

DESIGN STATEMENT

CROWN BUILDINGS, WREXHAM

Ainsley Gommon Architects, together with Read Construction, are working for Wrexham County Borough Council to deliver refurbishment and remodelling proposals for Crown Buildings in Wrexham.

The building was originally built in the 1960's, and provides four storeys of office accommodation. Constructed from a cast insitu reinforced concrete frame, the external elevations are reflective of the time it was built, comprising of feature concrete panelling at first, second and third floor levels, with single glazed steel ribbon windows and aluminium double glazed panels to the ground floor. Buff brick gables, with strip vertical glazing provide book ends to the building. Internally, the almost T-shaped layout provides large dual aspect, open plan offices combined with cellular meeting and office spaces. A central core accommodates the toilets and main vertical circulation, and connecting the two wings of office accommodation. The layout and facilities within the building are no longer fit for purpose. There has been a number of leaks over recent years, staff have been decanted and asbestos removal has commenced in preparation of the refurbishment works.

The brief required the remodelling and refurbishment of the building to meet the council's current and future needs, whilst incorporating much needed improvements in environmental performance. The upper floors are to be refurbished to provide flexible office accommodation with open plan areas, individual offices, meeting rooms and break out spaces, designed to accommodate modern working methods. On the ground floor, a new main entrance into the building is proposed from the north, addressing the main public Waterworld car park. This leads into a new centre for the provision of social services, with fully accessible spaces providing community and specialist services to the public, including 'Changing Places' facilities. A small extension is proposed to provide café facilities for visitors to the building.

Externally, a scheme of elevation enhancement is proposed, with new PPC aluminium double glazed windows, combined with PPC aluminium rainscreen panels in two copper colours, fitted over the concrete panels in a random pattern to break up the massing of the elevation. The new main entrance is highlighted in a colour reminiscent of oxidised copper, picking up on design cues from the nearby Waterworld building. Standing seam metal cladding is proposed vertically over the existing brick finish to the central core, and installed on an angle at the gables, with a feature chevron providing interest and a subtle way-finding device to draw people around to the new entrance. A new roof finish is proposed and PV panels will be accommodated. All these measures will

help improve the thermal performance of the building and increase the EPC rating to a 'B.'

Externally, the majority of the car parking will remain as existing, with a few spaces lost to the north elevation to create the new entrance and soft and hard landscaping to complement the new uses within the building. A feature 'public realm' space is proposed to the north of the building to draw people in off Chester Street and reinforce the pedestrian route round to the new main entrance.

Ainsley Gommon Architects
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