

Oriel Myrddin

Redevelopment Options

18th November 2019

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1. Background

Oriel Myrddin Trust (OMT) submitted redevelopment plans to CCC and Arts Council Wales (ACW) in March 2019. CCC has agreed to lead on the redevelopment project on behalf of OMT should enough funding be secured.

ACW considered the redevelopment proposals in July 2019 and made a conditional award of grant of £1m. Supplementary information to support the conditional award was considered by ACW at their October funding meeting and the grant was awarded subject to allocation of match funding by CCC.

CCC is yet to agree to support the scheme and the level of priority for funding awarded to the scheme at the meeting of SASG in August 2019 was "could / would" but with no financial commitment.

Considering the assessment by SASG and the need to develop a sustainable plan for the Gallery the project team together with colleagues from the corporate team responsible for the development of the Carmarthen hwb have sought to consider whether co-location would be feasible.

2. Brief

The architects plan for the redevelopment of the gallery has been developed to RIBA stage 3 affording the opportunity to consider the spaces to include the hwb services.

The architects were given the following brief

"Design input is required to the existing stage 3 plans to establish the feasibility of co-locating the operations sympathetically to the overall ambience and development of the gallery whilst being of sufficient profile to the hwb. The business planning process for the gallery has reinforced the need for it to be enterprising in nature with flexible spaces and a focus on a relaxed and inviting cultural environment where visitors want to dwell. The visibility from King Street is key.

There are two existing hwb premises one in Llanelli and the second in Ammanford – plan attached. This is the Council's customer service access point on the "high street" where customers can drop in to access council services primarily based around housing / training / employment opportunities and to date payment facilities."

3. Redevelopment Options

The redevelopment options under consideration are therefore as follows:

- i. Progress with the existing RIBA stage 3 design proposals for the redevelopment of the Gallery;
- ii. Co-locate with the Carmarthen Hwb in the existing buildings;

- iii. Co-locate with the Carmarthen Hwb on King Street through the purchase / lease of adjacent buildings to provide the required space;
- iv. Maintain the status quo

During the development period it has become apparent that there are significant additional benefits aligned with the selection of option 1 – to develop the gallery as a standalone artistic and cultural hub. The gallery in this format would have the potential to apply to become part of the development of the National Contemporary Art Gallery Wales with the opportunity to attract curatorial support and exhibitions from the national collection.

4. Outcome - Floorplans & Sketches

Appendix 1 – Existing floorplans & sketches – Gallery only;

Appendix 2 – Floorplan accommodating Gallery and Hwb;

Appendix 3 – Sketches accommodating Gallery and Hwb;

Appendix 4 – Floorplan demonstrating an expanded Hwb space at 96m².

5. Assessment of the options

Each of the four options is considered by reference to

- Defining the model
- Capital investment required
- Operational components
- Partners
- Timelines
- Value Added
- Strengths
- Weaknesses

A summary of the output of the review is contained in the following tables:

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Description		Capital Requirement		Operational Requirements	Partners
Option 1 RIBA Stage 3 Approved by ACW	OMG as a standalone cultural enterprise with	£445k	2020-21	Business plan is complete. Revenue	Oriel Myrddin Trust (OMT)
	improved facilities to increase visibility, accessibility,	£445k	2021-22	contributions to the Trust from CCC as existing.	CCC Leisure
	and enhanced arts education whilst significantly	£890k	Total	Upscaling the operation with costs covered	ACW
	improving the opportunity for income generation			through income generation and fundraising.	Arts Care Gofal Celf (TBC)
Option 2 Co-locate (existing property)	OMG and Carmarthen Hwb share the frontage on	£445k	2020-21	Restrictions on space within the facility would	Oriel Myrddin Trust (OMT)
	King St. and co-exist in such a way that allows for	£445k	2021-22	compromise the ability of OMG to raise income	CCC Leisure
	audience development for the Gallery	£890k	Total	The operational model for the hwb would need	CCC Hwb
				review based around the space available	
Option 3 Co-locate (adjacent property)	As option 2 but affording both facilities the frontage	890k	as above	Assumes the business plan for OMG as in option 1	Oriel Myrddin Trust (OMT)
	required	750k	est no 25	Operational model for the hwb as existing.	CCC Leisure
	25 King St - OIRO £235k (Listed)	1640k	Total		ACW
	28 King St - Subject to offer on lease				CCC Hwb
Option 4 Do nothing	Continue with the existing operation without the	£100k	Est for essential	As current although the ACW is reviewing revenue	Oriel Myrddin Trust (OMT)
	redevelopment scheme.		maintenance	funding to portfolio clients in 2020.	CCC Leisure
				Significant maintenance costs will have to be covered	ACW

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	Timescale	Added Value to Carmarthenshire	Strengths	Weaknesses
Option 1 RIBA Stage 3 Approved by ACW	Dec-21	£1m external funding raised Aligns the gallery for inclusion as a potential venue for a dispersed "National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales" Improving 1 listed building and 2 derelict buildings on King St. Developing the Cultural quarter / Cultural Tourism £ Opportunity for improved collaboration with ACGC on the impact of the arts on mental health and wellbeing	Supported by public consultation May 2017 Unlocks potential to become a part of a "National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales" Investing in existing infrastructure Building on existing operating model Easier to attract and retain skilled independent trustees Aligned to the Carmarthen Town Masterplan Opportunity to deliver classes and workshops with measureable social impact.	Significant upscaling requires careful management
Option 2 Co-locate (existing property)	Mar-22 (+3m)	Possible £1m external funding raised Improving 1 listed building and 2 derelict buildings on King St. Developing the Cultural quarter	Footfall from Hwb on site Sharing property based costs & limited capital outlay for the hwb Efficient agile staff accommodation in shared facilities Proximity to Carmarthen library	Not clear that ACW or OMT will support the revisions Hwb space would be approx 50% of requirement, OR OMG would lose street presence & therefore likely ACW support Loss of exhibition wall space and disabled ramp access for OMG Segregation / privacy is paramount which has an impact on what can be achieved through the designs.
Option 3 Co-locate (adjacent property)	Sep-22 (+9m)	£1m external funding raised Aligns the gallery for inclusion as a potential venue for a dispersed "National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales" Improving 1 listed building and 2 derelict buildings on King St. Developing the Cultural quarter	Unlocks potential to become a part of a "National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales" Aligned to the Carmarthen Town Masterplan Footfall from Hwb on site Efficient agile staff accommodation in shared facilities Proximity to Carmarthen library	Additional funding required Extended timescale arising from the need to purchase adjacent accommodation
Option 4 Do nothing	Immediate	None	None	Strategic importance of the gallery to ACW would likely be reconsidered. Potential implications on future revenue funding from ACW Increasing the financial burden on the Trust. Reputational risk - where a sizeable grant is available to consolidate OMG's position as key to the arts infrastructure Wales Essential maintenance costs of est £100k

6. Outcome of the Design Review

Several sets of proposals were submitted by the architects in response to the brief with the most favourable included at Appendices 2 and 3.

One of the key challenges is the width of the frontage at 26/27 King Street. Both facilities have an obvious need for street presence, one of the fundamental principles of the gallery development is to improve access, both visual and disability, and create an inviting entrance to do this. The Hwb has an equal requirement for visibility and as a customer service point requires its own branding and access arrangements. Should the redesign prove successful it would be necessary to demonstrate to ACW that the fundamental principles of the original gallery scheme were being delivered with the enhanced offering of the additional footfall and broadening access. On this basis the wider frontage of 26 King Street was allocated to the gallery however this then compromised the space available to the Hwb to such a degree that the space could not accommodate the Hwb's minimum requirements.

If the Hwb were to be allocated the wider frontage then that would compromise the retail space available to the gallery with an impact on sustainability. Neither is it clear that either the Trust or ACW would support such a compromise.

By way of example the Ammanford Hwb occupies a space of approx. 96m² and this has been drawn as the red line on the plan attached at Appendix 4 to demonstrate the compromise. In short, the space appears too limited to deliver meaningful benefits from the co-location of the Hwb and gallery and presents the risk that both Trustees and ACW would not support the scheme.

This resulted in the development of option 3 which is to look for additional space on either side of 26/27 King Street and the narrative on this is contained within the table above. This would result in an additional funding requirement roughly estimated at £750k for the purchase and development of an adjacent property – both of which are listed. It would also add a minimum of 9 months onto the program for delivery.

7. Option 1 – The original scheme and preferred option

In May 2018 the Welsh Government working in partnership with ACW and National Museum Wales, received a preliminary feasibility study considering the development of a National Contemporary Art Gallery Wales. The feedback on the development of the national gallery is that a conclusion has been drawn that a dispersed model is the most likely way forward. That is a dispersed model of galleries across Wales, around 9 we understand, working collectively as the National Contemporary Art Gallery. In due course ACW and its partners will be looking to explore future potential investment in the network of galleries, with investment to ensure that they are equipped to exhibit high value works from the National collection. Those galleries will also be considered in terms of the operational support they require. Having considered the detail of the model in the feasibility study the principles upon which the development of the gallery is based in option 1 are highly compatible with the vision for the model in Wales and we

would expect that we could align with those development plans in the current configuration and be aspirational about an expression of interest to that scheme.

The business model that has been developed for the gallery has focussed on broadening access to the arts and Carmarthenshire as a tourism destination. With that in mind the opening hours are geared towards the night-time social economy with late evening and weekend opening and arts and craft workshops working in partnership with local hospitality businesses that would be marketed as a cultural tourism opportunity. With the added possibility of national collections within our grasp, Oriel Myrddin is established as a real cultural destination. The full detail of the business plan which includes an indicative artistic program for years 1 and 2 is included at appendix 5.

A public, schools and artists consultation on the redevelopment of the gallery was undertaken in June 2017. 98% of respondents to the public survey stated that the redevelopment would benefit Carmarthen town with support for practical demonstrations in the arts and creative workshops and the idea of an informal meeting place for networking by the public and artists alike. 61% of artists were interested in a club or social meeting place to gather and have a sense of belonging. Schools would be interested in creative workshops and collaborations between artists and pupils and the relevance of enhanced educational opportunities has been further compounded by the development of the National Curriculum for Wales, and locally for Carmarthenshire.

8. Next Steps

Four options have been presented for consideration with the capital requirement, timescale, partners, added value and strengths and weaknesses associated with each as previously outlined in the table above. The status quo is not without its challenges as a maintenance liability will have to be covered together with the likely negative impact on the sustainability of the gallery in its current format and especially without the opportunity to align with national developments.

Unfortunately, the existing space appears too limited to accommodate the Hwb and gallery with meaningful benefits for each however option 1 aligns with national developments in contemporary art and could attract additional support as a result thereof. Option 1 is therefore the recommended option.

The decision is whether CCC are in a position to invest £890k, over two years, to deliver this scheme which aligns with the opportunity to become part of a dispersed National gallery, to develop the cultural quarter at the end of King Street, drive the night time social economy, create Oriel Myrddin as a real cultural tourism destination in the County and draw down a minimum of £1m match funding from ACW into Carmarthenshire.

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