The heating system for the proposed development will be efficient and controlled to supply heating to targeted areas as required.
- 9.8 Natural ventilation via opening windows will be used where possible and where mechanical supply and extract ventilation proves necessary this will incorporate a heat recovery system.
- 9.9 Roof mounted photovoltaic panels are under consideration for the new build elements of the proposals. The roof structure will be designed to accept this additional loading either now or in the future.
- 9.10 The design aims to promote the efficient use of land, locating the greater part of the proposals on the footprint of existing demolished development. The proposed extensions will not significantly increase the hard-surfaced area of the campus site. The ground investigation survey will be submitted when available to support the proposals. Should ground conditions not prove suitable for soakaways SUDS will be adopted and, via attenuation, surface water will be discharged into the existing system at an agreed rate subject to the necessary approvals.
- 9.11 Facilities for sorting, storing and recycling and collection of waste will be provided in line with the overall campus strategy.
- 9.12 Sustainable methods of transport are championed by Coleg Cambria, with students encouraged to use public transportation, with the local bus and train stations within walking distance. Coleg Cambria provides free buses for students under 19 who live beyond 3 miles of the campus, with a variety of routes across Flintshire, Denbighshire and Wrexham. They also run a car share scheme to reduce individual car journeys to the campus, reducing the number of vehicles on site.
- 9.13 Nationally recognised and quality assured standards will be used to demonstrate that environmentally sustainable design solutions have been incorporated into the proposed development. The development will be designed and constructed to BREEAM Excellent standard. The approach will ensure that the buildings embody the tangible benefits associated with BREEAM compliance, such as those outlined above and high standards of construction management and controls.

Ecology and Local Environment

- 9.14 An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was commissioned by Coleg Cambria and carried out by TACP in July 2021 a copy of which is included as part of this application. This survey made recommendations for a further climbing survey to assess a possible bat habitat. The survey identifies the low habitat value of the amenity grassland, but the potential adverse effects to habitat of the removal of select trees / shrubs to the eastern boundary. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the design, including planting of native shrubs and trees (particularly those beneficial for pollinators) to replace those removed.
- 9.15 The proposed development will aim to minimise disruption to habitats being retained during construction.

10.0 Land Use

- 10.1 The site will remain for educational use, providing all the facilities required to sustain education at the site.

11.0 Noise Pollution

- 11.1 Some noise will be generated during construction works but every effort will be made to keep this to an absolute minimum in the interests of the continued operation of the college and of the neighbouring properties. Once complete it is anticipated that the additional facilities will create no greater noise levels than that which exists with the current campus. Additional air handling plant associated with the development will be attenuated.

12.0 Air Quality

- 12.1 There may be a limited amount of dust resulting from the construction works but this will be minimised by the contractor. Maintaining air quality and reducing dust will be important for the continued activities of the college during the works.
- 12.2 The proposed uses do not generate any additional air pollution.

For the reasons set out above it is considered that the proposals represent a well-designed scheme that accords with the relevant Development Plan Policies.